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Progress is a comfortable disease : a cross cultural study showing televisions's effects on an American Samoan family

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showing television's effects on an American Samoan family**

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San Jose State University, 1990

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PROGRESS IS A COMFORTABLE DISEASE:
A Cross Cultural Study Showing Television's Effects
on an American Samoan Family

A Thesis
Presented To
The Faculty of the Department of Journalism
and Mass Communications
San Jose State University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Science

by
Andre Hubert Neu
May 1990

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ABSTRACT

PROGRESS IS A COMFORTABLE DISEASE: A CROSS CULTURAL STUDY SHOWING TELEVISION'S EFFECTS ON AN AMERICAN SAMOAN FAMILY

by Andre H. Neu

Advisor: Dr. Dennis Wilcox

This thesis investigates the effects of television on an American Samoan family by contrasting it with a similar Polynesian family in Tonga. Villagers in Hunga, Tonga, have never had television, although they do have radio and occasional videos. People in Amanave, American Samoa, have had television since it was brought into the country as an educational tool more than 25 years ago.

The researcher spent three weeks with each family, noting various traditional cultural activities practiced by the Tongan family and comparing them with traditional activities still observed by the technologically more sophisticated Samoan family. A small, random group of people in both villages was questioned about preferences and values. Based on evidence of continued traditional activities by the Samoans, this study concludes that television's effects there are relatively slight and mostly superficial. An altered use of time, rather than a loss of values, appeared to be the main effect.

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Video won't be able to hold onto any market it captures after the first six months. People will soon get tired of staring at a plywood box every night.

Darryl F. Zanuck
(head of 20th Century Fox Studios)
c. 1946

I tell you what mine authors say.
This king unto him took a peer,
Who died, and left a female heir,
So buxom, blithe, and full of face,
As heaven had lent her all his grace;
With whom the father liking took,
And her to incest did provoke.
Bad child, worse father, to entice his own
To evil should be done by none.
But custom what they did begin
Was with long use accounted no sin.

Pericles, Prince of Tyre
Act I, prologue
William Shakespeare

Pity this busy monster, manunkind,
not. Progress is a comfortable disease:

e. e. cummings

It's a small world, but I wouldn't want to paint it.

Steven Wright, comedian

Introduction
OF TELEVISION AND TIME,
CULTURE AND CHANGE

Television fills more of most Americans' waking lives than any other activity except work. It permeates existence, sifting into people's consciousness like a fine fog even when the eyes avoid it. But television is a commonplace of American life; perhaps half of the population can remember no period without its presence. Such is not the case in all societies, of course. Many developing countries have limited television broadcasting services, and a few have none at all. Once television comes to a country, however, its impact is often a major and long lasting one. Although people in few nations can match the extensive viewing habits of Americans, the siren song of television grows in strength everywhere as its broadcast waves expand. The more television programs that become available, the more people will sit before the set and watch them. But what happens then? Is the time spent watching TV robbed from other activities? And what happens to these other activities? Do they change or cease to exist? Does a primarily oral society fundamentally change after it is introduced to and adopts television?

This study, "Progress is a Comfortable Disease: A Cross Cultural Study Showing Television's Effects on an American Samoan Family," investigates these questions in microcosm by looking at two families in basically oral cultures: the South Pacific nations of Tonga and American Samoa. Tonga is just entering the television age (in fact, the video age is preceding it through the use of VCR machines). Samoa has had television for 25 years. There are, of course, many other differences between the two societies than their use of television, but as will be shown later, these Polynesian cultures were much alike until relatively recently; historians still debate whether the Tongans migrated to their islands from Samoa or the other way around. So, while television isn't the only

distinction between the styles of living in these countries, it is an important one among those aspects setting them apart. By focusing on one older married couple on a small island in Tonga, where life has continued basically unaltered for hundreds of years, and by comparing them with a family in a village in American Samoa, where more frequent contact with modern technology and outside influences has taken place during the past quarter century, I hope to reveal what changes can occur. At the same time, I intend to specifically investigate the effects, if any, of television on a culture. Proving that television changes culture and us with it is a lot more difficult than acknowledging that it clearly has some effect on who we are. It is probably impossible to pinpoint exactly where television alone has modified us, or how. Too many actions go into shaping who we are to be able to isolate any one cause as solely responsible. This examination of a few people in two South Pacific societies attempts to draw a broad picture of daily activities so that readers may more accurately perceive cultural modifications brought about by outside influences.

Ethnographic research was conducted during three-week stays each in the villages of Hunga, in Tonga, and Amanave, in American Samoa, during the summer of 1988. Chapter 1 will describe my observations about life in Hunga. Most of the narrative will cover daily events with little effort made to tie the observations into other studies about either television or culture. Chapter 2 will describe life in the village of Amanave and the same procedure will be followed. Chapter 3 will be given over to comparing the cultures, examining their histories, reviewing pertinent literature, citing references and offering theories about the effects of television and technology on life in those two villages. Chapter 4 will summarize my conclusions. Appendixes will list survey questions and responses, and provide the historical background of television's introduction to American Samoa, which, while informative, is not of primary concern to this study.

The narrative in the first two chapters will be leisurely and often episodic, just as life is in the two settings described. My method here attempts to draw what Van Maanen (1988) calls "impressionist tales," a story-telling procedure that reveals not just the culture but the fieldworker's way of knowing it. Readers, it is hoped, will see what I saw in the manner I observed it. They are encouraged to be patient—patterns will appear—and to enjoy the balmy days and sometimes stormy nights and times of people in the South Pacific.

CHAPTER I

HUNGA, TONGA: THE DOT WITHIN THE DOT

On the island of Hunga, Sunday is the sound of psalms being sung and children being slapped. Voices raised to honor God are joined by a chorus of tearful howls from tots often hit, ironically, to punish them for crying out loud in the first place, which merely increases the cries in both volume and duration. The church is awash with youngsters, from babes in arms to prepubescent teens. The babies, held either by a sibling a few years older or their mothers, are seldom unattended, but they often break free, crawl off under the pews or, if they can walk, wander around until they are rounded up or hurt themselves and start crying. Then one of the parents, almost always the mother, goes to the child and usually tries to quiet it, at least at first. After a few whispered warnings, which never still the infant, the frustrated mother slaps it. The siblings, however, rarely demonstrate even that much patience. They scoop up their younger brother or sister and whack it at the same time as they are scolding it in hushed tones. The slaps ring like shots in counterpoint to the singing.

Except for me, no one in church on this tiny island sees any incongruity between singing to a loving savior while flashing icy anger at a defenseless two-year-old. But, then, in most cultures, traditions are seldom questioned, and slapping children to quiet their crying appears to be just such a tradition. In fact, I knew this was so but had forgotten it. This is my third visit to the island in 20 years, and my second unannounced visit since a two-year stay there as a Peace Corps Volunteer in 1969-70. I'm surprised at how little has changed. On my first return visit, in 1976, I noted little alteration except that the people appeared a bit poorer. This time, the summer of 1988, they seem slightly more prosperous: most of the small homes are now made with lumber instead of thick

branches and bamboo, and are topped by corrugated metal roofs instead of thatched palm leaves. And the islanders' clothes are less tattered. My observations, I later learn, are partly correct: the average income on the island now approaches \$1,000 a year, an amount infrequently amassed 10 years ago. But the improved housing, it turns out, was financed by the government following a disastrous hurricane which toppled most of the homes on the island in 1982. I'd come back to Hunga to rediscover more about this place which was a second home for two years, and to observe how living conditions have changed in the wake of increasing technology. For the most part, though, it appears that technology hasn't pushed very far into this modest land.

Hunga is a minuscule island, perhaps two miles in length, in a nation of 170 tiny islands known as the Kingdom of Tonga. These specks of land together comprise only about 300 square miles of area above the sea. On world maps Tonga is indicated by, at most, three dots, which at least situate it correctly in the South Pacific above and to the east of Australia and New Zealand. It rests about as far south of the equator as Hawaii—a Polynesian cousin—lies north of it. Nearly 100,000 Tongans crowd the inhabited main islands which are divided into three island groups. The top of the three dots represents the northern island group, Vava'u, made up of hilly, volcanic rises of rock. And Hunga is only a dot within that northern dot, invisible like single planets are invisible at long distance, lost in the swirl of their encompassing solar systems, just single dots in the sky.

Some 300 people reside on Hunga, living a measured subsistence life much like their parents, grandparents, great-grandparents and ancestors did as far back as they can remember. Only the introduction of Christianity has altered their daily habits, but the process of planting and harvesting yams, of scouring the lagoon reef for food and tossing about on the ocean in a canoe not much bigger than a man's body while casting for fish—these routines continue. A few paths crisscross the island, but no roads because there are no cars. Although two or three homes have private generators to provide lights, the others

are still lit by lantern. And the only water for drinking, cooking and washing comes from the rain, collected in small cement tanks near most houses. Days are divided between early morning work obtaining food while the temperatures are cool, and less strenuous activities in the hot afternoons. Some activities could take up the whole day— or be scheduled to do so. Building a simple wooden house, for instance. But full days are rarely spent on such a project. Instead, undertakings are broken into three- and four-hour chunks. Between work, the islanders talk. Lots of talk. Talk about fishing, the weather, the pig that got loose and ate someone's yam roots, about the king, about the longboat races, about the *papalangi* (me) visiting the island again. If the Hungans excel at anything, it is talking. And in church, they turn speaking into a finely honed formal art. Although each of the four churches on Hunga has just one minister apiece, each also has a dozen or more lay preachers, members of the congregation who on a rotating basis provide the sermons or analyze the Sunday lessons. They revel in those orations, declaiming in tears of urgency and joy, happy just to be speaking of and for God! The islanders likewise excel at singing, producing a haunting four-part harmony unlike any sounds created by European-trained choruses. Their harsh yet driving singing in church that summer Sunday carries me into a different emotional world, and I smile remembering more aspects of this culture I had dropped back into. The cries of the children, the circling yellowjackets buzzing in through open windows, the sound of a different language surrounding me everywhere, all conspire to open me again to a life both foreign and familiar. And I'm glad to be there.

