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THE CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE OF ALBERT WENDT'S NOVEL POULIULI

by

Fa'alafua L. Auva'a

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree

of

MASTER OF ARTS

in

English

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ABSTRACT

The Cultural Perspective of Albert Wendt's Novel Pouliuli

by

Fa'alafua L. Auva'a, Master of Arts

Utah State University, 1997

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Department: English

Wendt's accomplishments as an artist of Polynesia and positions he held at different universities are presented in Chapter I. This marks the significant contributions he has made in different genres in which he has written, like novels, short stories, and poetry, that make him a major influence in the Pacific.

Chapter II analyzes the theoretical framework within the *fa'a-Samoa* in which a *matai* (chief) is presented, a revered office filled by respectable individuals. To make this point clear, I present the theoretical groundwork in Appendix A of how an individual becomes a *matai*.

Chapter III explores how Faleasa Osovae, the protagonist of Pouliuli, mirrors Mersault of The Stranger. This points out Camus's influence on Wendt.

Chapter IV investigates similarities of behaviors found among Faleasa Osovae, Mersault, and Bazarov of Turgenev's Father's and Sons. It connects Wendt and Camus to nihilism.

This philosophical orientation, however, is toned down when a historical figure, Tupua Tamasese, III (Appendix B), is presented in contrast to remind readers about the historical role of a *matai* in the *fa'a-Samoa*. Chapter V explores the cognition theory that looks into behaviors of protagonists. Chapter VI is a discussion of the irony of Faleasa Osovae's behavior.

Though I offer some explanation for Faleasa's behavior when I draw parallels between him and Mersault of The Stranger and Bazarov of Father's and Sons, which almost gives him justification for behaving like King Lear, it would be improper in Samoan thought to consider Faleasa a cultural artifact of the *fa'a-Samoa*.

(107 pages)

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I would like to thank my family, my children, and my mother, Savili Maaelopa Auva'a, who instilled in me the love of the *fa'a-Samoa* at a very young age, and more especially I would like to dedicate this to my oldest daughter, Serafi Pina Auva'a, who is so keen in education and has a hunger for the Samoan way of life because she did not have the choice blessing of being raised up in the *fa'a-Samoa*.

Fa'alafua L. Auva'a

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

It is inevitable to be asked among students of literature: What makes Albert Wendt's novel Pouliuli an important book to look into critically in a thesis? A suitable question which deserves a genuine response!

Albert Wendt was born in Samoa, 27 October 1939, the son of a Samoan family. He is the best known writer of the South Pacific. He found his major influence in Camus.

He is undoubtedly the best known writer in the South Pacific. In 1952, he was sent on a government scholarship to study at New Plymouth Boys' High School in New Zealand. Schooling in a new world introduced him to a new culture and tradition, which consequently became a significant part of his "complex personality." Upon finishing high school, he moved on to university, where he studied at Ardmore Teacher's College near Auckland; however, he soon graduated from Victoria University with a master's degree in history. This marked a great beginning of a productive literary career awaiting Albert (Ross 63).

Albert Wendt, in a search for a voice of his own, unavoidedly, borrowed a great deal of style and meaning from Albert Camus; so he paid tribute to Albert Camus, saying:

In my reading I was searching for the voices which said what I wanted to say and understand but didn't yet have the facility to articulate, for the writers who could define me and where I was at. I would later find, described in Camus, that I was living in exile, but I didn't know how to define that condition. . . . It was during 1958, my first

year at Ardmore Teacher's College, that I first read Camus -- and it was the Outsider. My head exploded, my heart thundered as I gobbled it up in one reading. Here was the book, the testament, I'd been looking for to help understand myself. It articulated aptly/poetically, lucidly what I'd felt and wanted to say about myself and living in exile in another country. (qtd. in Wendt 48-49)

Contemplating finding a style of his own, he imitated Camus's style and adapted similar themes to be treated in his novels. This is readily evident in Pouliuli where Faleasa, the protagonist, aims to be released of all his chiefly responsibilities as he attempts, under disguise of madness, to resist cultural transformations he sees taking over the main institutions of his Malaelua village. Contrary to Samoan norm when expediting communal resistance to cultural transformation, he ignores the traditional role of the council of chiefs, but attempts to resolve the problems all alone. As a major thrust of Pouliuli, the implied author presents Faleasa Osovae, the protagonist, who feigns madness as a way of resisting cultural transformation now encroaching upon his Malaelua village. But more startling and perhaps puzzling to students of Samoan literature is the embodiment of the idea of existentialism in Faleasa, when he feigns madness and refuses to continue his chiefly responsibilities (Chadwick 155). Yet Faleasa wishes to hold onto the power and authority that come with the office of a *matai* (chief). This is one of the levels of complexities built into Faleasa, as the protagonist, which, if analyzed from a Samoan cultural point of view, could be

found unsuitable for such a figure of authority. Further, he should not be considered as a genuine cultural artifact within the framework of the *fa'a-Samoa* (Samoan way of life).

In further analyzing Faleasa Osovae's narrative, I shall draw comparisons between him and Mersault, the protagonist in The Stranger by Albert Camus. I will also draw parallels between Faleasa and Bazarov of Ivan Turgenev's Fathers and Sons; hopefully the process will give a better explanation of how Faleasa Osovae, as an embodiment of existentialism, is seen as a foreign precept when placed within the context of traditional Samoa thought. Even more, Mersault is analyzed within his own cultural framework as a way to show that the implied author of Pouliuli, undoubtedly, is influenced in his writings by Albert Camus's philosophy of existentialism. Understandably, Albert Wendt, as an emergent author, is torn between the idea of the individual as supreme over the community and vice versa. Although he declares himself as a proponent of the community as supreme over the individual, it is nevertheless obvious that Albert Wendt is not finding that choice an easy one to make (O'Rourke 55).

His works are being studied at many universities: University of South Pacific, Suva, Fiji; Victoria University; Auckland University; National University of Australia; and even in some universities in mainland United States, e.g., Iowa State University, Notre Dame, and University of Hawaii (Wendt, Leaves of the Banyan Tree cover page). In many

inquiries about Polynesia or the Pacific, scholars turn to Wendt's writings either in periodicals like Pacific Monthly, or some of his published interviews in other literary journals, like World Literature, to get ideas on issues regarding the Pacific.

In 1989, Albert Wendt was appointed to the Chair of Professor of Pacific Studies at Auckland University in New Zealand. It is only appropriate because Auckland, as a city, is noted for the highest population of Polynesians in the world. Prior to this appointment, Wendt was a professor of Pacific Literature at the University of South Pacific, Fiji. It was at this point in his career that he received recognition as a "promoter of the arts in the region somewhat in the manner of Ulli Beier in Nigeria and Papua New Guinea" (Ross 63). Wendt also received special recognition for his work with The Mana, a magazine of creative and critical writing, while at University of South Pacific. The Mana publication series, sponsored by the University of South Pacific, was inspiring for young writers. Wendt was appointed the founding editor of the journal, which published a collection of poems. These poems were from aspiring writers out of Western Samoa, Tonga, Fiji, the New Hebrides (now Vanuatu), and the Solomon Island (64).

During one of his interviews published in Writers in East and West Encounter, Wendt made a heroic attempt (at least from the point of view of a Polynesian) to redefine Oceania,

approaching it from a cultural, humanist perspective. His message was equally compelling as ever in motivating students of literature around the Pacific region to persevere in their efforts, while attempting to find their places in the literary world (Amirthanayagam 202-204).

On one occasion, apparently, an anthology of writers of South Pacific was being developed. Patricia Grace, a Maori-Pakeha writer, Witi Ihimahera, a Maori-Maori writer of New Zealand, and Albert Wendt, a Samoan New Zealand writer, in unison, after they signed letters of agreement to allow their works to be included, decided at the last minute to withdraw their works. They argued that C.K. Stead, the editor assigned to the task of editing this work of immense importance, did not have the expertise, especially to work with writers of Polynesia to whom he had showed lack of sensitivity and understanding in the past. Upon finding out about the withdrawal of these writers' works, just before the book went to print, C.K. Stead was deeply disappointed, and, consequently, had to write a note titled "A Note of Absences," explaining about the absence of Patricia Grace, Witi Ihimahera, and Albert Wendt's works from the collection. Stead reckoned it was a political gesture which interfered badly with literature (Stead XV-XVI).

This incident illustrates Albert Wendt's stern personality, not only as he believes in himself as a significant voice in Pacific, but also as he serves as an advocate of Polynesian literature who remains true to his own

beliefs.

Mr. Albert Wertheim paid tribute to Wendt in the following:

A new literary voice has been heard from the South Pacific region. Albert Wendt, a native of Western Samoa, has produced a collection of poems, a volume of short stories and three impressive novels -- Sons for the Return Home (1973), Pouliuli (1977), and Leaves of the Banyan Tree (1979)-- dealing with traditions, modernization and the coming of age in Samoa. (Wertheim 443-444)

Although Wertheim's tribute only explains briefly about each of Wendt's works published thus far, it nevertheless indicates the recognition that was probably due to this literary scholar many years ago.

CHAPTER II

FALEASA OSOVAE: A CASE AGAINST THE FA'A-SAMOA

Human beings occupy space and time in different parts of the universe, and it is therefore expected that they would adhere to community standards embraced by their society. It is not always easy, however, for all members of any one society to comply with established mores and norms because individuals generally see life circumstances very differently.

Faleasa Osovae, the protagonist of Pouliuli by Albert Wendt, represents a unique way of life which places him as the existentialist main character in a Samoan cultural context, moving towards nihilism as a philosophy of living. Faleasa is challenging the basic belief that is essential to the smooth operation of a Samoan family, that is, the *matai* is expected to preside in all family affairs. He ignores responsibilities associated with his office as a *matai* (chief) of his *aiga* (extended family), when he decides to act like a mad man. This shocks his whole family and even his community because of his unchiefly conduct.

Samoans generally practice a culture which is genuinely different from the American culture because of the emphasis placed upon community values. Religion and culture in major ways impact the beliefs of the Samoans; this is evident in how people interact with one another in the course of living. In a more obvious way, practitioners of cultures in Samoa distinguish the conservative mode of thinking from the

progressive idealists, who may wish to make their mark as they idolize community unity as the ultimate goal of true living.

Faleasa Osovae, 75, a loyal paramount *matai* (chief) and father of the proud family of Faleasa for over sixty years, suddenly wakes up one morning and turns into a violent, mad man, cursing out his loyal wife, Felefele, his children, and grandchildren who have been faithful to him as their father and leader. In the effort to cure Faleasa of what appears to be schizophrenia, members of the council of chiefs and the Malaelua village *faifeau* (pastor) come to help Faleasa Osovae, who is regarded highly in the Malaelua community for his leadership and wisdom in the council of chiefs.

In the effort, however, the senior members of the council and their faithful *faifeau*, Filemoni, are humiliated when Faleasa, in extreme profanity, curses them out, and (while members of Malaelua village are looking on) kicks them out; but the delegation has come to help. Faleasa rejects the council representatives and the pastor several times. Soon his madness is suspected to be caused by the *aitu* (ghost) of his deceased mother because Faleasa gave the impression on one occasion that his mother's ghost spirit had entered into him.

The Faleasa family seeks out the *taulasea* (healer) from a far away village. The *taulasea*, however, is soon satisfied to leave Faleasa alone, after he is given money by Faleasa in the absence of his family. During the brief stay of the *taulasea*, he soon discovers the true mental condition of

Faleasa as perfectly normal; therefore, he is satisfied to go back home. Ironically, Faleasa gives away the best of the material possessions to the *taulasea* when his own family hardly has that much.

In manipulating his family, who are led to believe he is mentally incompetent, Faleasa finds the most suitable time at night to confide in his favorite son, Moalua, that he is perfectly sane; however, as he explains, he wishes to behave in a weird way, as a strategy to allow himself to get to the heart of some of the most serious problems in Malaelua. For example, he wishes to expel Filemoni, the *faifeau*, because he is suspected of embezzling church funds. But Faleasa cannot confront him with this because Filemoni is a blood relation of his wife, Felefele. To accomplish his goal, Faleasa sets up a new leadership in the council of chiefs, since he is now regarded as a mad man, who suffers from senility. Faleasa had set up Laaumatua Lemigao (his best friend) and Moalua (his favorite son) as new leaders in the council. Having successfully ousted Filemoni as pastor of Malaelua through politically maneuvering of the council of chiefs, Faleasa is now faced with new challenges, like removing Malaga from the national parliament. Malaga has been a successful representative of Malaelua for several years, but his reputation is not very good when he is accused of embezzling government funds to sustain his newly acquired mode of living at Apia. . Apparently, Malaga lives beyond his means.

But when Malaga, in a traditional way, makes his o'o (food presentations) to the Malaelua constituency before the new election, Faleasa Osovae realizes his true dilemma: He does not wield any more power in the politics of Malaelua. He has given away the Faleasa title since he assigned Moalua to be his replacement. As a result the affairs of Malaelua take on a more aggressive, violent twist when Faleasa Osovae, on the morning of the election, shows up and announces his timely recovery, as if he had never been sick at all. Interestingly, however, while under the disguise of madness, he sets up Moalua, his son, to oppose Malaga in the ballot. But Malaga is not aware of such a plan until the election day.

The results of the ballot shatter Malaga because he loses, and in his furious outrage, he seeks out Faleasa Osovae and his family to avenge the humiliation brought upon his family. Moalua retaliates in defense of his father, Faleasa Osovae, and family. Immediately after the election result is announced, Moalua kills two of Malaga's men at night when the two families are fighting.