But being back is confusing. A sense of displacement of time accompanies this return. It has been too easy to get from California to Tonga, and the shift from place to place has occurred too fast. In many ways, the whole country of Tonga could still be in the last century, so seemingly unaffected is it by contemporary existence. More isolated than most islands in Tonga, the island of Hunga is even more unaffected by the march of

time. So to find myself here in a village that barely acknowledges electricity, let alone more recent technological advancements, gives pause to my powers of reasoning. It's as if I had come here through a time machine rather than in an airplane. Yet slowly my mind recognizes and adjusts to what was once familiar. Each thing I recall warms me like an old friend: the raising of eyebrows to indicate agreement; women sweeping the grass to clean around their homes; young boys as well as girls walking unembarrassed hand-in-hand; dogs treated as animals rather than pets and how mean they are when so treated, and young girls and women strolling about in turn-of-the-century dresses (or so they appear) and carrying parasols to protect their brown skin from the white-eyed sun.

The people of Hunga call me either by my last name, Neu (which they pronounced "nee-oo"), or *papalangi*—the European, the Westerner... the white man. It is a word that changes connotation depending on the speaker. I'd heard it used as mere description ("the *papalangi* is coming on the boat," "the *papalangi* told me that he teaches school," etc.) and as threat, a synonym for "boogie man" ("stop your crying or the *papalangi* will eat you"). But whenever I hear it on Hunga, I assume it means me.

In Hunga I stay with Salesi and his wife Eneio. Salesi had been my best friend, confidant and translator when I served there in the Peace Corps and that role continues this visit. In fact, it seems like little time has passed since I last saw him instead of the 10 years it is. Salesi's house, despite its new tin roof, has not changed appreciably. It sits by itself on the sheet of low green grasses that encompasses the village. Salesi's house has the same interior as I remember. The walls are thin sheetboard and flattened cardboard pasted over with pages from 1984 newspapers and magazines instead of wallpaper. The ceiling, made of draped tapa cloth, has gaping holes in several places. (Salesi explains that the tapa hasn't been replaced because the roof leaks.) Branches from a huge rose bush outside the house spread into one doorway and crawl in from above, through the holes in the tapa cloth and in the space between the metal roof and the wooden frame. In

fact, the house frame doesn't fit flush with the roof in many places and vines stream into the place along with daylight. Woven mats cover the floor, which is merely a thick layer of small sea shells and coral. The whole house measures about 15 by 30 feet, divided into two rooms, a main one and a small bedroom occupying the rear third of the structure. A wobbly, round wooden table, a sewing machine and a screened food cabinet comprise the furniture in the front room; two beds and a flat steamer trunk take up the bedroom. Because there are no closets, clothes—mostly Salesi's suit coats—are hung up on nails hammered into the top of the wall frame at various places throughout the home. The house's only window, basically a few slates of wood which can be swung open from the bottom and held that way with a stick, is in the bedroom. Instead of windows, the main room has doors on both long sides and one at the back leading to the kitchen located about 30 feet away. Unless it is stormy, the doors and window are usually open to let in light and also to air out the hungup clothes. Actually, Salesi's home is built as most Tongan homes have been constructed for years—just simple rectangles with thatched roofs. Now, however, the use of lumber allows for more complex designs, L-shaped structures, multi-room homes, some even with kitchens on the inside or in separate but nearby wooden enclosures. Still, no house on Hunga is more than one story high. To find two-story structures, one has to travel to the main islands.

Surrounding Salesi's front and rear yards, which include the kitchen, the water tank and a small wash house, is a fence held up by young tree trunks as posts, and hooked together with wire, boards and old sheet iron slats used to create airport runways during World War II. In the front yard is a huge, hanging vine that produces a hard yellow fruit, the innards of which make a sort of citrus drink. There are also some rose and Hibiscus bushes, and a path leading from one door to the fence. Both the bushes and path are enclosed by empty brown beer bottles, heads stuck deep into the ground, the bottle butts making shiny glass borders. In the rear yard there are four dozen squat banana trees and a

couple of tall breadfruit trees. The kitchen, nestled at the end of a 10-foot canopy of palm leaves, is merely a shallow pit over which rest parallel poles about three feet long.

Coconut husks provide the primary burning material and heavy black iron pots and pans serve as the main utensils. Most food is boiled—yams and plantains, mainly—and some fried in fat, especially fish and doughy hole-less donuts. On special occasions, a large pit is dug four or so feet into the ground and pigs, fish, goats, yams and other dishes are cooked therein, but such meals are not often prepared in the kitchens of individual homes.

Under the kitchen canopy are strips of leaves which are being dried and will be woven into mats, and a large box which houses yams. The water tank, built of cement bricks, is five feet high, about six feet long and three or four feet wide. A tin gutter, connected to the tank and attached on one side of Salesi's roof, collects rain water (and whatever else is on the roof) and dumps it into the tank. Because it has not rained much recently, Salesi is down to his last foot of water, and not only that, the tank leaks. The wash house is four feet square and about six or seven feet high. One washes by filling a plastic basin with water and either splashing it over oneself or standing in the basin and sponging off. Just behind the rear fence outside of the yard is the outhouse, built of corrugated metal and about a yard square, with a cement base and round cement tube as toilet. Although many toilets are left bare, Salesi's has a wooden seat and seat cover and two woven palm leaves as door. The place is certainly adequate during the day but at night the giant cockroaches control it, crawling out of the sludge below in their shining black wingcoats. Also outside of the yard and scattered about the village are towering trees—the majestic mango with its Medusa-like roots showing above ground, the droopy-leafed *Ovava* which gives comforting shade, and of course the tall ostrich-necked coconut trees, with their fruit perched like multiple Adam's apples beneath the leaves. The color tones of the verdant leaves are astonishing, seemingly hundreds of shades of green, some so shiny bright that they reflect the sun and gleam white.

Salesi, 67, and his wife Eneio, 63, have been married for 44 years and have reared five children, four of whom now live on different islands in Tonga, while the fifth works in New Zealand. "It's very quiet without them," Salesi laments one evening. Salesi is nearly six feet tall and weighs perhaps 230 pounds. He is thickly built and has a slightly protruding belly, but one would not exactly call him fat. Solid, like a football lineman, is closer to correct. His movements are firm, dignified—"in touch" with his environment is the new-age jargon for it. His gray hair, though thinning, does not look like it will ever all disappear. Combed straight back, it accents the roundness of his copper face and the soft contours of his cheeks and lips. He smiles easily, revealing the effects of poor dental care: two front teeth and a batch of others are missing from his mouth. Eneio is different from all other adult Tongan women I had ever seen. She is thin. Tongan females seem inevitably to thicken at about age 17, most likely because of diet and changing lifestyles at that age. Before that time, girls and boys perform tasks and play with equal energy; both sexes have sturdy, lithe bodies. But at 17 or so, the young women become sedentary. They stop playing, cease most physical work and, instead, sit inside and weave mats or make tapa, and eat. There may be more to it than that, but no matter how slight they are as youngsters, as women the Tongans are hefty, heavier in many cases than their mates. Eneio, as noted, is a rare exception. Standing about 5-feet, 4-inches tall, she is probably between 120 and 130 pounds, most of it muscle. Her long, narrow face is set off by straight black hair, which would reach to her waist if she did not keep it tightly wrapped, and her smile reveals neat, even—but false—teeth.

In spite of their long and apparently successful relationship, Salesi and Eneio's marriage was not born of love. Salesi tells me that he had been engaged to another woman back in 1944, and had merely sought to break up a romance Eneio was involved in with another man. He did this, he says, because the other man's mother was for some reason badmouthing Salesi. And so, Salesi confesses, "I forced Eneio in the washroom of her

house," which, I assume, means he forced her to have sex with him. Whether that meant "rape," I was not prepared to assume and, in fact, I doubted it did. Once I was told by a young woman in Hunga that she had been raped by a rather notorious young man on the island. Then the next day, she said, she went to his house where he raped her again. Based on her tale, I decided that there was an obvious difference between what was referred to as rape in this culture and in ours. Women in our culture don't go alone into the home of a man who had raped them the day before, as this woman did. Not only did she not formally complain about it (which is true often in the U.S., also) but she placed herself in a position where she might be forced into having sex again. However, she had earlier indicated that she was attracted to the man, who was married, and while she couldn't legitimately be involved with him, if he "forced" himself on her, that would be excusable. What I concluded was that while the sex act the woman described first took place without clear invitation, it may not have been totally undesired. All this was pure conjecture, of course, but it served to keep me from immediately applying my standards on Salesi's story concerning Eneio. Apparently Eneio did not complain, either, as she repeatedly met Salesi in private—not exactly the normal reaction of a woman toward a man who has raped her. But, Salesi says, he had "tarnished" Eneio's reputation and she was sent to live with an aunt on another island. He married her partly out of sympathy (and partly to make himself feel better). Nevertheless, he continued to have relationships with other women until 1958, when, he says, he discovered his mortality, found God and got involved with the church. Since that time, he has come to love Eneio. All this information comes to me unsolicited, and partly because of that, I believe it. But I also believe it because Salesi is among the kindest, most honest and decent men I have ever known, and is one of the few who not only believes he is a Christian, albeit an imperfect one, but who consciously tries to live like one. He is disarmingly ingenuous.

Although the responsibilities of child rearing have ended, Salesi's and Eneio's workdays don't appear to be much different than when I watched them as parents rearing their last three youngsters. They usually arise at dawn, often at the call of church bells which seem ubiquitous here, and begin the day with a brief prayer. If they don't have to leave immediately for church, Eneio goes outside to start a fire, while Salesi turns on the radio for the early news from the BBC, broadcast from Australia over the one Tongan station. Eneio gets water from the cement tank, heats some for tea or cocoa in a small teapot and boils some more in a large pot for yams. Breakfasts are usually that simple: yams and tea or cocoa, with perhaps some fish leftover from the day before. Because there is no electricity on the island, there is no refrigeration, and therefore food has to be cooked and eaten within a day or so. While eating, Salesi and Eneio discuss happenings in the village and whatever is of concern to them at the moment. Currently, their main topic of discussion is whether to sail from Hunga to the main island in the southern group, Tongatapu, on which resides the king in the capital town, Nuku'alofa. The king's 70th birthday is coming up and a huge celebration is planned. Also, two of Salesi's and Eneio's children live on Tongatapu, and they want their parents to come for the event. Indeed, Salesi and Eneio likewise want to go but feel they can't both make the trip; one should stay to look after their house and land. Their reasoning and approaches to going or staying change each day and never fail to provide ample subject matter for conversation between them.

Another item of concern is church-related. Salesi is one of the lay preachers and is responsible for greeting a new minister who will be arriving shortly to head a church on a nearby island. The minister's date of arrival, however, conflicts with the time Salesi hopes to sail south and visit his children. Salesi agonizes over his responsibilities to the church and his desire to see his children and attend the king's birthday celebration. In the meantime, other things have to be done: there are yams to be harvested, new ones to be

planted, vanilla to be picked, dried, and sold, and the leaking cement water tank has to be replaced, which means Salesi has to obtain sand and small coral rocks from the beach to mix with the cement. Also coming up is *uike lotu*, or church week, during which there will be at least three church services a day for a week. Salesi will give the sermon at one of those services and, as choir conductor, lead the singing at most of the services.

While each of these processes is time-consuming, most could be accomplished in a day. Replacing the water tank, though, is a major task, and a description of the undertaking provides a good picture of how work is done without technological assistance. Because there is no sand or coral near the village, which is situated at the top of a 200-foot hill above a lagoon, Salesi recruits some strong young men to go in a small outboard motor boat to the one sandy beach inside the lagoon and bring back the needed material. It takes most of an afternoon to fill the bags and sail back and forth from one point in the lagoon to another. But because there are not enough bags to get all the sand needed, the bags are emptied at the base of the hill and then refilled. After that labor period, then, there are about 30 bags of sand and coral sitting on the dock and a huge pile of sand about 50 feet away that has to be re-bagged later. Also, each bag has to be carried up the hill, but is far too heavy for a man to lift by himself, let alone carry it. Therefore, Salesi gets his horse—guided by a young boy—to pack the bags up the hill, one or two at a time. Each trip takes about 20 minutes. This procedure, which lasts several days, is further slowed by rains that muddy the dirt pathway up and down the slope. One afternoon we come upon four men trying to lift a horse that has slipped and fallen into an erosion-carved ravine beside the steep path. They had struggled for about half an hour but the horse, perhaps in shock, can not untangle its legs trapped under it in the vise-like slit of mud. Salesi advises the men to leave the animal alone. He says that after a while it will get its strength back and stand up by itself. And, as it turns out, that's exactly what happens a few hours later. Once all the sand and coral rocks are brought to Salesi's

house, they are dumped out of the sacks and into a jerry-rigged enclosure inside his yard. This is done for two purposes, one of which is to again make bags available to fill with the sand now at the bottom of the hill, and the other is to put the material in a protected area where other villagers can't make off with it before it is to be used. The new cement water tank can't be built until a government worker, who knows how to construct the molds for it, arrives later that month. But all told, just the preliminary steps of collecting sand and coral has taken over a week's time. As noted, no full day is ever spent on any project, and Salesi puts in between two to four hours a day on this, depending on weather and availability of workers and horses.

In exchange for my helping Salesi lift the bags up to the horse and rider, he helps me go about the village and ask questions. I speak and read Tongan, but not as well as Salesi speaks and reads English. He is my insurance that my questions are clear to those I address, and that I understand their answers. Few people in the village speak, or admit they speak, English, so most conversations are in Tongan. Armed with questionnaires, Salesi and I confront about two dozens villagers of varied age and sex. None of those approached refuse to answer the three pages of questions I had written up (see Appendix A). Most of the questions concern the attitudes of villagers about traditional versus contemporary ways of life. For instance, I ask the men if they prefer wearing trousers or their traditional *valas*—a yard of material wrapped around them like a skirt just below the waist. Although almost all of them say they prefer *valas*, Salesi points out that those who said so were usually wearing pants.

During a questioning tour one morning, we come upon two men butchering a pig, while four others stand around watching. The pig, we learn, had gotten loose and eaten the tapioca roots of one of the men. He got a machete and promptly killed the animal. Now the men carving it up (which did not include the pig's owner) are going to divide the butchered parts among those who gather around it. Because pigs are relatively valuable in

Polynesian society and are seldom slaughtered except when they are to be the main dish for special feasts, I inquire about the seemingly casual killing of this pig. Salesi assures me that the pig deserved to die, even though it is a fat, full grown female with, I notice, milk-filled teats. The tapioca roots are important to insure the food supply of the man whose garden was invaded, Salesi explains. The pig should not have been loose. If it was not immediately killed, it would have gone into other gardens and destroyed more crops. Hence, killing it was the proper punishment. The man whose pig it was will not be compensated, but he will receive some of the meat, Salesi says.

That evening as we are eating dinner (which includes some of the pig), a man walks around the village and, like a town crier, shouts out that there will be a *fono*, or town meeting, the next morning. Repeating his announcement outside homes in different parts of the village until everyone heard it, he urges villagers to attend. Shortly before 8 a.m. the following day, many of Hunga's women and a few men gather in the town hall, a brick building about 80 by 30 feet with louvered glass windows, a tin roof and a cold, hard cement floor. It has no chairs; everyone sits crosslegged on the floor, usually on mats, hugging the walls and leaving the center empty. With Viliami, the town officer, sitting at one far end, the villagers speak across the room to one another, debating the topic under discussion with great eloquence and formality. Following an opening prayer, Viliami reports that he has been told by the village's "noble" that each family in Hunga is to contribute three large yams to be given as presents for the king's birthday. (In Tonga there are 33 "nobles," men who comprise the second level of power, just under the king. Each village in the country is responsible to a specific noble and is supposed to obey his edicts.) Viliami pleads with those at the meeting to supply the requested yams. After several women say they cannot produce the yams because their gardens are poor, Salesi stands and proceeds to chide the villagers. First, he says, the yams had been asked for several weeks earlier yet few people had complied with the request, which dishonors the

village. Just because a family's land is poor doesn't stop families from either giving whatever they can produce or buying the requested yams, in order to fulfill the village's obligation. Also, Salesi complains that it is embarrassing so few men have come to the *fono*, since it is their responsibility—not the women's—to produce the yams. The women, he notes, have been asked to make mats and tapa as presents for the king. After a bit of grumbling, the meeting ends and those men present leave the town hall. The women, however, stay and have a meeting of their own on another topic—illegal housing! A woman from the island, who now works for the government planning office in 'Tongatapu, the capital, has come back to Hunga especially to speak to the women. She informs them that living in kitchens is not allowed. She says that when the government gave villagers money to rebuild their homes following the hurricane six years ago, some people used it to build new, wooden kitchens in place of the outdoor, thatched roof pit-kitchens. But now, several villagers are living in those enclosed kitchens and, she admonishes, that must stop. Assurances are made that such actions will cease, if they are, indeed, taking place at all.

Usually during some part of the day on weekdays and Saturdays, Salesi goes to his plot of land to dig something up and plant something in. It is a daily ritual performed by most Tongan men because they are responsible for growing food, and the country's laws make that obligation formal. Every Tongan male, at age 16, becomes eligible to receive a small plot of land in the village for a home and eight-and-a-quarter-acres of land in the bush for growing food. To reach Salesi's land, we walk out of the village along a muddy path hemmed in on both sides by thick brush, grass and trees. Although there is nothing to distinguish one clump of bush from another, after about half a mile Salesi veers off to one side, locates a semi-open patch of plants and proclaims that it is his. On this land he grows bananas, coconuts, vanilla and the requested yams, known as *ufi*, the meat of which is whitish and closer to potato in taste than sweetpotato. *Ufi* is the most highly

prized of Tongan yams. Good-sized ones measure two feet or more in length and have the girth of a football player's leg. Salesi pulls up 20 yams and puts them in two piles, depending on length. Those under two feet will be replanted. He puts four of the largest *ufi* in a basket woven from leaves, but discovers that the yams stick out of holes, so he stuffs some additional leaves around the basket to plug the gaps, and strips thin branches from a nearby tree to re-tie the basket. That done, he goes off and returns with a dozen yard-long banana leaves. Next he crumples up and burns a batch of dry coconut leaves and one-by-one places the wing-shaped banana leaves on top of the fire for a few seconds. Doing this, he explains, allows the large banana leaves to be used in an *umu*, or earth oven, without their further burning. It also seals them, so that coconut milk can be used inside them to cook with meat, fish, yams and other wrapped dishes. Then Salesi packs the basket of yams and the leaves on his dusty brown horse, and we head back home.

While Salesi is in the bush, Eneio goes to Fofoa, a nearby island accessible by foot during low tide, and hunts for reef food. She returns with squid and some seaweed. That evening we have the squid, some yams and bread, bought at a small store on the island, and the juicy green seaweed, which has a harsh, hot aftertaste.