Within the context of a Samoan family, Faleasa is perceived by his wife, children, and grandchildren (those who are old enough to comprehend the adverse effects of their grandfather's behavior, which is contrary to the norm of the *fa'a-Samoa*) to be an uncultured, infamous *alii* (aristocrat), who is believed to have lost his mind. Faleasa is suspected to be unhappy about something in his family, which is believed

to be a probable cause for his sudden madness. Further, his colleagues in the village council of chiefs do not in any conceivable fashion of pity condone his undignified behavior. It brings upon the family much shame, which is not easily removed, no matter how elaborate a form of *ifoga* (public apology) the Faleasa family may put together to seek forgiveness from the *faifeau* and the council of chiefs. The use of profanity against the council is taboo; in a well-run village, life is *maopoopo* (in good order), and the lives of its residents are well protected by laws and customary institutions (Shore 119). The case of Faleasa Osovae, a paramount, senior aristocrat who commands respect and dignity because of the position he holds in the village, now poses a serious threat to the council and the community at large.

To reconcile with the council of chiefs and the *faifeau* (pastor), it would be fitting to call a *fono-tauati* (special meeting for only the *matai*) to probe into the cause of Faleasa's insane behavior. The matter is not weighed lightly in the minds of the council because the dignity of the village has been shattered ever since Faleasa publicly humiliated the senior *matais* of the council, when he used foul language, cursing them, while the community people were looking on. This behavior seriously endangers the peace in the family and the village. Should such an offense be left unchecked, negative light could be shed on the vitality of the position the council plays in dealing with matters affecting the well-

being of the village. *Ua a'afia le maopoopo male mamalu o le saofaiga.* (The dignity and the livelihood founded upon mutual love and respect is seriously threatened.)

Since the advent of Christianity, which converted Samoa, Faleasa had been made a senior deacon and was endowed with all rights and privileges affixed to the office of a deacon in the church. His behavior poses serious questions about how truly converted he has become. In the judgment of the established church policies, with Filemoni, the ordained minister of the Christian Congregational Church denomination in Malaelua, the unity and peace of the community have all been rent asunder when Faleasa publicly humiliated Filemoni, using profanity. His conversion to Christianity should leave him no room for any excuse; justice must prevail. In extreme cases, *fa'ate'a* (banishing) the wrongful individual from the village could result.

Faleasa Osovae deserves the most severe penalty because he has not in the least, in the eyes of the village council, shown any degree of repentance; in fact, it is aggravating to note his defiant conduct escalating. Twice, he humiliates senior chiefs of the council. He is arrogant. In all likelihood, it is fitting to summon an immediate *fono-tauati*, not only to facilitate reconciliation between the Faleasa family and the council, but to specifically call to order and to restore the council's historic role of officiating with exactness such a matter of immense magnitude. Faleasa, the

villain, has erred against ancient traditions that have made Malaelua a safe village to live in.

It is imperative, therefore, to trace Faleasa Osovae back to his place of origin. This could be accomplished by situating Osovae in his exact position of genealogical line in relationship to the Faleasa title within his family descent group. This tedious process would hopefully shed more light on the significance of his role as a *matai* (chief) in his family. It is generally held among Samoans that any *sulimoni* (rightful heir) to any Samoan *matai* (title) is a suitable candidate for a chief. However, this belief does not easily translate into practice, as cultural experiences among Samoans have proven. (Refer to Appendix A.)

The rationale of Faleasa's irrational and nonsensical behavior is founded in the historic words of Rosseau: "Man is born free, and is everywhere in chains" (Blair 8). His loyal wife Felefele and children suspect Faleasa's behavior to be caused by his wishes to be relieved of his chiefly responsibilities. Faleasa must have found his chiefly responsibilities burdensome. To suppose Faleasa is not conscious of his weird, irrational speeches when he curses at his family is presumptuous. Faleasa is grounded deeply in the *fa'a-Samoa* (Samoa way of life), so for him simply to feign irrationality and to expect an instant dismissal of his behavior as immaterial, could be perceived as a weakness of the council and the church as a divine institution. The

council of chiefs should probe him more carefully, if they are to diagnose Faleasa's real sickness. The council of chiefs pride themselves on their wisdom to probe into difficult situations that could endanger the community. Therefore, Faleasa's acting weird should be easy for the council to figure out.

To realize the social-political status Faleasa has acquired in Malaelua is a good starting point of reckoning; however, it could be more fruitful to also evaluate how Faleasa is burdened with the duties associated with his chiefly responsibilities. Faleasa suddenly comes to the realization that his whole adult life of seventy-five years had been spent not in doing anything for his personal gain; he has dedicated his entire life to serving his family, the village council, and inevitably, to serving his church, which most Samoans believe is the highest form of sacrifice a man truly converted to Christianity could do.

He now sees these past achievements no longer as marks of honor and dignity, but as evidence of his ignorance perhaps founded upon blind obedience. For over sixty years, he has been the sole *matai* of his *aiga* (family). He did not at any one time complain about the commitments associated with the carrying out of his duties. They are truly symbolic of his weakness, because he has allowed social institutions (church, family, village council) to suck out the living juices of his body. This realization injects a new life into Faleasa. In

a very unique way, Faleasa, who has now turned mad, finds feigning madness to be an effective means of evading work as a *matai*. Consequently, he immediately desires to have nothing to do with his past life. A quick exit, however, from institutions which traditionally have given meaning to his existence is seen as absurd, at least to his devoted wife, Felefele, their proud set of children, and grandchildren. As a family they have, to a great extent, taken pride in their existence based on the fact that their father/grandfather is the repository of sacred knowledge (genealogy and traditions), which has earned him the reputation as the leading authority in matters dealt with by the council of chiefs of Malaelua. He has been regarded highly by his colleagues as a custodian of the most uncommon traditional knowledge, which elevates Malaelua in the eyes of rivaling communities. Malaelua is, of course, an elitist community because chiefs like Faleasa Osovae are rarely found in other councils of chiefs outside of Malaelua. Even further, Malaelua is deemed a more refined community, comparatively, because of the presence of aristocrats like Faleasa Osovae who have lived beyond the normal life expectancy of Samoans. Most ancient Samoan chiefs did not live past sixty years old. Samoans have (although seldom spoken about it openly) held a belief that when a *matai* lives beyond sixty years of age, it is because he is favored by gods. Faleasa Osovae is thus sanctioned in carrying out his duties, because a *matai* is generally looked upon as a man

chosen through divine sanction.

The glorious years of Faleasa Osovae's reign as the leader of the Faleasa family, who now succumbs to sudden alienation, merits meticulous probing. For convenience, Faleasa is believed by the council and families to be controlled by the *aitu* (ghost-spirit) of his deceased mother. But the withdrawal syndrome which now conveniently camouflages Faleasa's real reason for the act he is putting on (acting as if he has the evil spirit in him) could offer a more plausible explanation. The sudden realization of how exploited he has been through all the years when he was working to satisfy the needs of his *aiga* (extended family), the village council, and the church, is real. Faleasa's role as a father of his family, however, is the most natural relationship he has entered into; his wife and children have remained bound to him as a natural thing to do because they need him for their protection and sustenance (Blair 9-13).

Faleasa Osovae's search for individualism is not a new phenomenon; however, in the

middle of the nineteenth century, utilitarian individualism had become so dominant in America that it set off a number of reactions. A life devoted to the calculating pursuit of one's own material interest became problematic for many Americans, some of them women, some of them clergymen, and some of them poets and writers. (Bellah et al. 32)

The cramped self-control of Benjamin Franklin's virtues seems to leave too little room for love, human feelings, and a

deeper expression of the self. The great writers of what F.O. Matthiessen has called the "American Renaissance" all reacted in one way or another against this old form of individualism (32). In 1855, Herman Melville published Israel Potter, a novel that subjected Franklin himself to bitter satire. Emerson, Thoreau, and Hawthorne put aside the search for wealth in favor of a deeper cultivation of the self. But it is perhaps Walt Whitman who represents what we may call "expressive individualism" in its clearest form.

The struggle for expressing oneself is extremely important to Walt Whitman, but he also shows the search for freedom as not restricted to one form of expression. Wendt chooses to have Faleasa Osovae demonstrate his desire for freedom in a way different from and in contrast to Walt Whitman and other nineteenth century individuals (32-35). The spirit struggling for freedom is central to Faleasa's search for expressing himself the way he chooses to behave, that is, feigned madness. In equal but contrasting ways, Walt Whitman, the poet, feels strongly about expressing his feelings about some issues, like his own sexuality, which was perceived as "shocking," and liberal when compared to the nineteenth century morality code. Though Wendt is a contemporary scholar, he presents Faleasa Osovae as seeking for individual freedom like Walt Whitman of nineteenth century America.

Faleasa's persistence at silence, though he remains in close physical proximity, is ironic because he is in all

reality, from the point of view of his *aiga*, making himself completely inaccessible. Family members he has loved all his life suddenly become an affront to his inflated ego. In actuality he sees his family members as a threat to his own personal existence. In fact, it is obvious from his keeping to himself, that he wishes to be left alone. His new mode of exile places him in extreme difficulties for communication. This is described in a Samoan saying: "*E pipi'i tia, ae mamao ala.*" Translated in paraphrase: Inasmuch as Faleasa and his family members are close to each other physically, nevertheless, they find communicating with each other absolutely impossible. Faleasa Osovae has chosen to isolate himself in a self-made ivory tower, so his family is placed at a real disadvantage of being unable to communicate with him. He is a true rebel. The existence, however, of a self-imposed silence is an absolute psychological defeat for the Faleasa family. "What have we done wrong to offend him?" This is exactly the most suitable question Faleasa's families have continually asked, but it is only part of a rhetoric now used among themselves.

Faleasa Osovae's behavior places him conveniently in a category as a schizophrenic patient, suffering from a condition defined "as delusion....An individual suffering from this mode of ailment believes...he is being persecuted, watched, hypnotised against his will, and interfered with" (Smith 30-32).

The medical diagnosis about Faleasa is implicit; his form of alienation is suspected to fall within the continuum of the schizophrenia malady. He holds every one of his family who tries to help in contempt. He has even kept all his chiefly colleagues and distant blood-relations at bay, except the *taulasea* (traditional healer), in whom he has confided about the reality of his ailment because he has paid the *taulasea* a handsome amount of money and a choice selection of clothes from his family belongings. Ironically, Faleasa does not have a lot of clothes for all his grandchildren, but has given the *taulasea* (healer) the best from his family's meager belongings. Very bizarre!

Self-gratification is apparently found in his new "self-consciousness." What exactly is there in this new consciousness that is compelling and gratifying which causes him to neglect his "social role" as the head of Faleasa family? More important in the case of Faleasa is the way in which good and bad, the higher and lower, the moral and immoral are implicated in equal weight in his new image as a mad, insane man.

The family of Faleasa, which was once a model unit, now succumbs to chaotic manipulations because of the attack of Faleasa's schizophrenia. It is well for family members to point these concerns out to Faleasa Osovae. Nevertheless, the family in due respect for their elderly *matai* continues to revere him.

As the family is a "micro-government," which in essence practices democracy as in the case of *fa'a-Samoa*, the *aiga potopoto* (extended family), they could make claims against their *matai* (Keesing 257-271). Faleasa has been given the "will" of the *aiga* as manifested in submitting themselves to his stewardship. This is fair play because of their undisputed loyalty, evident in full recognition, accorded to Faleasa as their sole distinguished *matai* over an extensive period of seventy-five years.

On one hot afternoon, when Filemoni, the *faifeau* (minister) and other senior *matais* of the council visit Faleasa, he swears at the *faifeau* (pastor), whom most members of the community look upon as the man of God and they revere him.

This episode is a true representation of Faleasa Osovae's attitude towards many others surrounding him. He doubts the ability of Malaga to make a fair representation for Malaelua in the parliament, so he positions his own son, Moalua, in direct opposition to Malaga. This strategy has completely shattered the tranquility which should prevail in a village as a direct result of good, honest leadership.

In carrying out the activities named above, Faleasa is presented as a very brave man who seeks only to satisfy his personal passions. Faleasa, indeed, pays little attention to how his actions affect others.

CHAPTER III

FALEASA OSOVAE MIRRORS MERSAULT

Because Wendt acknowledges his debt to Albert Camus, it is worthwhile to look at the protagonist in The Stranger to determine if any relative parallels emerge between the two protagonists that could provide some enlightenment pertinent to Faleasa Osovae of Pouliuli.

Faleasa Osovae, upon relinquishing responsibility for being the *ali'i* of the Faleasa family, disgraces the dignity and nobility of the *aiga*. Heirs to the Faleasa title in Malaelua village are astounded that their elderly leader, who has led their family for over three score years, has suddenly abated his chiefly stewardship when all of the families have been proud of his success in the village council of chiefs. He has, unquestionably, during his reign as their *matai*, brought undisputed glory to the family.

To find an immediate suitable replacement for Faleasa Osovae would only demand a *talatalaga* (formal deliberation) in which all *sulimoni* (rightful heirs) to the title would be summoned; but it would also mean an immediate relinquishment of powers and controls, which for ages the Faleasa family has proudly held in all matters of the council of chiefs. This is one of the ramifications the Faleasa family is not prepared to cope with. Faleasa Osovae, in a very unconventional maneuver, has declared Moalua, his favorite son, to be his choice to

replace him in spite of mute opposition from Felefele, his wife, and the oldest son, Elefane. Should the rift now eminent in the premature selection process escalate, it could severely affect the *fealofani* (mutual love) that has edified the Faleasa family in the past. The stability of social order that has held together the family as a viable entity is on the verge of collapse. Elefane is now threatening to move and live with his wife's family, a mark of disintegration when the selection process for a suitable replacement for Osovae has not officially begun. Chaos will, in due time, replace the serenity of a once very well-run *aiga*. If the family collapses, it may, in turn, cause chaos to come upon the Malaelua community.

Mersault of The Stranger places many more interests on himself, more so than looking after his elderly mother who is very ill. Faleasa Osovae is similar to Mersault in his very self-centered attitude. Like Mersault, Faleasa thinks about what he believes to be good for himself, but he leaves out others, like his children who depend on him. In The Stranger when the mother is taken to the convalescent home, Mersault never goes there to visit her, or even to call her on the phone to check how she is. Never once does he write her a letter or send her a post card. The mother must feel unloved by her only child, Mersault. Psychologically, the mother would probably live longer if Mersault would show her more love and support during her stay at the convalescent home.

Faleasa Osovae has declared himself unsuitable since being cognizant of the notion he has been a surrogate of his *aiga* all the years. All meanings of his individuality have been lost completely. It is only fitting at the early stage of Faleasa's ordeal to mark him as dysfunctional, without assigning his aberrant behavior to any distinct branch of schizophrenia. The form of schizophrenia with which Faleasa is affected could be rooted deeply in his psyche, because he is apparently not interested in family responsibilities which Faleasa believes to have robbed him of his personal freedom. This is, nevertheless, unbecoming for an aristocrat who is grounded in the *fa'a-Samoa*. Faleasa is obviously thinking and fending only for himself.

Faleasa Osovae is disinterested in his family affairs and this is a mockery against the most fundamental principle of the *fa'a-Samoa*; that is, the individual love for one's family is most important to the foundation of a Samoan community at large. Faleasa Osovae's individuality could be actualized only within the context of his *aiga*. A Samoan saying explains this concept: *O le tagata ma lona aiga* (Each person has a family); it implies the underlying theme: the individual is an integral component of each *aiga*. Without the *aiga*, the individual is nothing. In the case of Faleasa, his "social role" is defined within his *aiga*: He is the *matai* of the Faleasa family (Tiffany 35-58).

Even though the concept of self-consciousness has been

prevelant since the English Renaissance, it is somewhat foreign to Samoans. This is evident in the Samoan language, where the words that could literally translate "self-consciousness" do not exist in Samoan formal rhetoric of discourse.

However, in Faleasa Osovae's individualistic bent, and he is thus acting upon his new "self-consciousness," he promotes this new concept as experimental, and therefore it stands as superficial in the cultural framework of *aiga* (extended family) according to the *fa'a-Samoa*. Samoans usually place the *aiga* before individual needs. But in the case of Faleasa, he desires absolute freedom; this connotes a desire to live a life free of constraint: Freedom for a Samoan, observes Brad Shore,

is not simply a desired state; nor is it constraint solely to be avoided... given Samoan assumptions about human nature; it is understood that freedom is largely valued negatively and associated with uncontrolled passions, selfish and therefore anti social desires, and disorder. (166-69)

In this view of thought, it is thus perceived that Faleasa's quest to live a "free life" implicitly suggests the desire for anarchy.

Wendt seems to approve of Faleasa Osovae's conduct; in fact, Faleasa Osovae is presented as a modern *matai* capable of manipulating others around him to accomplish his purposes. Such conduct, in Samoan thought, is unbecoming of the office of *matai* that Faleasa Osovae is occupying. Samoans are always

concerned that when there is too much freedom, it encourages inhumane disregard for proper behaviors. This is illustrated in Pouliuli when Faleasa, in disregard for *amio pulea* (appropriate manners), chastises his wife and behaves like an innocent fool in the presence of his family and especially his grandchildren, who do not deserve public humiliation when Faleasa verbally abuses them. The implied author presents Faleasa as a man who approves of feigning madness, as a strategy for resisting the changes he is observing being introduced into Malaelua. Faleasa despises the pastor's wife and children, who show little respect for and are condescending towards others. This is an indication of the wife having been raised as a spoilt daughter of a government clerk who lives in the city of Apia.

In contrast to Faleasa, Mersault is presented in several incidents which parallel the former's behaviors. Mersault downplays the importance of his relationship with Marie (his lover), a direct parallel of how Faleasa neglects to nurture a more fulfilling and rewarding relationship with his devoted wife, Felefele. Despite the lack of love from Faleasa, Felefele continues to show concern and support for Faleasa amidst all the cursings Faleasa had given her in the presence of children and even others of the council of chiefs.

Similar to Felefele's dilemma, Marie, whom Mersault had taken for granted, continues to show loyalty by visiting Mersault at jail while he is incarcerated. Felefele continues

to show love and support for her husband, Faleasa Osovae, by making sure her children (family) serve him his meals on a regular schedule. Moalua and Elefane got into a heated argument because Elefane wants to take Faleasa, their sick father, to see a doctor at the national hospital. Moalua disagrees and the argument escalates to verbal abuse that could develop into a fight, but Felefele intervenes as their mother, fearing that this would only bring more pain to their father, who is suffering from mental agony.

CHAPTER IV
HAPPINESS IS

Faleasa Osovae of Pouliuli mirrors Mersault of The Stranger and Mersault resembles Bazarov of Fathers and Sons. The protagonists in these respective works embrace existentialism in varying degrees. Faleasa Osovae feigns madness as a way of evading responsibilities; apparently the duties have burdened him. Mersault of The Stranger attends his mother's funeral, and when he returns home he immediately takes Marie, his lover, to a movie the same evening. The following day he takes Marie to the beach where they can keep to themselves. It is not surprising for the protagonists of these novels to explore in their outlook of life what may seem unique in relation to the notion of happiness. Though there are close similarities in the protagonists' outlook about what constitutes happiness, it is, nevertheless, intriguing because the experiences are grounded in different circumstances. Mersault sees himself finding happiness in doing exactly what he believes to be the course of action that will lead him to accomplishing the desired end he personally aims at. Mersault wishes to live a life free of responsibilities to other people; he desires a life of absolute freedom where he does not answer to anyone in authority. Initially, when he receives the telegram about his mother's death, he is content with what happened to his mother. He is of the belief that

death is best for her, because he cannot look after her in person. Therefore, his mother is better off dying to end her mortal sufferings.

Mersault's conception of happiness is unusual, and might best be defined in three stages: Happiness is a state, not an emotion, as such, it can consciously be chosen. *Consciously* is the key word, for happiness is being aware of one's experiences and of one's life itself. This sounds simple, but the difficulty, the object of Mersault's quest, lies in cutting out what is accessory and concentrating on what is fundamental to oneself. This is what Mersault achieves. (Jones 15)

In a very similar orientation, Bazarov, of Fathers and Sons, with a firm focus maintains his aim; that is, he seeks out a more fundamental understanding about creeping animals, like frogs, because he is completely caught up in his dream of being a scientist. To Bazarov, achieving this goal constitutes his happiness. Life without goals to accomplish could be dull; everything else is secondary. Faleasa Osovae of Pouliuli presents a similar attitude about his exile: He maintains aloofness, which appeals to his own goal of becoming a free man yet uniquely bizarre and frustrating for all others around him, like Felefele, his wife. Is he, Faleasa, a happy *matai*, considering the elevated status he enjoys among his people? Not at all, Faleasa Osovae should reevaluate his behaviors and mend what is disturbing others around him.

The whole concept of chieftainship in context of *fa'a-Samoa* depends on the notion of *mamalu* (dignity), *pule* (authority, power), *tautua* (service). Yet Faleasa equally

defies these important tenets of his role as a chief. Though Faleasa's behavior is puzzling to his immediate family, he nevertheless maintains his personal dignity to some extent, in that his son, Moalua, who now replaces him, continues to seek his advice privately without anyone knowing it. Faleasa sits back as an emeritus chief. But on another level of viewing Faleasa, he presents himself as finding absolute satisfaction in what he chooses to become; he wishes to be relieved temporarily of his chiefly responsibilities, though it looks rather childish, considering the all-encompassing concept of what constitutes true nobility in Samoan thought (Tiffany 39-41).

Ascending to chieftainship status is not a privilege everybody could attain. It is only accorded to those who have earned the trust and faith of their families. Indeed, it is clear that a chief is set up on a pedestal, and is, therefore, expected to live up to a very lofty set of ideals as a model to his family. A *matai* is loyal, trustworthy, dependable, patient, wise, considerate, modest, diligent, upright, loving, open-minded, unselfish, and brave. The list of virtues and qualities is endless; however, families recognize that their chiefs are humans and are subject to human flaws. But chiefs, generally, are expected to do their best under whatever the circumstances may be. It is only when chiefs exemplify these ideals that they can realize true happiness in their lives because they have served their *aigas* to the fullest. Faleasa,

however, has chosen to feign madness as a meaningful mode of living which gives him fulfillment. This provides quite a contrast to Mersault's view about living a fulfilled life in The Stranger.

Mersault lives a short life. He faces his fate at the trial for killing the Arab and accepts death as an inevitable gift of a life fully lived. He dies consciously, as he had lived in these two cardinal senses, and it is indeed a happy death (Jones 15-16). The life of Mersault parallels the quality of life Bazarov had lived. Bazarov, in all the pursuits of happiness he has undertaken, doubts the fulfillment of life that derives from a life well spent. He commits himself unreservedly to his study. In fact, he immerses himself in it so fully that any form of distraction which pulls him away from his focus can easily become a major frustration. For instance, when Bazarov and his disciple, Arkady, visit Lady Odintsova, Bazarov soon finds himself attracted to the charming lady. Making all efforts to break free from Odintsova's powerful influence, he acknowledges his vulnerability to such a woman, but he quickly eradicates from his mind any more of his unschooled emotions which could have failed him. Bazarov, aware of how overwhelmed he had become with Lady Odintsova's beauty, makes a mental note to himself to control his wild passions. Bazarov's first love is his learning; however, this incident is an excellent example of his carnal nature, which makes him susceptible to

unpredictable human flaws. The implied author seems to be saying that Bazarov is excessively engaged in his quest for scientific knowledge which causes him to ignore other equally important events taking place around him.

Faleasa Osovae's quest for absolute freedom, when he no longer takes responsibility of his *aiga*, places him in sharp contrast with the ideal *matai* Samoans generally look for in their chiefs. (Refer to Appendix B.) Faleasa, on another level, is indeed a more sophisticated character: He feigns madness, becoming an existentialist as a mask which he can hide behind, while attacking some of the problems he sees encroaching on Malaelua's institutions. For example, Faleasa suspects Filemoni, the pastor, of embezzling money, and he does not want to confront Filemoni openly about it because he is a relative of his wife, Felefele. Faleasa takes an indirect route by working through Laaumatua (Lemigao), his bosom friend. But, again, when Faleasa manipulates Laaumatua and other members of the village council of chiefs into banishing the *faifeau* (pastor) from Malaelua, Faleasa makes Laaumatua and others the bad guys for actually carrying out the dirty works he designed.

Living a life of a *matai* under the camouflage of a madman, who embraces existentialism in its extreme form of nihilism, does not represent true honor, dignity, and privileges associated with the office of a *matai*. Though Faleasa seems to adopt existentialism as a possible lifestyle

for evading his chiefly responsibilities, it marks him only as a true rebel and alienates him from society. Faleasa Osovae, upon realizing the severe damages that resulted as the direct impact of his giving up responsibilities as the *matai* of the Faleasa family, wishes to restore himself to his original position. Unfortunately, the far-reaching impact of his exile cannot be changed. He is actually challenging the basic premises of the *fa'a-Samoa*, that is, that love and duty to one's family take priority over one's personal interest. It is only if Faleasa Osovae, the *matai* of his family, embraces the real code of being a *matai* that he will find personal fulfillment in his life as an individual. Scholar Joseph Chadwick criticizes Faleasa for contradictory attitudes he embodies against the conventions of the office of a *matai* which he occupies. Chadwick feels that Laaumatua defines that complicitious element early in the narrative when he admonishes Faleasa:

The individual freedom you have discovered and now wish to maintain is contrary to the very basis of our way of life. Have you considered that? For over thirty years you, Faleasa, and a few other *matai* have led our village, and your leadership, as was the ancient practice, has been based firmly on the principle that you exist to serve others, to serve the very people you are now branding as cannibals. A good leader doesn't live for himself but for his people. (155)

Faleasa obviously parallels Mersault in his irresponsible conduct towards others who count on him for leadership. Mersault ignores a duty he owes to his sick mother when he

leaves her at the convalescent home to die. Faleasa, likewise, neglects his wife, Felefele, who counts on him for love and support during their married life.

CHAPTER V

ABSURD IN THE STRANGER AND POULIULI

Mersault of The Stranger, upon returning home from the countryside, immediately develops a relationship with Marie, which sparks a love relationship while they are basking in endless sunshine at the Masson's beachhouse. Marie is led to believe that their relationship will end in marriage. After a few weeks of merry making, the sexual excitement subsides, and Marie is devastated when she realizes in frustration that her lover (as she thinks) is not sincerely interested in her. Their relationship soon becomes a casual affair. This is probably the most disturbing part of the disinterested attitude of Mersault. It is unfeeling of him after great moments of sexual intimacy, which peaks their relationship, to ignore the love of Marie, with whom he has shared a great time. This neglect hurts her greatly. After Marie spent the night with Mersault at his apartment, she asked him if he loved her. He told her, "it didn't mean anything but that [he] didn't think so" (Camus 35). Marie is, apparently, only someone he has conveniently spent time with to satisfy his unrestrained lust; but he is no Don Juan, because he does not, in the course of subsequent events, take serious interest in any more women. He has demonstrated the lack of ability to sustain a love relationship usually found among people of ordinary temperament. Actually, The Stranger in this regard

"plunges us into the climate of the absurd" (Satre 115). This episode portrays in reality the lack of feeling which is believed fundamental to proper human thinking. Thus The Stranger, according to Sartre, is

a novel of discrepancy, divorce and disorientation; hence its skillful as it is experienced, and on the other hand, the edifying reconstruction of this reality by speech and human reason. The reader is brought face to face with simple reality, must find it again, without being able to recognize it in its rational transportation. This is the source of the feeling of the absurd, that is, of our inability to think, with our words and concepts, what happens in the world. Meursault buries his mother, takes a mistress, and commits a crime. (120)

The odd behavior seen in Faleasa Osovae is similar to the absurd behavior described above of Mersault. In fact, in several parts of Pouliuli, Faleasa Osovae's narrative resembles similar inhumane behaviors towards his wife, Felefele. For example, Felefele expects more tender words of care from Faleasa when their family comes under scrutiny from the village community on the day Faleasa announces his timely recovery; instead, Faleasa conveniently acknowledges his recovery as a symbol of God's love upon him and the council. Therefore, Faleasa, under the pretext of God restoring his health, explains to the members of the council the plan to follow in order to defeat Malaga in the election.