Most of Salesi's day, when he is not in the bush or packing sand, is spent in his house either reading the bible or sorting vanilla to dry in the sun. The vanilla processing is appreciably easier than husking coconuts and drying and packing it as copra, which was Salesi's chief means of income the last time I visited him. Copra brought about \$80 for a 100-pound bag, but that entailed a great deal of work. First the coconuts had to be knocked off the trees (which can be tricky), then individually husked, cracked open and the meat ripped out in a few large pieces. Next, the meat had to be dried over a low fire in a specially built shed and then bagged for transport into Neiafu and sale to the government. The process took a fair amount of time and physical effort and often meant staying out in the bush overnight or over several days while the copra was being dried.

Bad weather affected both the quality of the coconuts and the drying process. With vanilla, however, the situation is much simplified. The only difficult part is pollinating the flower, which entails brushing some of the powder from one part of the leaf to another. Salesi says his hands are too big and clumsy and shake, so Eneio does the pollinating with a small brush. Once that is done, though, little else remains except for picking the beans, which look much like string beans, and taking them home to dry in the sun in a clear plastic bag--which apparently hastens the process. A small bag—one kilo—of green beans brings \$11. But for the blackened, perfectly dried beans, a kilo earns closer to \$100. Salesi says he was the first man on Hunga to raise vanilla and began planting it when the green beans were bringing only 50-cents a bag. Now others in the village come to him and ask for vanilla shoots so they, too, can begin raising crops.

While working with his vanilla, Salesi often listens to Tonga's one, all-purpose radio station. Radio Tonga is not the simple supplier of music that commonly fills American airwaves. No, the Tonga station gives daily information on boats traveling around the islands, acceptance notices and test results for school students who pass their exams, names of ministers appointed to various churches, church conference schedules, messages from family members to one another, solicitations for money and goods, flight schedules for the airlines serving the country, agricultural information, summary reports of parliament sessions, and birthday and funeral announcements, among other things. I had been used to hearing the funeral announcements on radio when I was in the Peace Corps. They were easy to recognize because a funeral dirge was always played preceding them to get listeners' attention. This time, though, the radio carries an announcement I had not heard before. It is a public service spot about AIDS. A funeral dirge also opens it, followed by a brief statement, in Tongan: "Be careful. Be aware of the AIDS virus. If you catch AIDS, there is no hope." The dirge, then joined by a tolling bell, closes the spot. Additionally, each weekday morning the radio broadcasts a half-hour of lessons

for high schools, followed by an hour of lessons for elementary schools. During the rest of the day it plays music, an intriguing combination of Tongan versions of 1960s American pop songs, traditional Tongan songs and current music from Australia and New Zealand. Truly something for everyone. Although Tonga has a weekly newspaper and a semi-monthly magazine, the circulation of both is small and primarily centered in the southern islands. So, in the Vava'u group and on Hunga, radio is the prime source of information. That point is reiterated to me when villager after villager asks if I remember the landing on the moon in 1969. The reason they ask is so we can recount that event as it took place in Hunga. In the summer of 1969, a group of villagers and I sat around a radio in the middle of a grassy field while the moon landing was being broadcast on radio, and I translated it from English into halting Tongan. I learned the Tongan word for circling something (*takatikai*), like the moon, and sort of got across the idea of Neil Armstrong's "small step for man, giant step for mankind" utterance. It struck me then, and still does now, how far apart cultures can be technologically, one traveling the planets, another barely inching across oceans, while at the same time being bound together as humans and fascinated by the same human need for exploration and adventure.

For Salesi, the radio is his ear on the world. It serves him with as many necessary tidbits of major events as most of us are probably able to comfortably digest, a sort of *USA Today* of the air. For someone living on a relatively isolated island, Salesi's awareness of world events is surprising. His knowledge of the embarrassing current affairs of televangelist Jimmy Swaggart is not as impressive (given the significance of religion in Tonga) as his interest in and familiarity with more weighty matters. "Some news are most interesting," Salesi observes, "like what America and Russia do in their program for the space. Also, I like to know many news of American 'Star Wars,' and I found that Russia tried to stop that program. I don't know why, but I wonder why they try to stop it, and I think in my mind that (it) might be Russia afraid of what America do."

They might defeated Russia in that program. Also, I'm happy to hear the leader of Russia, Gorbachev, is trying hard to make the world peace, and I think he's the man (who) tries the best. I don't know but as I hear the radio I like that news when I hear it."

I ask Salesi if parents listen to the school lessons broadcast during the day. "Not so many," he says. "They just tune up the radio, then they work and do their things. They hear it, but they don't take care, they don't listen and try to find out what is going on or what the program might help them. But it's just the same with every program, like Health Department programs. It's very important program, but just some people they take care of it and they listen, but some people they just heard the program (and) they take no notice at all." He says Eneio doesn't pay attention to radio programs and will talk to him while he's trying to listen to them, even though broadcast in Tongan, as most are. He believes that only those "with sufficient knowledge are eager to hear the radio." What do most villagers listen to? Salesi says islanders listen most carefully for the weather report or, as he refers to it, "the description of the air," in case they plan on fishing or sailing.

Shortly after dawn one weekday, Salesi and I go into Neiafu, the main town in the northern island group, traveling with others from Hunga on a small diesel boat that churns the eight-mile journey in a steady two hours. One could walk that fast, if there were land bridges into the town. Instead, about 20 of us sit in the cabin, on the cabin roof and on the foredeck of this dependable sea-going relic held together with paint and rags. It had plied the ocean back before I first came to Hunga and will likely be operating long after I'm gone. Like Walter Mitty's famous imaginary vessel, it rumbles "ta-pocketa, pocketa" in a soothing, almost hypnotic beat. Traveling with us are baskets of yams to be sold, a large square box to be filled with ice for storing fish, and a bag holding a struggling young pig, which will be killed and eaten. The wooden boat pitches gently in the wind and waves, while villagers comment on the passing scene—a yacht moored on the far side of the lagoon, someone snorkeling near the lagoon's entrance, and the presence of a U.S.

Navy frigate just outside of Neiafu harbor. (We learn later that the ship and its crew are on their way to the southern islands as United States representatives at the king's birthday.) During the early part of the voyage, still within the protective cover of Hunga's wind-deflecting cliffs, I marvel at the tall, chiseled piece of volcanic rock that is home for these people. That this tiny, jagged outcrop of coral covered with coconut and banana trees, wild brush and grass, had been sought out and settled a thousand years ago is simply amazing. Archaeologists have established that the Tonga islands were inhabited at least 500 years before the birth of Christ. And since then, the people on them have lived a comfortable, if occasionally harsh and precarious existence, taking what the land offered and suffering whatever punishment nature sent in the form of violent winds and rains. Little has changed over the centuries, but even now, I doubt that many of the islanders on Hunga, at least, would trade their village for the slick cities of western society.

As we clear Hunga's steep cliffs and get into the choppiest seas, several of the men sitting on top of the cabin lit up cigarettes and one man does something I had forgotten was common: he wakes a sleeping man to ask for a match. Sleep, I had observed during my earlier stays in Hunga, was not sacred. Just because it was three in the morning and you were soundly asleep in your house did not mean you wouldn't be woken without apology by a passing villager who wanted a match. Hungans couldn't understand my attitude when I got angry at them for doing such a thing. I recognized it as a cultural habit, not rudeness or insensitivity, but I asked them not to do it, anyway. Why sleep is not more highly revered is not clear. But it seems that this is so because night and day, work and play, are not so neatly divided on the island as they are in more technological, clock-oriented societies. Although Hungans generally sleep when it is dark, they also nap whenever they are tired during the day. They are not involved in 9-to-5 work where sleeping on the job is looked on somewhat unsympathetically. Hungans also appear to have little trouble falling back to sleep after being woken, so they have slight cause to be

angry about it. The other thing the islanders do on the boat ride that I had also forgotten about was: sing. About a half-hour into the trip, a group of five young males start singing in harmony some soft Tongan tunes. The men are dressed eclectically—tee shirts, Dallas Cowboy and Los Angeles Rams jersey tops, Hawaiian print shirts, polyester jackets, plaid workshirts, and cords and jeans for the younger men, *valas* for the older men. In the cabin below, the women, mostly clad in thin white blouses and long print skirts, talk and laugh and make sure that the canvas cover for the boat's open sides has been pulled down to keep the sun off them. When we dock in the harbor, I notice the array of yachts moored around us, about 30 in all. During my Peace Corps tenure, seeing two yachts a year was a lot.