Felefele on this occasion gives the impression she needs an assurance of love from her husband, Faleasa, who has not spoken to her for the past several months. Faleasa, acting like a typical male chauvinist, ignores Felefele. He proceeds

to issue instruction to the chiefs about how to vote when they get to the booth.

Despite Faleasa's irresponsible behavior as a husband, Felefele and her children serve a breakfast of cabin biscuit and hot chocolate to the chiefs. It makes Faleasa very proud. Again, not a word of gratitude does he say to Felefele and the children who have provided him loyalty and love.

In Fathers and Sons, Turgenev presents Bazarov as deeply entrenched in similar disinterested attitudes. Bazarov is a nihilist who devotes all his time and energy to his studies, and he thinks that the working of human minds is not much different from that of a frog. In a deliberate overstatement, he approaches everything with exact scientific objectivity and maintains that human feelings and concepts should be viewed as nonsense, or as only so much weakness in the human body. This is further evident when Bazarov, after breakfast one morning, inquires persistently about Pavel's past, whereupon Arkady, in a sympathetic tone, explains that Pavel, his uncle, while in his youth, was a "remarkably handsome person who made women lose their wits over him" and provoked men to call him a fop (Turgenev 115-135). Arkady, further, adds that Pavel is a man who won fame for his daring feats and dexterity in athletics. Even though every woman in the country was at his feet, he once met an enigmatic noble lady who could never give herself to him entirely. For quite some time, after a prolonged affair, the mysterious lady grew tired of him. She left him,

but memories of this unrewarding affair haunted him. Even more, he bemoaned his loss, and subsequently resigned his position in the army and retired to his brother's farm.

The narrative of Pavel's life, though punctuated with what seem like heroic deeds for his accomplishments while in the military, at least in the judgment of Arkady, does not please Bazarov, who simply dismisses it as a sojourn of misplaced energy, which could have been put to better use. It is, as he names it more precisely, the "weakness of human body" (135-155). When Arkady in keen interest shares these stories of accomplishment with Bazarov, Arkady is shocked to learn that Bazarov does not consider them important at all. Bazarov in mockery calls them a symbol of weakness. This is absurd.

Mersault, on the other hand, cannot be marked as absolutely void of human sensibility because in evaluating his relationships with other people we find his dealings with them marked by mutual acceptance. He becomes friends with Raymond, the pimp, and further entertains friendly relationship with Salamano and his dog. He befriends Celeste and Emmanuel, whom he meets for the first time. At one point, he helps to restrain Raymond's hot temper when they meet the Arabs on the beach (Jones 21).

Two examples might persuade readers to affirm Mersault as strange: Marie, while at the beach one afternoon, starts to mark Mersault as different; perhaps he is perplexed by the

memories about his mother and by his employer's indication that Mersault is strange because of his lack of ambitions.

And from Mersault's point of view, if one goes beyond the observation of his behavior to take into account his expressed reflections, one finds that he is occasionally aware of being apart: conscious of a need to justify himself to his employer for having taken two extra days off; feeling that he is being judged by old people at the home. (Jones 22)

Mersault, however, in spite of getting on well with the Massons whose beachhouse they use, nevertheless, remarks on some of Masson's odd habits like eating at odd hours of the day. These instances are significant and related. For it is only when judgment is passed on Mersault by readers, either explicitly or implicitly, that his experience is marked as different. Judgment implies adherence to a norm or value and the common denominator of the judgments actually or seemingly applied to Mersault is social convention: the expectation that one should cultivate ambition or behave appropriately at or following a funeral. On the other hand, the type of behavior that Mersault censures is behavior that is automatic (Camus 35-55). When asked by Raymond at the first meeting to join him for a meal, he, with little thought to the matter, responds by immediately joining Raymond in his little apartment. He ends up writing a letter to an authority on behalf of Raymond. This could require legal expertise, but Mersault does it with little reservation, almost unthinkingly. The spontaneity aspect evident in Mersault's action shows his lack of planning ahead. In fact, Mersault responds to

situations which arouse his human interests without much thought given to the consequences. Mersault's behaviors parallel some of Faleasa's own behaviors; for example, when Filemoni, Sau, and Vaelupa visit Faleasa at his house, he continues to ignore them, although Filemoni addresses Faleasa directly, calling him by his name.

The contrast of specific behaviors exhibited by central characters of the three novels makes additional commentary necessary. The experiences portrayed in the lives of the main characters presented in respective plots are probably identical with the philosophies these literary works embrace, or seek to examine.

Using Friedrich Nietzsche's cognitive, noncognitive metaethical philosophy, it thus seems proper to ask if the central characters in The Stranger, Pouliuli, and Fathers and Sons are cognizant of their actions. If so, it would be argued

that rationalists are they who are cognizant either psychological, or epistemological rationalist, like Spinoza, who believes that it is possible to have a *a priori* truth, truth not dependent upon contributions of experiences. It is therefore fair to accept rationalism in one of these senses and to reject it in another sense. A psychological rationalist, like Socrates, argues that humans act in conformity with their beliefs.

In the latest twentieth century metaethics, many a cognitivist or rationalist reject rationalism in epistemology, he shares with the traditional rationalist the fight against arbitrariness in ethics, against skepticism, conventionalism, authoritarianism, and emotionalism, but he does so without appeal to a *a priori* principles orientation. (Wilcox 12-15)

The protagonists of Pouliuli, Faleasa Osovae; The Stranger, Mersault; and Fathers and Sons, Bazarov, could be perceived in light of their respective behaviors as ideally noncognizant of things they do. The characters, respectively, therefore, do not recognize the bad effects of their behaviors. As this rationale may validate the behaviors of Faleasa of Pouliuli, Bazarov of Fathers and Sons, and Mersault of The Stranger, it further suggests protagonists embracing existentialism as a mode of thinking, capable of being egocentric.

Turgenev precedes Nietzsche, the father of nihilism, who observes that humans are obviously conscious of every little thing that goes on in their bodies, or of the details of the interacting of persons' bodies with our physical environment. Indeed, he observes as much, but he goes on further to argue that we are not aware of what is intellectual, affective, volitional, or experiential; he argues emphatically, that we edit, invent, interpret, simplify, and organize what we allow to appear in our consciousness:

... [We] immoralists have the suspicion that ... everything about ...[an action] that is intentional, everything about it that can be seen, known, "conscious," still belongs to its surface and skin -- which, like every skin, betrays something but conceals even more.

In all seriousness: the consciousness of our thinkers is somehow touching and evokes reverence, when today they still step before consciousness with the request that it should please give them honest answers....

...[What] we experience and absorb enters our consciousness as little while we are digesting it (one might call the process in psychation") as does the thousand fold process, involved in physical nourishment -- so called "incorporation."

...[The] thinking that rises to consciousness is only the smallest part of all this -- the most superficial and worst part... the world of which we can become conscious is only a surface and sign-world, a world that is made common and meaner; whatever becomes conscious becomes by the same token shallow, thin, relatively stopped.... (Wilcox 16-17)

The above statements of doubts about consciousness are in alliance with the ideal expressed in the non-cognitivist phenomenology. One of these sets of quotations may be explainable in terms of the other. Similar to the point of the non-cognitivist phenomenology, they cast suspicion on the ability of human beings to grasp enough of reality to make possible a rational appraisal of human values (17-19). This idea is important in looking at the protagonists of the three novels under discussion since they may further validate people's behaviors generally as not capable of being cognizant of things they do.

Mersault, a man without a past, accomplice of baseness, unwilling murderer who lives at the edge of his own nothingness, poses a stark contrast to Faleasa Osovae in Pouliuli (Bree 17). Faleasa was once an extremely traditional leader, culturally rooted in the wealth of *fa'a-Samoa*. He was once responsible for facilitating a productive, highly stratified community in Malaelua, where the livelihood of its

people rested mostly on the decisions and politics created among laws and policies promulgated under the guidance of Faleasa, the revered, senior *alii* (aristocrat) of the village council. The realm of revolt evident in Faleasa, Bazarov, and Mersault connects us to the Romantics; since Pouliuli presents Faleasa almost as an ideal aristocrat, Faleasa Osovae has reached the highest point of self-development and Mersault the lowest. Faleasa has lived a more fulfilling life. He has a big family: children, and grandchildren; he is an accomplished *matai* in the village council of chiefs. He has earned the respect of the council and church where he was a deacon for several decades. Members of his community, like Malaga, Malaelua's representative at parliament, have relied on Faleasa's assistance for success.

Mersault, on the other hand, does not have any family, except Marie, his girlfriend, and his few associates at work. When he was sentenced to die, Mersault showed little emotion, as though he did not care. However, Mersault's existentialist philosophy idealizes the importance of living life to its fullest while alive as there is no belief in any life beyond the grave. Faleasa of Pouliuli believes in life after death--the obvious influence from Christianity.

It is obvious that what is lost during the period that separates Mersault from Faleasa is the ideal of the great personality. The difference of opinion shown in protagonists may suggest the differences in the times when these books came

out. In comparing Camus to Wendt, the latter presents characters of diverse personalities in his other works: The Sons for the Return Home; The Banyan Tree. The Sons for the Return Home, published in 1973, contains the ingredients of the culture clash theme frequently encountered in the first generation of novelists from the Third World. The hero, a young Samoan man growing up in New Zealand, believes the family dream of one day making a grand return to their native Samoa. For one interesting thing, the girl with whom he falls in love assumes that every Samoan male is a sexual expert. In moments of crisis, the boy loads her with all the sins that *papalagi* (people of white origin) ever committed against his people.

Though the girl is sexually satisfied in their relationship, the boy's family do not accept the girl completely because the mother thinks she cannot fit into the *fa'a-Samoa*. On the other hand, the girl's mother blackmails her daughter into not marrying her Samoan lover. Fathers, on the contrary, show far more understanding about the cultural differences.

The girl, encouraged by the boy's mother, upon discovering the girl is pregnant, sends her away to Australia where she would have an abortion. The abortion foreshadows the tragic end of their relationship. The boy returns to Samoa with his family, but he can't fit into his native Samoa. He returns to New Zealand to flee the Samoan life; yet in mid-air between two islands and worlds, his future seems uncertain. (Ross 64-65)

The last episode, according to Ross, brings together an

evocation of Camus's Sisyphus myth and the traditional story of Maui's doomed attempt to penetrate the death goddess. Like Sisyphus, the boy intensely enjoys the beauty of being alive despite the absurdity of existence.

In contrast to The Sons for the Return Home, The Rebel by Albert Camus is an essay about being an existentialist, a very brilliant discourse best suited for the intellectuals. He proposes in a very emphatic tone how an individual could be empowered to live as an agent unto his own free spirit, but it borders on absurdity, because on a practical note, living in alienation could present a serious problem in real life.

In a similar tone, as already explained about The Stranger, the individual is proposed as capable of living in exile amidst all other people, but this isolation presents a big challenge to those affected by the protagonist's behavior, as noted in Mersault. Camus, however, persists in exploiting the dark side of human nature in all his work: The Fall, The Rebel, and The Stranger. The historical periods that Camus is drawing from, the Napoleon and Hitler eras, have passed, but they have obviously haunted Camus in his thinking, when extreme measures, especially in Hitler's era, were used to advance ambitious political ends! Though Camus looks upon Hitler and Napoleon for ideas to explore and though they are not being positively idolized, readers upon reading Camus's work may suspect Camus is seeking to enhance the theme of existentialism from which revolt derives. Existentialism

might have been actualized during post-World War II, the post-colonial era. But Besspaloff observes:

We neither can nor want to renounce what Camus brought us. But we would not have wished to be spared the suffering it has brought upon us. On the other hand, we acknowledge the reward as beautiful: a freedom of view never before attained, really heroic lucidity; a new tenderness for the terrestrial; an unparalleled development of the passion for knowledge; an impetuous conquest of freedom under the multiple assaults of our will to justice; a renewal of philosophy through our questioning our philosophy itself; in poetry and in arts, an era of experimentation in which discoveries are accumulating; a secularization of Biblical ideas and Christian concepts simultaneously reviving atheism and faith; the trial of morality leading to a study in depth of ethics -- there would be no end to the list of these assets. (Besspaloff 17)

But if we consider the liabilities of Camus imitating the idea of these others like Napoleon, who wishes to take over parts of the free world and who wants to control people by them embracing his philosophy, how can we deny the bankruptcy of revolt: society, nations, the world cut in half; slavery, the like of which was unknown in history's contempt for man carried to unknown extremes; a rapid decadence of the love of truth (19)? Existentialism is validated by people when they embrace it; and this, in a way, brings about integration into a society when people live in a more individualistic kind of a lifestyle.

It is reasonable to place Camus in the center of the vast reservoir of knowledge in philosophies like existentialism and nihilism. Camus is implicated as a scholar who picks and

chooses only the strand of philosophies he liked, considering the fountain of knowledge available for him to draw from. Yet, he passionately embraces the theme of a revolting existentialist to focus upon in most of his discourses. Why?

The strand of philosophical persuasion embraced in the life of Mersault, the protagonist in The Stranger, could motivate readers to look into Camus's own life for explanation. Camus's work as an artist, said Germaine Bree, "is a search for truth he felt and which he was attempting to clarify and communicate through literature" (Bree 15). It is the words of Camus which illuminate our dim perception of what life could give us, depending on what philosophy of life we adopt. Bepaloff explains:

Each artist preserves deep down in him a unique spring which, throughout his life, feeds what he is and what he says. I know that for me, this spring is in the world of poverty and light I lived in for a long time. (Bepaloff 19)

The opinion of Bepaloff explains how Camus's work depicts events he experienced in real life.

Throughout a spectacular career, which peaked with the award of the Nobel prize in 1957, Camus did not forget that he was once a lonely child. Life was bleak with his having grown up in part of Algiers traditionally affiliated with poverty. With his brilliance of wit, recognized early on the struggle of childhood, like Odysseus of Ithaca who grew up in the rocky terrain of an isle, Camus's early childhood difficulties provided an opportunity to develop in him a stout character to

equal the life quest he pursued (Herzberg 15). Odysseus grew up to become a great warrior; Camus became a critic of his day. The latter's intellect was sharpened by the physical difficulties of his childhood and, subsequently, was enriched by rigorous university training, which prepared him for his role as a social critic. His fame has no boundaries as his work has been translated into many foreign languages, which gained him a huge following in all parts of the world to read about his philosophy of existentialism.

When Camus wrote The Stranger, he had already perfected in his critical mind, an instrument, that realism which is called "cryptic" to distinguish it from naturalistic realism. Germaine Bree, editor of the article "An Explication of The Stranger," further explained:

Objectivity with Camus does not strive to create an illusion of reality, for it is precisely the real which is being questioned. It strives, rather, to give the sensation of the fragmentation, the incoherence of a world which has, so to speak, lost its nuts and bolts. Camus wanted to show an alienated subjectivity by letting the character depict himself through acts which do not express him. (Bree 18)

The latter part of Camus's definition of objective realism poses some contradiction: For how does he, in clear conscience, depict a character in acts which do not express his real personality? This idea is almost nonsensical, except we need to be reminded that it is in what purports to be allusive, existentialistic, dogmatic infusions found in Camus's literary characters that set fire to minds of curious

readers who seek earnestly to find value and meaning in Camus's writings. Could it be that readers are missing the mark about Camus's literary creativity? Or, even more succinctly: Is Camus posing a riddle about the reality of human experiences? If so, are we missing the point, then, because we are blocking out existentialism as new ideas because of our personal prejudices against new truths Camus is trying to share?

Mersault, in The Stranger, poses extreme challenges to Christian thought, but before launching into Christian sentiments, it is well to note how Nietzsche proposes a possibility that could be used while dealing with obvious contradictions in Camus's work:

[A]ccording to Aristotle, the law of contradiction is the most certain of all principles, if it is the ultimate and most basic, upon which every demonstrative proof rests, if the principle of, every axiom lies in it; then one should consider all the more rigorously what presuppositions already lie at the bottom of it. Either it asserts something about actuality, about being, as if one already knew this from another source; that is, as if opposite attributes could not be ascribed to it. Or the proposition means: opposite attributes should not be ascribed to it. In that case, logic would be an imperative, not to know the true, but to post it and arrange a world that shall be called true by us. (Wilcox 17-19)

The work of Nietzsche parallels Camus's argument in great detail. This suggests Camus might have studied some of Nietzsche's work since Camus was heavily engaged in philosophy.

Camus, apparently, ventures into new frontiers of human

knowledge not merely to repeat the obvious, but, as a critic, he confronts us with a new narrative about Mersault as an advocate of existentialism since he thinks this kind of experience could be found within the general perimeter of our human experience. This new narrative challenges our personal bias. Could we then, as readers, excuse Camus as being misunderstood as we do Ivan Turgenev whom readers find difficult because of the Nietzscheism that infuses his writing and is embodied in Bazarov of Fathers and Sons? Or, is it when readers oversimplify their reactions about these authors' works and regard them as bordering absurd which gives them very little value in meaning? Nietzsche does believe in truth and human greatness; readers have to reserve judgment until they can understand Nietzsche's philosophy on human values. The same argument can be said about the main characters of The Stranger, Pouliuli, and Fathers and Sons. We must resist passing judgment on them until we feel we have searched deeper beneath the surface of the obvious. Though Nietzsche is easily affirmed on the greatness of science, scientific method, and the scientific spirit, he is also convinced of the greatness of the senses as a source of truth. Wilcox claims that Nietzsche would be best understood in relation to senses and truth in the following:

Indeed, it might be a basic characteristic of existence that those who would know it completely would perish, in which case the strength of a spirit should be measured according to how much of the "truth" one could still barely endure or to put

it more clearly, to what degree one would require it to be thinned down, shrouded, sweetened, blurted, falsified.

How much truth does a spirit endure, how much truth does it dare? More and more that became for me the real measure of value. Error (faith in the idea) is not blindness, error is cowardice. (20-25)

Nietzsche celebrates wisdom, insight, knowledge, honesty, and conceiving reality as it is--according to Wilcox's own assessment, of which little is intelligible, unless readers may be willing to assume some fairly strong sense of what is thought by Nietzsche to be truth. So do these statements manifest Nietzsche as having embraced truth, wisdom, knowledge, and the like as matters of personal strength? As this may seem to affirm the depth of Nietzsche's philosophical orientation about human nature, truth, and reality, it is inevitable for students of literature to conclude that the same could be said about the works of Camus, Turgenev, and Wendt. Because Ivan Turgenev's experiences, as evident in his work, are products of different culture and period; Albert Wendt, similarly, writes about celebrations of life and culture from another completely different point of view of a modernist, who is introducing new ideas into his traditional Samoa.

It is my contention that Wendt, like Turgenev and Camus, should go through the refining process of readers analyzing and criticizing his works, so that Wendt's literary creations can be rated among some of the great literature. Students of

literature should not oversimplify the complexity of ideas interwoven in the work of Wendt; he is as an artist who strives to fashion strands of ideas into meaningful plots to create an intelligible, timeless narrative of his own. For example, Wendt is challenging traditional minds about Samoa by introducing Faleasa, who feigns madness, as an alternative to traditional ways of resolving problems within a Samoan community.

But, we, as students of literature, must understand some of the political situations which motivated some of the ideas expressed in Camus, Wendt, and Turgenev. For an example, the presence of the French in Algeria for over 130 years has put Algeria through civil wars that claimed countless lives. In the context of foreign rule, Camus is making a statement in his work that there is always a quest for individual solidarity, if only those in power had tolerance to allow individuals equal sovereignty to exercise their freedom of choice. For example, the individual who opposes government should be extended the equal protection of the law. Although Camus's treatise is mostly philosophical in substance, it, nevertheless, suggests the implications of proposing a realm of coexistence where a dissident individual could be recognized in his equal rights to disobey the existing government. Essentially, Camus is implying personal revolt against government as theoretically possible, upon mutual recognition of the rights to rule, and, by the same token, the

rights of those being ruled. This premise, though dating back to earlier scholars of government like Jean Jacques Rousseau, however, was applied recently in nonviolent resistance movements by men like Mahatma Ghandi and Martin Luther King, Jr., who believed in the rights of dissenting individuals in using nonviolent means for overcoming injustices (Billings 51). Injustices come in different forms, and they could be misleading if individuals impacted do not have the courage to speak up against oppression. Camus, as a proponent of solidarity of an existentialist, does not present this theme with hope to apply this noble principle exclusively to Algerians. Instead, his passionate belief in this doctrine of individual sovereignty, which speedily translated to literary rhetoric at a critical era of political unrest (1950-60s), rightfully belongs to all people. So, like Mersault of The Stranger, who is exercising his freedom through living as an existentialist, Faleasa of Pouliuli and Bazarov of The Fathers and Sons should be given equal protection for living their lives as an existentialists as well.

The world was experiencing major turmoil: civil rights movements in 1960s were taking their toll across the United States when millions of African Americans, assisted by many Anglo-Saxon Americans, were fighting for equality. India, for 130 years under British rule, was emerging as an independent nation, with Mahatma Ghandi, their leader, espousing the non-violence approach to getting rid of the yoke

of British white supremacist policies (Billings 51). On a more personal level, as we relate the precept of individual freedom to people individually, Faleasa Osovae of Pouliuli is exercising his right to live an individual life free from oppressive forces like we find in individual nations such as India, Samoa, Algeria that were breaking free from oppressive rule of the colonial powers, like England and France. The ideal struggle for freedom, as evident in historic events alluded to above, points out how the individual strives to find individual freedom at all costs conceivable. People value their freedom.

With more keen intensity, Algeria was throwing off the shackles of the bondage of France, which had ruled them for approximately a century and fifty odd years. The emergence of independent Algeria is another credit to the United Nations which encouraged all foreign powers to relinquish to indigenous people of various third-world countries the power to design their own political destinies. Advisory assistance should be provided by former colonial powers, nevertheless (New Zealand, Gov't Doc. 1-5). The phenomenon was further evident in Fiji of the South Pacific, where the British had previously ruled the colony. Western Samoa, similarly, situated to the immediate north, was slowly gaining independence from New Zealand. New Zealand was previously assigned under the December 17, 1920, mandate from The League of Nations, to look after Samoa until she was found suitable

to be made an independent nation. This objective was only hoped to be accomplished at the discretion of the two countries. Western Samoa did not become independent until June 1962 (Siers 1-8).

It would seem unrealistic to present existentialism as the most suitable form of lifestyle which all humans may embrace. In conservative places like Samoa, extreme forms of freedom could infringe on the rights of the community as a whole. However, upon considering the political turmoil of the time, when these great minds were observing the evils of tightly structured governments which took away immensely from individual sovereignty, one cannot help but suspect that these great scholars, Camus and Wendt, respectively, were promoting this ideal only as an option to provide the oppressed human soul an exit from the tight fist of oppressive governments. Existentialism wills the individual to power. Camus is arguing against political propaganda as implemented in Algeria, and other places, because oppressing government aims to limit individual freedom. This strain of philosophy is better evident in The Rebel, and even in Faleasa Osovae, the existentialist rebel of Pouliuli by Albert Wendt.

As I see implicated in the character of Faleasa Osovae, the right to exercise personal freedom is essentially another theme the implied author is getting at; but the author, probably, is overreacting to the political climate of Samoa in the 1960s, when individual freedom was not a precept that was

taken seriously by Samoans. So, I think, to draw attention to the importance of individual freedom, the implied author of Pouliuli finds it necessary to tell a story that is compelling in order to capture the attention of people. For political propaganda to sell, it must carry the strength to touch hearts of readers; therefore, Pouliuli tells a narrative of Faleasa, a *matai*, 75, who woke up one morning, and decided to feign madness as a strategy to resist cultural transformations encroaching on his village of Malaelua. Faleasa, while exercising his individual freedom in staging a fight against some other individuals in the village, because of their involvement with corruption, is thus perceived by his colleagues in the council of chiefs as setting himself above the council. Faleasa is becoming extremely individualistic in his efforts. This is when the narrative turns into a power struggle between Faleasa Osovae and some other institutions of the village: the church and council of chiefs. He even turns against his own family in making a point about his individual freedom: He neglects his wife, Felefele; abuses his children, and even his grandchildren who look upon him for leadership.

CHAPTER VI

THE IRONY OF FALEASA'S EXILE

E TOGI LE MOA AE TAOFI LE AFA

(FALEASA IS A FAKE)

When Faleasa sets himself up as an alienated snob by keeping away from his family, his potential for drastic changes should not be immediately discounted, considering how powerful an aristocrat he has been during his active years in the Malaelua council of chiefs. His silent exile within his village, where he comes in contact with his people, makes him a suspect of future troubles. It is not dignified for him after abdicating his office of a *matai* to linger about because his physical presence in Malaelua inhibits a more natural course of social development that Malaelua as a village could have taken. The Faleasa family would have found it less formidable to proceed with the choosing of their next *matai* if Osovae had not been loitering around. It is not culturally correct that he should be seen any more in Malaelua, for he is encroaching on community affairs. Faleasa's behavior is best defined in Samoan: *E togi le moa, ae taofi le afa*. (His behaviors, since he turned mad, have in essence, branded him a fake.) In fact, he does not wish to relinquish the political authority he held while he had the Faleasa title.

Faleasa's unexplainable dilemma parallels King Lear's tragedy. Upon being willing to divide his empire among his daughters, Lear strangely insists upon being treated as a king

with all ceremonies whenever he visits any of his daughters' homes. Is it not only natural that when a king gives away his kingdom and office that he should no longer, then, look upon himself as a king? Lear divided his throne after his disloyal daughters flattered him with superficial expressions of their love. Ironically, when Lear visits his daughters, subsequent to the division of his throne, the daughters no longer provide him any of the provisions he was accustomed to before as a king. Alexander Leggatt notes it as follows:

From the beginning there is tension in Lear between the desire to surrender -- 'while we unburdened crawl toward death' (I. I. 41-42) -- and the desire to cling to power, authority and love. Yet in clinging to these things Lear violates them; Richard II gives away his office; Lear split his down the middle. (Leggatt 72-75)

Like King Lear, Faleasa has given away the title which has given him the privileges he previously had enjoyed exclusively. He is, therefore, no longer a *matai* (chief); however, as Faleasa Osovae realizes the loss of ceremonies he once had capitalized upon as the sole *ali'i* (aristocrat) of the Faleasa *aiga* (extended family), he is haunted by the loss. He begins to receive his meal very late in the day. Moreover, the quality of food served to him drastically declines. It irks him greatly, but he does not want to face up to this reality. On one occasion, it takes poor Solimanava, his favored son's wife, to have been physically abused by Moalua (her husband) to alert the family to how badly neglected Faleasa has become. Moalua, therefore, promises to kill any

one of the family that treats his father in a bad way any more.

Faleasa, upon observing Moalua beating Solimanava almost to death, is convinced of his son's unfailing love for him. (What a way to illustrate one's love at the exclusion of all others' worth, even their safety.)

The occasion of Malaelua's parliament member visit brings the reality of Faleasa Osovae's uncertain position in the council of chiefs even closer home to conceited Faleasa. During Malaga's *momoli* (presentation of food gifts) to his electorate in presence of the council of chiefs, Faleasa's physical presence in the meeting does not matter any more. In fact, the whole *usuga* ceremony, where *matais* acknowledge all those present in the house, proceeds with the absolute non-mention of Faleasa Osovae in attendance (Wendt 120-127).