Although Neiafu is the largest town (actually the only real town) in the northern island group, it in no way resembles anything like a modern city. With a population of about 5,000, it is more closely related to small southwest American and Mexican towns of the beginning of the century. The main street is three blocks long, and is crossed by two other roads which run parallel to each other and join in a wye at the bottom of a slight hill at the harbor. The sidewalks are wooden planks in some spots, cement slabs in others, and raise up a foot to two feet above the gravel roadway which bulges in the center like a couch cushion. Fronting both sides of the street are a batch of small variety stores, many built with brightly painted, thick cement walls so that they are cool inside, the dark plankwood floors smelling of the treated sawdust sprinkled on them to catch dust. No self-serve establishments these; customers tell clerks what items they want and the requested goods are brought to them. Because most of Neiafu has electricity, the main stores (Morris Hedstrom and Burns Philp Ltd.) sell some refrigerated goods, such as ice cream and cold beer. But those who want to purchase alcohol must first apply for and obtain from the government a license which stipulates how many bottles of liquor may be purchased in a year. Some stores are not much more than food stands, offering cold

drinks and pies, or a few fish. The only "modern" sign of business in town is the small video tape outlet. In it, shoppers can wander through the display stacks and pick out whatever video they want to rent, then take the empty cassette box to the counter to have it replaced with the actual tape—just like in American video shops. The selection of tapes, while not extensive, includes many well-known and relatively recent U.S. films and rows of karate movies, which are very popular. Another thing Neiafu has that Hunga doesn't, is traffic. A limited but steady stream of vehicles pours through the town—usually taxi cabs serving the tourists staying at hotels on the outskirts of town, a few large, clunky buses packed with schoolchildren, and a sprinkling of privately owned cars and flatbed trucks. Many of the vehicles are driven by *papalangis*, expatriates who own or manage most of the stores, but a fair number are driven by some of the better-off Tongans who hold relatively well-paying government jobs. The traffic is not so thick as to make crossing streets difficult, but because it is somewhat unexpected, one has to be on the lookout for the odd-zooming car tearing up the dusty roadways. Fortunately, the setting is so quiet that one can usually hear an approaching vehicle some distance away and be amply prepared for its appearance. Overlooking Neiafu, but not visible from the town, are two wide dishes, either radar or satellite, and a radio tower that rises far above the goose-necked coconut trees around it, pulling in and sending out waves from an ocean of a different kind.

Salesi has come to town specifically to buy *sipi* ("sheep"—more commonly referred to here as mutton) to cook for the young men who are to get the sand and coral for him. We go first to an outdoor market, at which sellers display tables of fruit, vegetables, fish and other assorted foodstuffs for sale. He buys three pineapples, walks to another shop to purchase the *sipi* and salt, and to a third to get loaves of freshly baked bread. Before we reboard for the return trip, Salesi decides he wants a sandwich, so he buys a can of corned beef and scoops the whole thing out over two thick slices of bread. It is

good for his stomach, he insists over my protests about its fat content. Our return is subdued. The boat's cabin is crammed with purchases, including about a hundred sheets of lumber that will be used to build part of a new home. Most the passengers sit in silence above deck as the vessel races the sunset back to Hunga.

After returning from Neiafu and attending evening service, Salesi joins a circle of people sitting in front of his house for *po talanoa*, or evening conversation. In the circle are his brother Hakalo, Hakalo's wife, another couple, a middle-aged woman, and an assortment of children belonging to the two couples. They discuss various matters, mostly concerning Salesi's desire to travel to Tongatapu for the king's birthday and the implications of that trip. Salesi says that as much as he'd like to go visit his children, he has been "moved by the spirit" to stay and fulfill his church duties. The conversational scene is duplicated about 50 feet away, where a group of women sit in a circle, likewise talking of events of the day. The women's group is slightly more active than the mixed circle Salesi sits in, however. One woman combs another's hair while they talk, and a third woman cradles her young daughter in her legs and searches through the girl's hair for lice. When the woman finds a louse, she pulls it out along the strand of hair and breaks it between her fingernails. If she finds a louse egg, though, she carefully places it in the back of her mouth and cracks it between her molars. This grooming activity is a common one on the island, carried out repeatedly by mothers with their sons and daughters, young girls with their younger sisters and brothers, young girls with each other, and occasionally wives with their husbands. It demonstrates caring and closeness for women, at least, because I never saw men or boys groom anyone. The fact that most islanders have lice is not because they are especially dirty. Rather it is because their hair, which grows thick and curly, is often kept in place and scented with a highly viscous coconut oil. And although they bath often, they don't really get that oil—which provides a fine breeding base for lice—out of their hair. Even if one person rids herself of lice, the

close sleeping and living arrangements of most families make it likely that the person will soon be re-afflicted.

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Morning comes early in a place where the roosters—never noted for their intellect—begin crowing at 3 a.m. In Hunga, it will not be light for another three hours, and the fine, clear dust of the Milky Way is still starkly visible. But perhaps just for the stupid love of its own sound, one rooster starts to crow, and then, one or two at a time, all those around it join in and continue wailing off and on for hours. By 6 a.m., the church bells toll—first one loud, steady cadence, then another, slightly different in pitch but the same beat, then a third with a faster beat and weaker tone, and finally the fourth, not a bell but a wooden drum, its slower, hollow call much deeper in pitch. The cacophony lasts five minutes or so, until everyone on the island is aware that church is to begin soon. Ten minutes later, the islanders now assembled at their various chapels, open their mouths for the commencement hymn. First one choir, then another whose voices 100 feet away rise and clash dissonantly with the first, and then another, and so on from different parts of the village. But that doesn't end the layers of sound: The crowing begins again, chickens clucking, dogs sounding warning barks, pigs grunting for food, horses neighing in protest of the early morning chill, and babies crying for no apparent reason at all. Suddenly, this once reserved and peaceful island is as noisy as a New York City street corner at rush hour. Paradise lost again.

Attending church, as mentioned earlier, is a family affair but only so far as the church door. Once inside, men sit with other men, women with women, and the children usually—if they are old enough to be out of their mother's or sister's arms—are in an area by themselves. At first I think this is a traditional cultural segregation, because men and women in Tonga do not frequently participate in activities as couples. Salesi has a different insight, however, one which at least applies here. Seating is primarily arranged

by voices, he says, rather than sex. Since the whole congregation functions as choir in most instances, that sort of seating is required. Altos with altos, basses with basses, sopranos with sopranos, and so on, to insure the proper harmony. Nevertheless, it does seem to perpetuate the life patterns I am familiar with on Hunga. As close as Salesi and Eneio are as a couple, they don't walk to church together. Salesi leaves the house ahead of Eneio and doesn't think of waiting a second for her to go with him. Even if they leave at the same moment, he walks ahead rather than with her. A few of the younger married couples go about the village together, especially if they have a baby in arms. But not one do I ever see walk hand-in-hand or otherwise touch each other in public. It simply isn't done. Figuring out what man and woman are husband and wife is always a challenge because they are so seldom seen with one another and never seen displaying affection toward each another. Salesi can't explain that. He recognizes it and even says he thinks the *papalangi* way of showing affection is preferable. But he says if couples are seen together "too often," they are ridiculed by the villagers.

The church building itself fascinates me because it is one of the few structures on the island that is the least bit ostentatious. The original church building, which took up the same floor area, about 90 by 30 feet, was badly damaged in the hurricane along with the rest of the island homes. Its wooden walls withstood the blow, but the floor—which had already been severely weakened by termites—buckled. It sits vacant now next to the new building, its wide wooden windows shut like heavy-lidded eyes, its bottom sagging over its concrete supports like a beerbelly over a belt. From the outside, the new church is not much different in appearance than the old church, except that it is not collapsing. But the insides are significantly altered. The floor is cement, rather than wood, so parishioners won't have their pews crash through the bug-eaten floors beneath them, as I had seen in the past. But it is the ceiling that most astonishes me. In a place where all buildings are simple to the point of Spartanism, the ceiling here is a glossy white plywood divided by

six highly lacquered, finely laminated beams that run the length of it. It looks exactly like five bowling alley lanes minus the gutters. It isn't just that the ceiling is fancy that makes it notable, but the fact that no ceiling is needed at all and that many homes and buildings don't have them. The front of the church holds a simple, one-person pulpit with wooden stairs leading up to it from both sides and set off by a low, wooden railing. It could be almost any small church anywhere. But behind the pulpit are two large pictures that designate its place. One is of Tupou I, the first king of Tonga, and the other of John Wesley, for whom the church is named. The main churches in Tonga are Wesleyan (Methodist) and offshoots of it. There are also Catholic, Mormon, Assembly of God and Seventh Day Adventist churches, but the country is officially Wesleyan because Tupou I was converted to that religion and proclaimed it as the official church of the country. The current King, in fact, is head of the Wesleyan Church of Tonga, much like Queen Elizabeth is head of the Church of England. In addition to the pictures of Wesley and Tupou are two portraits of Jesus, and two large velvet paintings of "The Last Supper," facing each other on opposite walls. One "Last Supper" is done mostly in blues and reds, the other is primarily brown and a lighter blue.

The islanders here—indeed, all Tongans—dress up for church. Almost all males wear suit coats to church, dress shirts, ties and, depending on age, either slacks or *valas*. They also wear a thin, finely woven mat around their waists. Called a *ta'ovala*, no Tongan male is considered formally dressed without it. Females also wear such a belt, plus an outer dress that goes below their knees, and an inner dress that reaches down to their ankles. Unless they are in mourning and dressed all in black, most of their blouses are white, thin, frilly and cover their shoulders and upper arms. Baring that portion of their anatomy is taboo. Many women also wear large hats and, as always, have their hair bound up tightly. Loose hair is not considered proper. Their Sunday image is of women dressed in the fashion of the early to middle part of the last century, or about the time of

the missionaries' first effective forays into the country. Asked why they wear relatively so many clothes in such a tropical climate, the women say it is tradition. But that answer reveals their own lack of historical perspective, because before the arrival of the missionaries, the women wore very little clothing. Their skirts, made of tapa cloth, ended about knee high, and depending on the weather, they might not have worn any top clothing at all, and certainly nothing that would have covered their shoulders. The only time Tongan women dress with bared shoulders now is when they do traditional dances in "costume," that patronizing word generally used to describe the clothing worn by people other than Americans.

Church services on the island are not much different than those in the United States. There are prayers, songs, lessons read from the bible and the sermon. The only aspect of it unfamiliar to me—though perhaps it is commonplace in fundamentalist churches in America—are the individual prayers spoken by members of the congregation. At one point during the service, everyone is supposed to pray aloud, but independently. The church fills with a rumble of 50 or so different prayers being uttered in varying degrees of intensity. This continues for a few minutes as one by one the prayers end, but before they all do, one man begins singing and the process starts the other way, with parishioners joining the singing one by one. Finally, when the song is done, all the prayers are supposed to be over also. Those who give sermons in Tonga, from the minister (called a *fiefekau*) to the lay preachers, inevitably become emotional and teary-eyed. This day, the *fiefekau* keeps coughing during his delivery and is not as impressive as I remember Tongan sermons to be. Nevertheless, Salesi later declares the sermon an effective one. Its message was simple: trust in Jesus and have faith in Him, not in material things; prepare the soul, don't get caught up in the body. Most sermons are similarly oriented toward faith and based on bible readings, rather than related to contemporary events or matters of current social relevance. But they are taken seriously. Religious

activities fill a significant portion of each Tongan's life; church gatherings provide the primary setting for social relations of the people, at least in the small villages like Hunga. The schedule for *uike lotu*, for instance, mandates that parishioners attend church Monday through Friday at 6 a.m. and 5 p.m. Sunday's schedule is even more intense: there are services at 6 and 9 a.m. and 4 p.m., singing practice at 11 a.m., Sunday school at noon, and bible study following the 4 p.m. service. To make all this possible, the country has a strict Sunday law that mandates no work or play be done on the Sabbath. Eating, sleeping and attending church are the only actions permitted. In some villages, even cooking is considered as physically too similar to working, so all food has to be prepared the day before. Loud noises and raucous laughing are similarly taboo. Although the restrictions are annoying to Tonga's *papalangi* population, they are simply a matter of accepted course for the islanders, who rather enjoy the routine.

But there is one somewhat new church routine that disturbs Salesi: the gradual replacement of traditional Tongan songs and singing styles by Western hymns and harmonies. Most of this is an outgrowth of the missionary influence in church music, he says. Australian missionaries and, especially, teachers introduced what Salesi calls the "European method" of singing here. Their Tongan pupils now carry on that method in the local churches. Salesi says the Wesleyan church usually employs such singing, while ignoring Tongan composers. But this is not the case in Hunga. Why? "Because I like the Tongan way of singing, and I myself am the composer and conductor," he declares, and as such, he decides what is sung. He also believes that the leaders of the key churches in the main towns—Neiafu, Nuku'alofa and Pangai—of the three island groups don't care for Tongan music. "They usually use the foreign music. I think they hate...they don't like the Tongan music," Salesi says. "They just like the Tongan love song (by) the Tongan composers, but not in the church. I think we have to make the church a Tongan church, we have to use every Tongan way, the custom, and save the Tongan church. And

we don't (shouldn't) imitate what the Australian brought up here. They taught us to know everything and we can compose our song. And I'm sure that's what we'll have to do to make it a Tongan church. It will be better then." It is like the Tongan banana, Salesi says. "We like it, we know it, we love it. If we will make the church a Tongan church, we will do the same thing. We will feel hot in our souls. (Now) the soul of the Tongan is gradually going down, gradually go to cold. And I meditated the reason is because we imitate the foreign way of singing and speaking. We often do it. Some people, when they speak, it is just like a *papalangi*, their voice, but if we use our natural voice, it is far better than that."

After the service, we consume a large meal, including octopus and canned corned beef cooked in a coconut sauce, plus half a large fish and half a scrawny chicken, both gifts from other villagers. One woman, who has a real gas stove but hasn't quite mastered it, makes a lemon meringue pie that is tasty, if lopsided. The customary yams accompany the meal, which is, as usual, far more than I can finish at one sitting. When there is leftover food, however, it is usually sent to other villagers. This habit is partly due to lack of refrigeration, as mentioned, but had existed long before there was even the possibility of refrigeration. Food that couldn't be eaten was shared. Often it was given to nearest neighbors but most often to members of the extended family. The male's oldest sister is highest ranking in Tongan society, so food would go to her first, then other relatives and neighbors. After our meal, Eneio packs dishes to be taken to a few nearby homes, and slowly (and, to me, incredibly) eats an enormous mound of yams and fish herself. Eating, like talking, usually takes place seated on the floor. Eneio lays a plastic table cover on the floor, then covers our plates with food—hills of yams, into which she stabs a knife, and whatever else is on the day's menu. Since we seldom have forks, eating is done by hand, and our glasses and dishes quickly become greasy. Dish washing is done at the same spot as dinner. Eneio uses a plastic basin filled with cold water (but no soap)

to clean the utensils and passes around a small pan with cold water (but, again, no soap) for us to wash our hands as she folds and puts away the table cloth. Often trying to join us for dinner are four kittens and a mama cat who sit just outside the rear door and attempt to sneak in whenever no one is looking. A large old dog waits more patiently outside for scraps, showing no inclination to chase away the felines. Also, during daytime meals, one or two chickens wander through the house, pecking at nothing in particular, until someone runs them off. Tossing out scraps is one way to get rid of garbage, but has its drawbacks. While the food thrown out will surely be either devoured by animals or absorbed by nature, other items similarly discarded do not so readily disappear. Hence this cultural tradition of disposing of waste food leads to the creation of litter when foodstuffs come in cans and boxes, and goods such as batteries and bottles outlive their usefulness. Salesi's backyard is less littered than many areas in the village, but old flashlight and radio batteries are scattered here and there, as are the remnants of bottles and cans. Burning garbage, the other traditional disposal method, doesn't work for those items, either. And so they remain, and so the island shows the effects of modern products and packaging. Nature's product line carries no such unsightly aftereffects.

During dinner, Salesi and Eneio again discuss the trip to Tongatapu. Salesi says he can't go because of his responsibility to the church and obligation to meet the new minister when he arrives at a nearby island. A bit annoyed, Eneio notes that relatives have sent them money for the trip and are expecting them to visit. If Salesi won't come, she says she'll sail by herself. After she leaves, going to a nearby house to weave a mat, Salesi pooh-poohs her threat, saying he doubts Eneio would actually make the trip alone and stay a month or so with their children she claims. (Nevertheless, a few days later Salesi gets a church steward to agree to fill-in for him as official representative to greet the new minister. Still to be resolved, however, is who will watch the house if both he and Eneio go to Tongatapu.)

Although the meal that day presented a sizeable spread, one held later in the week more fully fulfills the concept of Polynesian feast. Called *luau* in Hawaiian, it is known as a *kai tuno* in Tongan, but basically it is the same thing: enough food to feed a battalion. We hold the feast at the beach in the lagoon where the coral and sand for Salesi's water tank comes from. The meal is a present to me from a couple I had known from my Peace Corps days. Feasts are considered gifts because food often is of extremely high importance in a society where few other goods are commonplace or acquired. The friends, Vili and his wife, Fe'ou, bring a small pig, Salesi provides mutton, and another man, Malekai, goes out with a long pronged-pole and comes back with a clutch of fish. Those, along with breadfruit, *ufi* and other yams, all will go into an oven dug four feet into the earth. Because the ground is sand, Vili easily digs into it, then covers the bottom of the pit with kindling, adds a layer of thick tree branches and on top of them, a layer of lava rocks, and sets it ablaze. Vili then takes a squawking baby pig from out of a sack and, after shushing it, calmly slits its throat with a knife, holding it as it shudders for what seems like a long time. He washes it quickly in the lagoon, then holding its hind legs, he drags it across the lava rocks in the fire. He reverses the process, holding the front legs. This burns and shreds off most of the pig's fine hairy skin, and the remainder Vili scraps off with a small knife and part of a coconut husk, cut to form a brush. Once the pig is cleaned outside, Vili slits it open from the anus to the throat and pulls out the innards, disposing of them all except for the liver and heart. He washes the pig again in the lagoon and takes it to the pit which is now covered under a pile of sapling branches and leaves. Removing that cover, Vili throws out any of the thick branches that haven't burned. All that remain are hot coals and the heated lava rocks. Vili flicks one glowing rock out of the *umu* and wraps it in leaves, then stuffs it inside the pig, wraps the whole pig in leaves and puts it in the heated coals. Meanwhile, Eneio uses the lid of a corned beef can to scrape off the hard outer skin of a dozen breadfruit, and cuts them in half with a knife. At last,

everything else is put into the oven—the fish, breadfruit, mutton—all resting on leaves or sapling branches, and the pit is covered with a blanket of leaves and buried in sand, turning it into a smoking mound several feet high. The food cooks for about an hour, during which time the men tell fish stories—how big the fish was, how hard it fought. Malekai goes out again with his pronged-pole and comes back with one huge fish, which we eat raw and wash down with coconut milk. Ultimately the oven is opened and we feast.

* * * *

Although the island is fundamentally free of western influences, a few things on it seem incongruous. There are two small stores, which sort of fit in between cultures, neither Tongan nor European but incorporating both. One store is no more than a shack four feet deep, maybe six feet long and high enough for a man to stand inside. It is built of the ubiquitous corrugated metal, including the roof, with its front no more than a waist high sheet of tin. A large piece of plywood covers the rectangular opening on top, and swings up when it is "business hours." Inside is a narrow wooden plank that serves as counter and at the rear is a shelf holding a small supply of goods, powdered milk, tea, soap, cigarettes, flour, cans of corned beef, batteries, candies and so on. Occasionally, fresh bread and other fresh items are available, depending on whether the boat had gone into Neiafu that day and returned with more goods. At the times the shopkeeper decides to open for business (regular hours are not kept—or even considered), villagers can take advantage of it, or the other store, which is run by one of the school teachers on the island. It operates only when she is not teaching, of course, and is situated in a slightly larger structure next to her house. She carries basically the same items and, because villagers often buy things on credit, they shift their purchasing pattern back and forth between stores depending on where they have reached the credit limit. There were two similar stores on the island when I had first lived there, but both were badly managed and

went out of business. The present ones appear to be following the same pattern, even though they have virtual monopolies on Hunga and no shortage of shoppers. Buying goods there instead of having to take what usually amounts to an all-day trip to Neiafu is certainly preferable, and the prices at the island stores are essentially the same. Maybe that's why the earlier stores had folded.