When Malaga distributes the gifts (bottles of whiskey), again they overlook Faleasa. If Faleasa was not believed to be sick, then, he would have been served the first *ava* (drink) and also given money and even one of the whiskey bottles. It is, of course, humiliating for Faleasa, though feigning schizophrenia, to realize he is definitely being treated as a sick, senile old man; he no longer is thought of as capable, of wielding any power in the affairs of Malaelua. When festivities of Malaga's *momoli* end, Faleasa quietly returns to his lonely *fale* (house) when he is confounded with his observation that even his own friends, like Laaumatua Lemigao,

are no longer paying him serious attention. But the incidents affirm how quickly Faleasa has been pushed aside as a useless, mad man. The whole village of Malaelua, even its neighboring allies, who have come for Malaga's *momoli*, have now witnessed in person his demoralized, physical stature. As this thought enters Osovae's mind, it infuriates him, but he hardly can do anything now to change his image. For his feigned senility strategy to have its best effect, he should persist at it until the right moment to implement the next phase. But for Faleasa Osovae to persist at his game plan (upon realizing the problems he has wrought upon his family) is undoubtedly perceived as his mark of courage to be able to withstand the pains his family is suffering. This is arrogance, but he believes in it as a valued trait for a true leader to possess, according to the myth he has recounted about his forefathers (115).

Faleasa is not admitting to the reality that he is acting mad as a spite against his own family. Faleasa's quest for freedom is getting to the stage of its being mere vanity, for he has lost his objectivity about his real meaning in relation to all of his children who have looked upon him for guidance and protection. *Ua ola i fale le laau a Nafanua.* (Faleasa's cunning knowledge which should afford his family protection, now, unbeknown to him, is hurting them badly instead.)

Moalua, the young son, is chosen over Elefane, the older son, who should, according to customary practices, be made the

sulisoso'o (next heir) in place of Faleasa Osovae. It is customary in Samoa to give the title to the oldest son, as a way of showing him respect, before the younger one takes on a title. The tension between the two brothers is escalated as their wives, respectively, take sides with their husbands. The damage Faleasa has wrought upon Malaelua is not restricted to his immediate family.

Like an active lava, stealthily, he has successfully ousted Filemoni, the village *faifeau* (pastor); he does it through deliberate maneuvering of the senior orators of the council to frame Filemoni for embezzling church funds. The Malaelua council sees this as a heinous sin for a man of God to have committed; they ignore Filemoni's sincere apologies, when he seeks to absolve himself of the allegations. The council, in fact, is unanimous in ousting the *faifeau* (pastor). Ousting Filemoni, the *faifeau*, even after he makes a formal apology in public to the church's general membership, sets an unprecedented practice, only because Faleasa wants Filemoni out.

Laaumatua and Moalua, the new leadership of the council Faleasa Osovae has put in place through behind-the-scene maneuvering of the experienced *matai*, now have carried out the exact platform for reforming Malaelua according to the blueprint Faleasa has masterminded. This unprecedented maneuver is in accordance with leadership tactics Faleasa has aspired to imitate; it is the essence of true leadership mirrored in

the myth his father had shared with him when he was only a young boy: "A true leader should have indomitable courage" to do what he believes in, without fear (115-117). This is evident in Faleasa's behavior when Felefele, upon learning of Elefane and Povave's plan to move away to Povave's aiga because of disappointment over Moalua's appointment, pleads with Faleasa to intervene and stop this from happening. Felefele believes Faleasa should be inclined naturally to stop Elefane and his family from going away, out of his love, as a father. Faleasa "adamantly" ignores his wife's motherly concern over the matter; he dismisses it, rationalizing that Elefane "is behaving like a spoiled child," thus showing his real weaknesses in "not being suitable for holding the Faleasa title" (29-40). His ideal freedom, camouflaged as madness, has been lived out through methodical demolishing of all social institutions which, in their respective spheres of operation, have defined the deeper meaning of Faleasa's existence. For instance, his aiga (extended family) is now experiencing great difficulties holding together as a cohesive unit. Faleasa's title was once synonymous with dignity, but has since been made a laughing matter, since matai and the community now look upon Faleasa Osovae becoming a mad man as a punishment from God for his arrogance and dictatorial style of implementing rule in Malaelua.

The church, which Samoans regard as the epitome of the community spiritual life, has been usurped with malicious

design by Faleasa to oust his wife's nephew, Filemoni, the ordained *faifeau*. It is inconceivable that a powerful *matai*, if he is in his right frame of mind, would ever remove a blood relation from a *faifeau* position. This is one position in Samoan thought for which all influential *matai* seek to bring into a good, honest ethical person. In most Samoan villages the church is the center of the social, spiritual life of its people, irrespective of what denomination it may be. Remember, Filemoni has exorcised the *aitu* (as he supposes) from Faleasa in the indignant manner used out of love and duty. But Filemoni does not suspect that Faleasa is only feigning madness. Under Faleasa's persistent disguise of madness, he demolishes each institution one at a time, until he is done with them. This marks his arrogance, which he believes is part of his individual rights that should be exercised in protecting his village Malaelua.

At another level, Malaga, the member of parliament from his district, has gained national recognition through having returned in three consecutive terms to the parliament--through Faleasa's help. Ironically, Faleasa is now undermining Malaga's chance for a fourth consecutive victory by plotting against him. In the course of facilitating his plan, Faleasa has become completely oblivious of the ethics he had previously embraced that elevated Malaelua in the eyes of its political rivals. Now he has stooped so low, even to trickery. For instance, Malaga, Faleasa's blood relation, has

confided in Faleasa about his worries of rumors of a new candidate opposing him from the Malaelua electorate; Faleasa firmly assures Malaga not to be bothered with this tale because upon his (Faleasa's) return to Malaelua (after a meeting with Malaga at Apia), he will do everything within his power to stop whoever it may be from running. Little does it occur to Malaga, he is talking to Judas, the traitor. Faleasa, indeed, in all attempts, has sought to secure Malaga's dethronement from parliament. But Malaga, not having suspected Faleasa, acts confidently, considering he has made another personal visit to Malaelua especially to consult Faleasa about the progress of the campaign. Again, Faleasa leads Malaga to believe that it is only a folktale: "Malaga, you will win this in style," assured Faleasa (130-131).

Credulous Malaga, having placed his trust in Faleasa, finds personal comfort in the knowledge that Faleasa has gained back his sanity just in time for the ballot. Contrary to this, Moalua and Laaumatua, through manipulative designs issued by Faleasa, are to meet secretly with all *matai* of Malaelua and explain to them completely about allegations of the fund embezzlement Malaga is implicated of. The *matai* are to be told exactly of the misleading stories about Malaga's claim that he was attending night school in New Zealand. If the stories of Malaga having attended night schools at New Zealand are untrue, then he is not fit to be a parliament representative for Malaelua. Also, Malaga was not living an

exemplary life, having lived off a series of women while in New Zealand. The impact of these severe allegations, once they take hold of *matais'* moral ethos, would turn them naturally against Malaga. Traditionally, *matai* are thought of as men of principle and would, therefore, seek to vote a more upright candidate into office over someone who is given to flamboyancy.

The *faifeau*, having been persuaded to preach strongly against hypocrisy, adultery, and dishonesty, seriously hint against the vices Malaga is believed to have lived. Faleasa and his associates believe that Malaga will not make it in parliament if their plan materializes. Malaga, blindfolded by the sweet talk and trickery of Faleasa carefully engineering the ballot, is, in due time, shocked with the reality of his own ignorance. He has, of course, placed all his eggs in one basket. How could he trust Faleasa, a mad man, who has suddenly turned sane and normal on the election day? Could Malaga not suspect Faleasa's behavior as fake? What exactly are Faleasa's motives for his behavior? They wonder.

The election day brings a major surprise to all *matai*, upon seeing Faleasa gaining back his sanity, holding a *lotu* (prayer) with his family in the morning--something he has not done since he turned mad. Most *matai* conveniently interpret it as a sign of some heavenly sanction for their secret plan. Immediately gathering in Faleasa's chiefly *fale* (house), the council of chiefs (those who endorse the plan) have "hefty"

morning tea consisting of crunchy cabin bread and *koko* (hot chocolate). Only true aristocrats could afford to do this on short notice.

A moment before Faleasa casts his vote at the booth, he makes a brief speech to a group of *matai* who assemble in front of the school veranda while awaiting their turn to cast their votes. Faleasa ends it with a prayer he offers, personally. This marks his *mana* (power). In spite of all people regarding him as a madman, he has this general knowledge and has reasserted himself at a crucial moment before voters cast their ballots. He is a leader "not afraid of doing what he believes to be right," a trademark he has inherited from his ancestors (116). As Faleasa projects into the election outcomes, he amuses himself in his thoughts, knowing that Malaga, their incumbent parliament representative, shall soon no longer enjoy the luxuries of the wealth he has acquired through the years he has represented Malaelua. Physical evidence of personal wealth are the new pickup truck he now drives and the state house Malaga owns. Only the elite members of the Samoan society could afford this (most members of the parliament belong to this group). Upon Faleasa's unexpected visit to Malaga's home at Apia, he marks how Malaga has quickly acquired all material conveniences that now flourish in his home. Faleasa is cognizant of the contrast found between Malaga's home life and all Malaeluans. Though Faleasa has come to love Malaga as a son, revelations of

Malaga's corruptions have become too overwhelming for Malaeluans to bear.

Malaeluans, of course, are true Christians, who expect their representative at parliament to be a God-fearing individual. For Faleasa, personally, the knowledge of Malaga's unbecoming behaviors has proven devastating, even if the council could be convinced to dismiss it as mere unfounded gossip, stemming from human jealousy. The reputation of Malaelua is tainted badly with Malaga implicated in embezzling government fundings to sustain his way of life at Apia. Malaga, Faleasa's cousin, whom he has grown to admire greatly because he is the only one in his *aiga* who went to New Zealand to be educated, has now become a monster in his appetite; he no longer lives within the confines of the laws. Faleasa, upon closely scrutinizing the problem, is convinced that only he, Faleasa Osovae, the man who once placed all his trust and faith in Malaga, should assume responsibility of ousting him from the parliament. However, upon Faleasa confronting Malaga in person about the allegations, Malaga, without any moment of hesitation, declares them all lies. But the evil of what Malaga had done is too much for the *mana* (sacred power) of the Faleasa title to bear. Malaga must be removed from parliament.

Faleasa Osovae, the senior *matai* in the council of chiefs of Malaelua, desires his absolute individual freedom above everything else. To his disappointment, however, he

recognizes how impossible it really is to actualize a complete departure from all the social institutions such as his family, council of chiefs, and church. These institutions essentially have provided him a social context in which he had thrived as a *matai*. Without them, Faleasa Osovae may find very little meaning in life.

Obviously, Faleasa may live like an existentialist, but he cannot realize true happiness as a *matai* who is expected by his family to provide them leadership. Becoming a *matai* in Samoan thought is a lifetime commitment, which only the chosen individuals would thrive at. Realizing a true meaning of being a *matai* can only be achieved when the appointed individual observes conventions that safeguard his office. Of course, Faleasa Osovae must conduct himself as a *matai* of the Faleasa family in dignity and honor. Apparently he cannot deceive himself by living under the camouflage of madness. He must be honest to himself to realize fully what happiness really is.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

In Wendt's introduction to an anthology of Pacific Literature, he states that

like writers elsewhere our Polynesian writers are explaining us to ourselves and to one another, and adding details to the faces, organs, hopes, and dreams of each of our cultures. They are helping us to understand who we are, where we came from, and where we might be going, by singing their own individual songs, by plotting their own paths through the Void. (xvi)

This statement mirrors, at least in my opinion, the mind of the implied author of Pouliuli in the way he is exploring some of the human sentiments that are marked as anti-*fa'a-Samoa*. For instance, when Faleasa Osovae of Pouliuli is set up against the council of chiefs of the village of Malaelua, a reader would be compelled to ask: Is the implied author suggesting a new idea, that is, the individual is supreme over the community? This may be the immediate reaction of a seasoned reader of Pouliuli because of the awareness about the *fa'a-Samoa* (Samoan Customs) and the importance traditionally placed upon community, which makes the individual needs secondary. The community, in the minds of traditionalists, is an important entity! It is, of course, supreme.

But it is probably, therefore, more fitting to argue that the implied author of Pouliuli was at a stage in his career, when he felt the urge to explore with new ideas. This change of heart is symbolic of the author having gained maturity and

complexity in his art. The author, through Faleasa of Pouliuli, is exploring the theme of living as an existentialist under feigned madness; but at the same time, using it as part of a strategy to resist cultural transformation within the setting of the village of Malaelua. An existentialist is someone who neglects responsibilities to his families and community (The Random House Dictionary of the English Language 501). He wants to live a life where he is expected to be loyal to nobody; he wishes to live according to the desires of his own mind. Obviously Faleasa, the protagonist of Pouliuli, is borrowing some ideas from Albert Camus's existentialist philosophy. For in his interview three years after the publication in 1974 of The Flying Fox in a Freedom Tree, Wendt describes his attitudes at the time: "I thought the individual must be supreme when I wrote the Flying Fox" (113). This fact as noted by Valerie O'Rourke is particularly significant, as it "represents a view in stark opposition to the precepts on which Samoan society is structured" (55).

But it also represents a dilemma which the implied author of Pouliuli is wrestling with, that is, he recognizes the validity and the importance of an individual person as a precept which Samoa may adopt as a society; yet Samoa as a community is not sold on it as a compelling precept. As Chris Tiffin explains: "The Polynesians [sic] view is less flattering to the single soul, for whereas there may be value

in the collective, the individual is subsidiary" (95-98). Faleasa Osovae's individual effort of stopping the corruption observed in Malaelua is better illustrated by his planning the removal of Malaga as Malaelua's representative to parliament, and replacing the minister, Filemoni, for using church funds of the village for personal use. Being a minister, Filemoni is expected to be more virtuous, which could set him above other people. This is the ideal image of a *faifeau* in the Samoan community. Filemoni, obviously, failed.

Faleasa's monumental effort to correct the corruptions in different places of his community resulted only in violence and more tension. A message, therefore, is implicated: No one single individual could resolve problems within a Samoan village all alone. Faleasa, instead, should use the established social infrastructures within the village, like the council of chiefs, as a vehicle to remedy the corruptions. Though Faleasa's effort is applauded for its honorable motive, it is not culturally amiable for any one person to try to correct problems within the Samoan community all alone. Because when Faleasa Osovae acts alone upon the most difficult work of ridding the Malaelua village of corruptions, it sends to the council of chiefs a mixed message. Faleasa is more omniscient and omnipotent than the collective minds of chiefs put together.