But what is most out of place on Hunga are not the stores, but the telephone. Yes. There is one telephone on the island, set in a semi-enclosed glass stand located next to the town hall in a cluster of grass. Calls can be received, but not placed, there. To make a call, villagers have to go into Neiafu. Once in Neiafu, however, they can then call back to Hunga. But even there they have to place the call with an operator, not just dial it direct. If someone in Hunga is called, the phone next to the town hall rings. Evidently, whoever happens to be passing by answers the ringing phone and then has to locate the person being called. I never get to see the process in action, but Salesi says it works well and that people pay an annual fee for a set number of calls. The phone was installed after the infamous hurricane of '82. Until that time, people on Hunga could only be contacted by villagers on other islands through announcements on the radio or by telegram. The telegram messages, however, had to be picked up in Neiafu. If no boat was going into town for a week—or longer—the message simply stayed at the telegraph office undelivered.

The only other indication—or intrusion—of modern technology on Hunga is the Saturday night movies or, more correctly, the Saturday night videos. In the past, the movies shown in Hunga were those educational or medical films brought along by government health workers who traveled to different villages promoting family planning or better dental care. Along with the appropriate health film, short feature films might also be shown. But as far as I know, no Hollywood-style movies were ever shown on Hunga. Because there was no electricity, generators had to be brought in, screens set up

and arrangements made to insure people would attend the health movies, which, of course, were free. Apparently, because of those complications, no one saw the possibility of making a profit bringing Hollywood-type movies to show on Hunga. Within the past year, however, an enterprising young Hungan named Vaha decided that showing a few rented videos in the town hall each week could be a money-making proposition. It entailed his buying a generator and television set and renting a video cassette player, but his weekly audience was large enough to cover the overhead within a few months. Charging about 50 cents a person, he plays his videos to an average of 100 islanders per showing. And, obviously, this is the only show in town. But it's not the profit-making aspect of the movies that are of concern; it's their content. Tonga has exceptionally strict rules concerning obscenity. The government customs counter at the airport has a large sign stating that "obscene books" or books containing "obscene material" are expressly forbidden from entering the country. (There is also, I learned later, a small television station serving 300 Tongans on the main island that operates under the direct permission of the king, who censors those TV shows he considers too risqué.) But somehow, the videotapes have gotten around those restrictions. Salesi says that Vaha's father told Vaha that if he ever showed a film with "sexual things" in it during a Saturday night video, he (the father) would "crush the video." Apparently Vaha's father does not go to the only Saturday night video presentation I see during my stay, because the video remained intact while the audience didn't. The evening provides an enlightening experience. When I arrive, about 50 or 60 Hungans, including a dozen youngsters, are already there and the show is underway. The first video, called Country Music, is apparently a promotional film put together by RCA records. It takes place at an outdoor concert and features American country and western singers, all of whom had just put out new albums. In turn, they sing two or three songs each. Except for Charlie Pride, I don't recognize any of the singers, and the islanders don't seem either impressed or depressed

by the entertainment. They merely watch in silence, neither swaying with the music nor singing along with it. The crowd has grown to about 150 when the main video comes on. Called (for no reason that ever becomes clear) Firecracker, it is a karate movie that appears to have been filmed in the Philippines and stars no "name" actors or anyone I have ever heard of. The protagonist is a beautiful, slim, long-haired blonde woman who is an expert in karate and can beat up everyone but the main villain. From a technical aspect, she performs adequately and is convincing in her karate movements. The villagers seem to enjoy the fights, often cheering and laughing when someone gets shot, beaten up or stabbed. Salesi, who at first planned to attend but then changes his mind and stays home, says action films such as this one are easier for people to understand than films with more complex story lines and character development. Most of the islanders' English skills are not sufficient to grasp more sophisticated movies, he notes, but language ability is not needed to comprehend what is going on in good-versus-bad action movies. Because of this, Vaha, the producer of these video film nights, generally shows all-action movies and that's what people expect. What happens next, however, is not expected. In the middle of a fight, the blonde woman's blouse and bra are ripped off and she stands exposed. The audience is stunned. A few embarrassed snickers come out of the darkness, but almost everyone is immediately stilled by what they see. Remember, in Tongan culture, even women's shoulders are not supposed to be shown, and here the villagers are confronted by a half-naked woman. Fortunately, she remains topless only briefly, quickly winning her fight, and the scene ends. Then the children—now numbering about two dozen—laugh, perhaps to indicate to each other that they have seen something taboo. But they haven't seen anything, yet. About three-quarters of the way through the film, the heroine inexplicably (but who worries about motivations in movies like this?) falls in love with the villain, and they slowly (and what was supposed to be sensually) cut the clothes off each other with a knife. At that, a low murmur runs through the audience and much

uncomfortable shuffling occurs. But next, when the naked couple roll around on a bed, the audience explodes into action. Obviously embarrassed, women and young girls flee the room in scores. No men do. The reason for the segregated exodus is that although there is no total taboo about seeing what took place on the video, there is a taboo about a brother and sister seeing such an act together. Hence, the sisters run out of the room. I am embarrassed because the people are. What seems most offensive to me, though, is not the naked coupling—as silly and inappropriate as that is. What most concerns me is the violence in the film, which is plentifully and graphically presented on screen, and is also readily and uninhibitedly accepted by this audience. Just like Americans, the Tongans seem to accept gratuitous violence much more good-naturedly than naked bodies. And this film has more than the requisite amount: a man speared through the chest and then lifted by the spear; a policeman pushed onto a stake, which comes up through his chest while another man steps down on him, pushing the stake even farther through; a man with his head shoved into a circular saw; and a number of people slowly and bloodily beaten, shot, tortured, and stabbed. One young woman complains to me afterward that she wishes movies like "The Sound of Music" would be shown, rather than what is usually presented. She says she feels sad about the killing and cruelty in the movie. Nevertheless, Vaha, the producer, insists to me that such action films are what the islanders want to see.

The next day, I ask Salesi about the evening's events. He says that it's not acceptable for the villagers to even see couples kissing in a movie, let alone more torrid activities. And he reiterates the prohibition of brothers and sisters seeing such things together. "I don't understand why they don't go out (of the movie) all together," Salesi says. "They are Christians. Or they may ask the man who owns the video to stop it. I don't know why (they didn't). It's what the people do. They stop their children from smoking, still they (the parents) are smoking. They don't want to let their children see

something like that but when they see that, they don't stop them. They ought to. They don't know that they teach their children in doing these things." Salesi says that despite the teachings of the church and admonitions on the radio to avoid films with explicit sexual material in them, the islanders' curiosity gets the better of them. "In a lovely place like this, they just see new things, new things coming. They want to see it and they don't care whether it is good or bad. We are not true Christians, I'm sure that's true. We are just trying to tell what is good, but we can't do it. We know the best to do, but we don't do it. We still love the other side," he confesses, meaning the "evil" or "dark" side. "We say (one) thing and do the other thing." Asked why some villagers laughed at the violent actions in the film, Salesi can only explain the feelings of those who didn't laugh. "Some people have light in their soul, they can feel love with those (in the film)," he says. But those who feel that way are in the minority. They are usually just those who are well-educated, he says, those with "a good knowledge or maybe a better knowledge than the others."

* * * *

Finally the long debate over whether or not to—and who will—go to Tongatapu to visit their children and see the King's birthday celebration ends with the decision that both Salesi and Eneio will go. One of Salesi's brothers will guard the house and take care of the crops. The decision ends the mild bickering between them, mainly concerning money sent by relatives to finance the trip and threats by Eneio to go by herself if Salesi wouldn't go with her. Somewhat ironically, my visit ends with their departure, instead of mine. And so, two days later, I take the boat with them to Neiafu and later say goodbyes on the deck of an inter-island passenger ferry that will take them to Tongatapu. I embrace Salesi, whose voice catches on a whispered "God bless you," and then Eneio, who remains silent, her long face and lips tightly composed, eyes downcast. I promise that we will meet again. Because it is an island boat and follows a schedule seemingly written on water, its time of departure has been changed at least four times.

I leave deck when its whistle blows at 5 in the afternoon. But I am mistaken. More and more passengers show up, more goods are loaded into its hull. It starts raining softly, then harder, and shadows and ultimately darkness wash away the faces and outlines of people waiting to wave goodbye. After an hour and a half, soaked through my clothes, I can no longer see anyone on deck. As I walk up the slight incline into Neiafu, the boat behind me becomes a dark heavy presence barely distinguishable from the ocean around it except for the lights strung about its riggings and pouring from its portholes. Its deck glows like a bandstand, while in the dark innards below, people who have lived close to the sea forever prepare to journey on it once again.

"Keep that commitment to just being happy people....But you all look like happy campers to me. Happy campers you are. Happy campers you have been. And, as far as I'm concerned, happy campers you will always be"

--Vice President Dan Quayle
Speaking to American Samoans
April 24, 1989

CHAPTER II

THE 'HAPPY CAMPERS'

The first things I notice in Pago Pago, American Samoa, are the paved asphalt roads and the pulsing presence of cars and trucks. They come in an unending tide, one wave breaking immediately after another, a constant whooshing of churning air, the sound of horns, of tires whirring rhythmically along the streets. In the background, a dull, ubiquitous hum of...something not yet identifiable. It is not noticeable until a break in the greater chatterings of sound, but then it is there, continuous, an ongoing, unstopping, electric sound of turbines and power, of machines and production, the driving, thumping, droning sound of...work: People on cranes, in switch engines, on forklifts, in trucks; of generators cycling, feeding jolts of electrons out along wires. This great "combine," as Kesey called a similar phenomenon in One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest, is always running, producing a din so much a part of the everyday vocabulary of dissonance that people here hardly hear it. It lives in Pago Pago. It is the universal driving force. It is Progress.