The crisis Faleasa Osovae ventures through, upon trying to resolve all these big problems alone, has only proven

overwhelming. He failed! Upon Faleasa having realized the extreme magnitude of the problems, he resolves to use violent measures; for example, Moalua, Faleasa's favored son, upon seeing Malaga approaching, interposes himself with a bushknife and kills two of Malaga's men. This incident happens when Malaga comes back to seek revenge on Faleasa.

Faleasa, apparently, underestimates the importance of calling upon the council of chiefs, which is the most stable, respectable institution that could easily bring Malaga's corruptions to a stop. The individual attempt of Faleasa could be interpreted as usurping the council's collective ability, which is foundational to maintaining the stability and dignity of the community of Malaelua. The collective wisdom of the council of chiefs carries more weight and validity in solving problems than Faleasa acting alone.

With obvious social complications, Faleasa Osovae, the protagonist, is certainly clear as reiterated by Olaf Ruhen:

. . . Pouliuli leaves us a Samoa that occasionally struggles in the lax coil of a serpent tradition, but not too forcefully, for tradition provides comfort within its restrictions, a comfort and security valid, that is mainly for conditions that have vanished, even though the tradition has apparently adjusted to a degree of modernity. (41-44)

Even further, the individual struggle of Faleasa to correct all the community problems of Malaelua introduces another theme of the novel: Traditionalists within the Samoan context of thought would take more time in resolving problems slowly;

the implied author of Pouliuli presents Faleasa Osovae as a character torn between the old and modern ideas. Faleasa is presented as ignoring the Samoan traditional methods of resolving differences in what could be a more elaborate and gradual process. Evidently Faleasa, the protagonist, wants to fix problems very quickly, without giving himself ample time to look into the problems more carefully. This is a modernist approach, which is contrary to a community based approach that entails a gradual and, occasionally, a time-consuming strategy. Village people, like the council of chiefs in Pouliuli, would probably employ the less structured approach, which is in stark contrast to what is believed by Faleasa as a cost-efficient and pro-immediate-result-oriented method. The irony in the self-righteous attitude of the protagonist, Faleasa, to end Malaga's career as a member of parliament who represents Malaelua, introduces another level of the quest that the implied author wishes to eradicate from his traditional Samoa; that is, Samoa, as a society founded in community values of love, dignity, respect for each other, must be rid of corruptions (Chadwick 155-161). The narrator, who appears as omniscient in her telling of the story, presents Malaga tainted with other great mistakes he has committed in the past, and even now in the parliament. The narrator, who seems somewhat detached from the events, tells about spending government money for personal use. Unfortunately, the implied author is not so sure himself of

how to resolve corruption. This feeling of the author's uncertainty could be ascertained from his lack of know-how to do it. The measures Faleasa, the protagonist, uses to rid Malaelua of Malaga's corruptions shows his failure to weigh possible consequences carefully in calculating adverse side-effects that result from his attack on Malaga. When Moalua and his supporters defeat Malaga in the election, through using trickery, it shatters the unity of Malaelua. Consequently, Malaga and his men seek revenge on Faleasa, which escalates to a major war between Faleasa's family and Malaga with his men (Wendt 17). Two of Malaga's men die during the fight.

The implied author staging this scenario in the plot is, in my estimation, playing the role of the devil's advocate. He is not advocating violence as an acceptable means of resolving human differences in his Samoan community. Rather, he is making a statement about Samoa being infiltrated with new ideas. As traditional Samoa, however, is espousing modernistic ideas, conflicts will inevitably result. At times, when practitioners of cultures fail to use proper care in merging the old and new ways of doing things, chaos may be the only logical consequence. This has been the case with Faleasa responding to new things happening in Malaelua.

Implicitly, the author is leading readers to believe that an individual who chooses to live as an existentialist, in a traditional Samoan community, would not thrive as a person.

This is noted with ridicule in the case of Faleasa Osovae, 75, a reputable member of the council of chiefs in the village of Malaelua. As Chadwick said, Faleasa

behaves in a Lear-like attempt to give up through feigned madness the responsibilities of his chiefly position, while still maintaining the privileges and even power of that position. Through this situation ... the novel Pouliuli -- postures itself as an allegory. It sets up a microcosmic version of the confrontation between traditional Samoan society and encroaching Western values and practices; a confrontation embodied in the figure Faleasa, and especially in Faleasa's responses to the corruptions that he discovers or comes to acknowledge within his own familial, religious, and political institutions. (158)

In the church, he acts against the pastor Filemoni, whose "wife and children were intolerably spoilt, condescending, disrespectful of the *fa'a-Samoa* (Samoan way), an embodiment of the worst characteristics of the town where his wife was born the daughter of a government clerk" (159). Though Faleasa is intent upon ridding his village of individuals believed to be imposing negative influences on the ideal lifestyle of Malaelua, he is, I think, even more at fault when he is oblivious of using proper conventional ways of doing things within the framework of the social infrastructure of the established church, as an institution, with its own set policies for resolving problems. Faleasa had chosen to humiliate Filemoni in public.

Is the implied author intent on condoning Faleasa's unorthodox ways of doing things as presented in Pouliuli within the ideal framework of the *fa'a-Samoa*? It would not be

so, for Laaumatua, one of Faleasa's most trustworthy friends, whom he goes to for advice, admonishes:

The individual freedom you have discovered and now want to maintain is contrary to the very basis of our way of life. Have you considered that? For over thirty years you, Faleasa, and few other *matai* have led our village, and your leadership, as was the ancient practice, has been based firmly on the principle that you exist to serve others, to serve the very people you are now branding as cannibals. A good leader doesn't live for himself but for his people. (159)

While Faleasa Osovae is presented as a quasi, free spirit who methodically stirs up the peace within various institutions of Malaelua, it allows him further a better stage for acting out his individual quest for more personal freedom, as camouflaged in feigned madness. His every effort of resisting Westernized influence is, in the observation of Chadwick, "used as an excuse of using his innate, personal freedom for expression of his own self-interest, his placing of his own desires above the interests of his village and family" (159).

The inclusion in the plot of Pouliuli of the mythological character, Pili, provides Faleasa Osovae, the protagonist, with a representation of his own plight. In a subtle manner, the author is presenting Pili, one of the ancient legends, as a form of justification for Faleasa's weird behavior. Pili, the ugly lizard, has been dropped onto earth by his father, Tagaloaalagi, the supreme creator, who begat him with Sina, a mortal beautiful woman. Through the assistance of his three

friends, Tausamitele (insatiable appetite), Lelemalosi (Strong Flight), and Pouliuli (Darkness), he goes up to the Ninth Heaven; and, after proving himself valiant upon overcoming different trials from his father, he blackmails Tagaloaalagi into restoring him into a handsome young man. While with his father, in a daring quest, he brought away with him a live amber, which is believed (according to this legend) to be the source of fire, and a war club, which made him the strongest man in Samoa. When Pili grows older, his children ignore him, but fight over the inheritance. So Pili vanishes from Malaelua. In a similar way, Faleasa reckons that, like Pili, he has been swallowed up in a similar darkness while trying to make sense of his situation at old age (Ross 68).

In an attempt to make sense of his odd situation, Faleasa is reminded of the crazy old man whom his father had welcomed into their *fale* as an honored guest after he was found lying on the church steps. While living with them, the crazy old man had performed weird incomprehensible tricks, like stealing things from neighbors; and Faleasa also remembers the odd circle of black and white pebbles which strangely appeared one morning in their front yard. They could only suspect these creations to be the old man's, but they would not dare say anything bad about the old man, because his dad believed him to be an important person.

At this level of Faleasa's ordeal, we could suspect the implied author is introducing the crazy old man's story as a

way to complicate the narrative of Faleasa. It is not just a story about the Samoan village confronting cultural transformation, which Faleasa, the old chief but the hero, is trying with all his might to resist, but it is a story that may very well be about any group of people resisting cultural transformations as they see them encroaching on their valued way of life.

The narration, as interspersed with flashbacks about Faleasa's relationship with his father, "a ruthless tyrant and womanizer, who had taught Faleasa never to show any weakness," (Ross 68) establishes the implied author as a skilled teller of tales. Wendt acknowledges throughout the novel, the value of his oral traditions by incorporating some of the legends into the main strands of the Faleasa narrative. These legends are deemed relevant for the main plot. They reinforce some of the behaviors Faleasa acts out which are like those of his very egocentric father; therefore, Faleasa would act the same way, too.

The overall tone of Faleasa's struggle to resist cultural transformation in Malaelua suggests that the implied author is lamenting the loss of traditional Samoa, which is consumed in an influx of new ways. In most cases, new ways introduce their own institutional frameworks for expediting their intended goals. For example, Christianity, which is presented as an acceptable part of the social-political status quo of Malaelua when Christianity doctrines were accepted by

Samoans, ushered into the traditional, social-political infrastructure of traditional Samoa new institutions, like youth organizations, which are believed (at least from my own personal point of view) to do good for people generally. Yet, traditional Samoa had always had in place the *aualuma*, *aumaga* (untitled men and women institutions) and even the council of chiefs, which is the remaining ancient institution still thriving within what is deemed as modern Samoa.

Comparing Faleasa Osovae of Pouliuli to Mersault of The Stranger and Bazarov of The Fathers and Sons adds more complexities, and hopefully meanings, to the value of existentialism and nihilism as ideas which Albert Wendt is proposing as possible substitutes for a communal life like the Samoan society. Perhaps, it would not be fair to say nihilism is looked at sufficiently in substance in Pouliuli, although I have discussed it as part of the dialogue. Yet, I can guess it will one day show up in Samoa, especially since existentialism is seriously considered in Pouliuli by the leading author of Samoa.

The two philosophies marked as foreign in my discussion suggest them only as vital contributions into the intellectuals' circle of the Samoan society. Obviously, they have come to Samoa via the European experiences of Samoa through colonial and imperialistic influences. The same experiences were seen in other third-world nations alluded to in the discussion, like Algeria, Fiji, and India. Wendt

acknowledges Camus as his mentor, who has provided him the voice which he has adapted to fit the needs of Samoa. Yet, as Wendt continues in his writings, it becomes more apparent that Camus has certainly gained a disciple in Samoa, not only in style but in themes that have become significant parts of plots explored in Wendt's works. They are very similar to issues Camus had written about in his works. This is evident in Pouliuli.

However, a message is clear from the plot of Pouliuli; that is, existentialism is not a respectful way of life for a *matai* of a family. Like Faleasa Osovae, he has too much to lose as a *matai* (chief) should he choose to adopt a new style of life that contradicts the chiefly code, which is integral to the *fa'a-Samoa*. The chiefly code which validates the position of a *matai* within his family context provides a set of rules that the *matai* should follow.

If a *matai* is found in violation of the set of rules that safeguard the privileged position of a *matai*, he would soon be penalized by the natural consequences of his own behavior. He should, therefore, vacate the office of a *matai* for a more respectable candidate who must meet the approval of his peers and especially his family. This is the compelling message of Faleasa Osovae's story.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

THE THEORY OF BECOMING A MATAI

Different circumstances prevailing at the time when a *nofo* (entitlement ceremony) is facilitated may dictate exactly how to progress with the necessary entitlement ceremony. However, it is traditionally expected of a well intended *nofo*, where all *sulimoni* will concur, to consider three factors as explained below. Every Samoan family being conscientious of pride, dignity, and privileges associated with each *suafa matai* (chiefly title) a family owns, chooses from among their *taulele'a* (untitled men). The selection is not restricted to the untitled; others currently holding other chiefly titles are equally considered. The most suitable candidate is selected according to the following: 1) the candidate should be an heir to the title: blood relationship, or consanguinity; 2) the candidate should possess and have demonstrated understanding of genealogical knowledge of his family. This is equally important because well grounded knowledge of family genealogy may determine access to other titles and lands within the *nu'u* (village) or the *itumalo* (district). 3) The candidate should demonstrate the ability to give unselfish service to the family, either by laying claim through parental services or *tautua* (personal services). A Samoan saying captures the essence of the third criteria: *O le ala I le pule o le tautua*. (Diligent individual services pave the road to attaining chieftainship) (Tiffany 42-56).

The family must perceive the candidate as capable of rendering services to the family when *fa'alavelave* (affairs) occasionally call upon the individual to perform these duties. Samoans place great emphasis on the third criteria, since they regard the individual ability to help families and community as a mark of inner strength, integrity, and individual dignity. It is one practice which could elevate the *suafa matai* (title holder) among his peers. Failure of the *matai* to live up to expectations of families and the village council of chiefs is interpreted as a mark of personal weakness, usually translated in formal expression: "*E mativa ma lima vaivai*" (He is a weak vessel). Whereas when a *suafa* (title holder) proves himself valiant in the eyes of his peers, and, of course, among family members - they would say: "*E lima malosi: E malu ai Aiga*" (He is capable: He brings dignity to the family). It is imperative to realize the cultural context which Faleasa has gone through in becoming the holder of the Faleasa title. For, apparently, he has been chosen above all other candidates, who were equally valiant. Being a *matai* is a life-time commitment to one's family and the community at large.

This belief surrounding the chieftainship system, indeed, is true of the *fa'a-Samoa*. Every individual is expected to live an honorable life to bring glory to his family. Such a practice prevalent among aristocrats is similar to a system embraced by lords of manors who perform special favors for

members of their castles in ancient Britain. What motivates these favors in generous deeds is the reinforcement of loyalty among subordinates to their lords. The same can be said of a good Samoan *matai*. Beside the ability to render service, Samoans expect the *suafa* (title holder) to demonstrate his *agava'a* (capability), his cleverness and knowledge of the intricacies of Samoan lore and oratory. But with Samoa adapting to modern universal standards (incorporating the value of university education), other skills and abilities may be implicitly included in the concept of "*agava'a*." A candidate must have been formally schooled at a university or its equal in the standard of Samoa; a candidate with advanced training would be deemed more favorable over those with lesser formal training (Shore 66). Given the cultural theory explained above upon which being made a *matai* is predicated, Faleasa Osovae's feigned senility is thus perceived in the eyes of his community as a matter of no small consequence. The *suafa* (title) which Faleasa Osovae holds in his family avails him the exclusive privileges to claim all benefits and honors associated with his role. Wendt presents Faleasa as a very eloquent spokesman for the Faleasa family in the years he has held the title; he wouldn't have risen to such height in the social, chiefly hierarchy of Malaelua if he were not a *matai*. It is taboo in a Samoan culture for an untitled man to speak as a representative of his family in the council of chiefs.

Therefore, when a suitable candidate is appointed a *suafa*, a formal conferral ceremony is in order. While in the past, "taking a title may have been settled or forcibly been taken by warfare," and even in modern Samoa, the many disgruntled unsuccessful claimants at the Lands and Titles Court may argue that a title which is rightfully theirs is being wrongfully taken by someone less deserving of the honor. A title is thus laid upon the chosen *suli* (heir) by the descent group.

To use the definition of Shores: A title in Samoan thought is simultaneously a name, a position or place in a council, a collection of rights and powers summarized by the word "pule" and finally a "side" of the person who assumes it; ... the possession of a title also transforms the holder from untitled status to that of chiefs -- from secular or "common" status to one imbued with *mamalu* (dignity), *paia* (sacredness), *pule* (authority), and *afio*, a formal term indicating stately or majestic presence. (67)

To maintain traditions and style, becoming a *matai* must follow distinct stages. The descent group should first convene; at times it may require several *talatalaga* (extended family meetings) before they can arrive at choosing a proper holder of the title. The descent group will next announce their decision (It is becoming a norm with the advent of modern technology to announce it through radio broadcast, only to be officially formalized with a standard notice printed in the Savali cassette, the official government newspaper that is distributed to all *matai* registered with the Land and Titles Registry).

For the descent group to maintain formality and ceremonies the newly chosen *matai* is entitled to, they would next approach the village council of chiefs and their allies to prepare for the *saofa'i* (entitlement ceremony). The word "*nofo*" assumes the right of the newly elected individual to be accorded a place or seat in the council. The official *ali'i taeao* (high chiefs' formal presentation of *ava* and speeches) and *usufa'aaloalo a tulafale* (orators' formal presentation of *ava* and speeches) during attendance in the entitlement ceremony, symbolize their acceptance of the chosen individual to rank among themselves, the council of chiefs (Tiffany 36-37). The newly installed *suafa* will then receive his first *ava* (drink) as a symbol of the council officially recognizing the individual's change of name. He is the first amongst all *matai* present to receive his *ava* (drink).

It is generally alluded to by wise orators of paramount status that a Samoan *taule'ale'a* taking on a chiefly title provides for him a new setting in life equal to that of Jacob, whose name was changed to Israel through angelic intervention in the Bible. In this connotation, a *matai* is expected to be a man of up-right character who seeks out the best for his *aiga*. The first *ava* drink of the *nofo* (entitlement ceremony) is enhanced by much oratory usually delivered by senior orators of the council, whereupon they bestow blessings rightfully accorded to the *nofo*. Chosen from among the *tulafale* (orators) of the village, the one who prevails after

fa'atau (formal deliberation) amongst themselves, presents a speech fitting only for the occasion. This honor is a privilege all orators dream of realizing in their lifetime. When an oratory presented by a *tulafale* is considered not up-to-par for the event, it becomes a mark of mockery for the *nofo* (entitlement ceremony). More importantly, it brings much shame to the council, which may verbally chastise the orator and in near future occasions discourage the same orator from exercising such a privilege.

During the *saofai*, the new chief and his family, both immediate and distant *aiga* (extended families), will provide abundance of foodstuffs in kinds: mounds of taro, roasted pigs, cooked chickens, *pisupo* (corned beef), chop suey, fish, kegs of beef, to be presented to the council of chiefs and all guests present. Fine mats will be distributed to all chiefs present; the ceremony is considered incomplete without it. Distribution of fine mats, however, should be conducted according to the ranks of *ali'i* (aristocrats) and *tulafale* (orators) of the village present. Only when chiefs of the host village are satisfied would chiefs of their political allies be presented fine mats and money. This is a standard procedure for food and fine mat distribution, but it is always altered by the newly installed *matai*, who may be inclined to give equal shares of everything, if he has abundance to share. *Faifeau* (ministers) of various denominations of the village are not forgotten during this food distribution. When the

council of chiefs finds the food presentation by their host plentiful, it is thus believed to be a sign of blessings in store for the newly installed chief.

The *matai* of the *aiga* is solely responsible for the family communal lands; he would see to it that the lands are equally distributed. Land ownership in Samoa, called the *pule* (authority, power), is carefully separated from use-hold rights in land. The *pule* of land rests with a kin group, which the holder of the *suafa* (*matai* title) assumes along with the title administration duties associated with Samoan traditions. Land management may not necessarily require much advance real estate expertise since duties and responsibilities of administering family estates are usually settled within family councils. In keeping with traditions, the *matai* of each family allots each family member (which is usually married members) a section of family land to cultivate for personal sustenance (Keesing 250-254). Every responsible *matai* who performs his duties well would desire members of his family to be productive in personal effort, so that each household unit within his family at large could realize economic independence. But economic independence is, of course, predicated upon personal diligence. Self-reliance is the ultimate goal because it relieves the *matai* of added responsibilities, like worrying about members of the extended family.

The theory of ascending to chieftainship in Samoa is provided to give a more understanding about the important role a *matai* plays in a Samoan community. Hopefully, this theoretical framework places Faleasa within his designated position so that he can be looked into more closely as a significant, genuine cultural artifact within his own narrative.

APPENDIX B

IDEAL SAMOAN MATAI

With Faleasa Osovae acting irresponsibly, it is necessary to look at a model *matai* within the Samoan cultural framework. For an example, Tupua Tamasese, III, a great aristocrat who headed the *Mau* (Samoa's struggle movement for freedom), had demonstrated a noble, dignified life of a true *matai*. Initially when the *Mau* movement began to gain national prominence in 1920s, the New Zealand colonial government decided to enforce their policies, which could easily trap most leaders of the *Mau*. Tupua Tamasese was one of its targets. Having carefully put together the troop of 35 military policemen on two trucks and a van one early Saturday morning at 5 a.m. the military police headed out to Vaimoso to arrest Tupua Tamasese in his home. Upon the police approaching the house of Tupua Tamasese, his family and supporters rose to resist, and perhaps this situation could have developed into a violent confrontation, but Tamasese in his usual way spoke: "*Filemu*, (peace) Samoa." He knew that if he resisted in any violent measure the police arrest, it could mean many lives of his people lost in an uprising against police. The latter were well equipped with weapons (Field 147-152).

Upon capturing the chief, they took him away to Vaimea, the penitentiary. On December 6, 1928, when he appeared before Woodward on a charge of contempt of court, and also on

charges of resisting arrest, he was sentenced to six months in jail. The authorities then decided to send him to New Zealand where he served his sentence. The authorities were hoping that while he was at New Zealand they could convince him of the goodness of New Zealand and thereby change his mind to side with them. His wife and children later joined him in January 1929. During their visits with him once a week, they were never allowed to be alone, nor permitted to speak in Samoan. Their conversations, even more, were required to be held in English (52-54).

Another significant person who visited Tupua while in prison was Sir Maui Pomare, the former Minister of the Cook Islands in the Reform Government. He told Tupua that he had not come to offer advice; his own heart would do that, but

I came but to see your face, and so I looked into the countenance of a tama au Ariki -- (Cook Islands) a prince indeed -- lineal descendants of kings where genealogical lines reach back into the . . . twilight of fable -- deprived of hereditary titles, degraded, deported and imprisoned. (166-167)

Sir Pomare's awareness is the exact reflection of all Samoans' feelings about their leader's imprisonment. Samoans, however, delighted in knowing that Tupua Tamasese was acting honorably at all times, having co-operated with the authorities in doing all he was asked to do.

Another visitor was Berendsen who talked with Tupua Tamasese for few hours. Later a version of their conversation was recorded:

Tamasese was tempted just as Jesus was tempted in the wilderness. He asked Tamasese, did he wish to have the appointment of *Fautua*, (Advisor to government); could Tamasese go to Wellington to meet the Prime Minister; would Tamasese like the government to arrange for him to have a look around New Zealand? I am thankful to say Tamasese stood fast and his reply was, "I am a prisoner and am not able to do any of these things. When my sentence expires and when I am released from prison, then I shall please myself what I do. I do not wish to ask the government for anything I want, and I do not accept anything from the government. I shall remain steadfast in the *Mau* of Samoa." (165-166)

Tupua Tamasese's conduct under these events of enormous pressures represents a true *matai* who does not easily give in to temptations which might offer immediate physical pleasure, like foods, and even material goods which he could have acquired had he accepted the invitation to take a post of prominence in the colonial government. Tupua, certainly, was not thinking just for himself. He knew that his families and all Samoan folks back home were counting on him. He loved them. Faleasa Osovae, a hero who attempts to resist foreign ideas "infiltrating his ideal community of Malaelua, is probably taking upon oneself a task too big for one man to do. While attempting to correct the corruptions about Malaga, the member of Parliament of Malaelua, soon recognizes the problem as dangerous and, indeed, too complicated. He summons to work his son Moalua's wreckless help, which proves even more tragic when he retaliates to defeated Malaga and his men who came upon Faleasa to seek revenge. Two of Malaga's helpers are killed; when Moalua, immediately reacting without thinking,

violently attacks almost indiscriminately with a knife.

Having served his sentence, Tamasese returned home to Samoa where he immediately resumed full responsibility of the Mau. The movement had since gained national importance to the extent of every village being represented by their *matai* and even all able untitled men who could attend meetings held at Vaimoso, the Mau headquarter. Upon release from Eden, New Zealand, penitentiary on 4 June 1929, he arrived back in Samoa 27 June and brought more life and vitality into the movement once again. However, the life of peace he anticipated to live until the independence for his country was not fully realized; mortality had ended sooner than expected. During a peaceful demonstration on December 28, 1929, a group of Mau supporters were marching through Apia, when police, who apparently had prepared for a more aggressive confrontation, opened-fire indiscriminately at the Mau (160-162). Tupua Tamasese, III, fearing for the lives of more senior chiefs at the head of the march, ran forward while calling out "*Filemu, Samoa,*" (peace, Samoan), "*Onosa'i,*" (patience). Unfortunately while he was coming forward to calm down the crowd, he was set up to be an easy target for police who were firing at the crowd with machine guns.

As one eye witness recorded: Tupua Tamasese arrived at the "Ifiifi Beach Road" junction as Waterson began using the machine gun. Frightened Mau supporters were still walking into the intersection, exposing themselves to machine-gun and rifle fire. Dressed in a white jacket and white lavalava, carrying a rolled up umbrella and

holding both his arms high in the air. Tupua Tamasese walked into the open calling out in both Samoan and English, "*Filemu Samoa, peace Samoa.*"

Standing virtually alone in the open and on occasion with his back to the police station, Tupua Tamasese was dangerously exposed to the hail of bullets. Over the noise, his strong, clear voice could be heard by both the police and the Mau as he called for peace. With his arms high in the air, his actions were anything but aggressive. As he made his desperate appeal, McMillan, Cahill or Spark - we will never know who, nor whether they were acting on orders - aimed a Lee Enfield rifle at his back and pulled a trigger. The .303 bullet struck him in the upper right thigh, chewed its way through the muscle and shattered the femur and pelvis. Tupua Tamasese collapsed to the ground in pain.

Su'a, Faualo and Tufuga were standing nearly when he fell, and they ran to his aid, despite the continuing rifle and machine gun fire. Tufuga was the first to reach him. "I tried to lift up Tamasese's head, and as I was doing that I was hit in both legs."

Su'a tried to shelter the wounded chief with his own body and was hit as well. So was Faualo. Two others, Migao and a youth, Tui'a, ran after the other towards the chief and were seen by Avea, the women in Ifiifi Road, as they were hit by what she said was machine-gun fire. They were dead within minutes. Tupua Tamasese was lying on the inland side of the lamp post. (165-175)

Eventually the firing stopped as the police realized they were not, and had never been, under attack. Tupua Tamasese was aware that his end was near, and fearful of the consequences of both his death and the events of the day, he made a dying appeal. It represents perhaps the finest moment in the history of the Mau:

My blood has been spilt for Samoa.
I am proud to give it.
Do not dream of avenging it, as it was

spilt in maintaining peace.
If I die, peace must be maintained at
any price. (170)

Tupua Tamasese, III, died at 8:45 a.m. on Sunday, just over twenty four hours after he was shot. Tupua Tamasese, III, and the others were buried on Monday at Vaimoso on land by the main road under Faumuina's *pule* (power). Around 3,000 people attended the simple funeral services. Tupua Tamsese, III, had lived a life of a true chief who doesn't live for just himself, but who is concerned about the welfare of his people. Most surely Tupua Tamasese, III, demonstrated a true leadership which embrace traits of a seasoned, refined aristocrat. He was brave, steadfast, loyal, unselfish, visionary, and, above all, he believed in peace which he exemplified in his noble life.

The life of Tupua Tamasese, III, models not only a *matai* who is concerned for his own family, but as a chief, he stands for all others who count on him for leadership and help. He is a great model.

The implied author of Pouliuli, staging Faleasa as an instigator of violence in the incident which led to the defeated Malaga seeking revenge on him and Faleasa family, makes an impression about the author's feelings towards corruption. He is saying that corruption, in consequence, could pay a very dear price, no matter who, and whatever circumstances that may be. Therefore, avoid them at all costs.

The plot of Pouliuli in this level of reading, turns Pouliuli into a parable which relates to real life situations.