In the Pago Pago (pronounced Pahngo Pahngo) harbor, brackish water speckled with litter bounces the reflection of bright lights over dark waves. And with the flickering lights come waves of smells, smoggy fuel dock fumes, diesel engine odors that cover the salt sea freshness with heavy, greasy vapors. Although Pago is not quite a city, it is far

more a modern town than Neiafu. It has industry, canneries, landing docks, container yards, oil tanks, fueling stations, supermarkets, drugstores, restaurants, banks, a big hotel, a 19th century courthouse, churches and clumps of cement houses crunched together at odd angles along narrow streets. It also has a large open air market about which Samoans gather daily for food and on weekends for Bingo playing. A sense of busy-ness pervades the air. Comings and goings. The Samoans don't seem to stroll like the Tongans do; they walk, purposefully, from place to place.

I stay at first in Herb and Sia's, a small, relatively cheap hotel off the main street in an area that feels like a tropical skid row. There's a mix of architecture about, not Western, exactly, but not Polynesian either. It hints of turn of the century deep South (U.S., not Pacific), with formal white wooden columns and porches and balconies on the government buildings; and it indicates the makeshift nature of many business structures, a slapped together look of broad board walls capped by metal roofs and of converted military barracks. The garishly red, blue, green and yellow painted outsides of most buildings are badly in need of freshening. A few buildings are constructed in the elongated ovals of traditional Samoan design, but are crowned with metal roofs and walled in cement or wood rather than bamboo and mats.

A few incidents jar me into realizing that although Pago Pago may be Polynesian, it isn't the same seemingly innocent Polynesia as Hunga or even Neiafu. A lot more separates the two societies than 300 miles of ocean. The bulb in my head first starts lighting as I check into Herb and Sia's. I notice that the Samoan desk clerk has a thick matt of hair growing just above her decolletage, and it dawns on me that she's a he, despite the dress, lipstick, mascara and eyeliner, and a surly he at that. Then, later, after the Samoan cleaning lady shows me to my room and points out the two beds, she sits in a chair and asks if I'm married. Informed that although I'm not, I do have a girlfriend, she asks if my friend is *papalangi*. When I say yes, she pursues: "Do you only like *papalangi*

girls?" "No, I like all kinds," I say. Then she comes to the point: "Do you like me?" I am clearly unprepared for the situation and after offering a polite, but unencouraging "yes, you seem like a nice person, but—" I reiterate my present relationship, and say I have to go wash up. When she still doesn't move, I finally ask her to leave, which she does with a scowl. The next day when she comes to make the bed, she lies down on the one across from mine. I tell her she cannot sleep in my room, but again she doesn't leave until I ask her to do so, and she stalks out angrily. Well, maybe it's just this hotel setting, I muse. But that afternoon, after buying some postcards at the one major hotel in Pago, the semi-classy, multi-story Rainmaker Hotel, my lightbulb finally comes to full glow. I'm sitting in front of The Rainmaker writing my cards when a young Samoan woman approaches and strikes up a conversation. It is a slight variation of the cleaning woman's inquiries: are you married, and so on. It seems this woman already has several *papalangi* boyfriends. She just doesn't care much for them at the moment, she says, at least not as much as she thinks she likes me. Do I like her?, she asks. Of course, I do but I have a ladyfriend and I must be going, I say. And we part. That evening as I am standing in front of the collection of small shops, fast food places and bars behind the parade grounds and playing field in Pago, one of a group of taxi drivers standing around between calls comes over to me. He asks if I want a woman for the night.

Obviously activities of this sort occur in many port towns, and it's certainly possible that the ladies were merely being friendly and had no other motives in mind. Even granting that, however, nothing of this nature had ever happened to me in the port towns of Tonga during my stays there over a 20-year period. In Pago, my introduction to subtle sexual solicitation came in the first two days. Of course, comparing Pago Pago with Hunga is a sort of an apples and oranges thing, and fairer observations should come later, in Amanave, the small village where I'll stay. Still....

* * * *

Before heading to my new home, I tour KVZK, the lone television station in Samoa and interview the chief engineer. Tours of the facility are ostensibly offered daily, but the engineer, Robert Blauvelt, says "because so few people ever ask us to give one, we don't have them scheduled." Nonetheless, the information proves valuable. KVZK, Blauvelt explains, is a rather rare bird for several reasons, among them the fact that this one station offers three channels. Another fascinating aspect is that it is perhaps the only American television station owned and operated by the U.S. government, which funds it entirely at a cost of \$1.2 million this year. "We're not cost efficient," Blauvelt confesses. "We're overstaffed. It's not what jobs need to be done but who needs a job...what relative needs a job." The station's budget comes from the U.S. Department of Commerce through the Samoa Governor's office. Complaints about overstaffing and personnel are useless, Blauvelt says, because the workers in the station don't control the purse strings, the governor does. Blauvelt also complains that because the station is government-owned, it has no freedom of speech and its news department is heavily censored. "We don't ever criticize the governor," he says. "We just run government press releases and cover ceremonies and speeches. If you want the real local news, read the local newspapers."

The building that houses KVZK-TV looks like the big cement block structure that holds channel 11 in San Jose, the only other television station I've ever toured. Inside are the standard array of film and video tape facilities, plus several studios in which the evening local news and weekly church programs are shot. Blauvelt says that some traditional dances and other cultural events are filmed in the studio, but most are shot live as they occur outside during different ceremonies. Also routinely shot out-of-studio are government meetings (called *fonos*, as in Tongan) and sporting events. "Anybody who wants to put something on the air, if they come in, we put it on," Blauvelt notes. "Most of

the ministers in American Samoa have been on the air, and most of our other special events are like that. What they really are," he confides, "are things that should be one-minute, 15-second news spots (but) that go on for 45 minutes or so." Rows of two-inch instructional tapes made for use in the local schools back in the mid-1960s and early '70s fill a large chunk of the building. "Those old black and white 'talking heads' were garbage," Blauvelt says bluntly. "They were just cranking them out then: 'OK, let's do 16 lessons on how to speak English,' point the camera at a teacher and shoot for 30 minutes. Next lesson. Shoot it. It was good for what they were trying to do, bring education and electricity to the villages until the educational system and new schools were set up. But looking at them now, the talking heads are boring." He says that none of these education films were shown at all last year, which is a bit ironic because the whole purpose of the television station when it was built in 1964 was to make and show those films (see Appendix B). Today, says Blauvelt, the only educational films shown in the schools are those taken from PBS (Public Broadcasting System) offerings, such as "Nova," "Sesame Street," "Science" and "3-2-1 Contact." "I don't know who watches them (the early instructional films)," says the chief engineer. "I don't know if any of the TV sets in the schools even work. The shows don't even start and end at the same time. 'Nova,' for instance, is 60 minutes long and the classes are only 45."

But Blauvelt says he is proud of getting a greater amount of national news put on the air during his two-and-a-half years at the station. KVZK TV presents 13 hours a day of CNN (Cable News Network) reports either live or on a slight tape delay, plus the NBC Nightly News and the McNeil-Lehrer Report (also, the Johnny Carson Show and some sports events), all picked up off of the US Armed Forces Satellite. This increase in news scheduling, Blauvelt claims, has influenced the local paper, Samoa News, to publish more frequently, going from a weekly to three times a week during Blauvelt's tenure at KVZK. And, he says, an FM radio station has started up, presenting an hourly 5-minute

"rip and read" newcast from the Associated Press wire. Two AM stations offer similar rip and read reports from the United Press International wire. Blauvelt says that this increase in radio news and his CNN, NBC Nightly News and McNeil-Lehrer Reports broadcasts "have kept the public keenly interested in world affairs."

Most of KVZK's other programs come from the evening lineups of NBC, ABC, CBS and PBS, which are taped in Honolulu, flown to Samoa, and, with no attempt made to observe which network originally broadcast the shows, mixed together and shown on three different channels a week later. Hence you'll see an ABC show followed by an NBC or CBS or PBS show, all on the same channel. Additionally, all the shows carry the original national advertisements (or pledge pitches for the PBS station) that came with them when the show was taped plus the local advertisements from Honolulu! Blauvelt says he could have those ads edited out but it would take a great deal of time and effort, and it would change all the starting and ending times of the programs. I ask about selling local advertisements to fill the gaps. That couldn't be done, he says, because as a government-owned station KVZK would then be illegally competing with privately owned businesses, the local papers and radio stations. Also, he says, even if the station got all the advertising now going to the newspapers and radio stations, it would still not be enough to cover half of KVZK's annual budget. In other words, it's easier to leave things as they are.

And what, exactly, does the public most want to see? News? Well, yes, Blauvelt says, people certainly watch the news. But the two most popular shows in American Samoa, the ones that don't get "bumped" without huge public outcries, are "Days of Our Lives," the afternoon soap opera shown here each weeknight at 10, and World Wrestling Federation bouts, shown Sunday evenings. Blauvelt, a thin, six-foot-plus man in a bright yellow flowered Hawaiian sports shirt, stands to show me out. "If we miss broadcasting those two shows, we hear about it from everyone. If we miss other shows, no one seems

to notice much," he says. I notice he's wearing sandals. He smiles, explaining that he was "ass deep" in Colorado snow selling broadcast equipment when he landed the job here. "Now," he says, "I only wear shoes to broadcasters' conventions."

* * * *

Amanave is about 15 miles from Pago Pago but traffic is dutifully slow on the curvy one-lane road to it and around the island, so the trip takes over half an hour. Some 300 people live in Amanave, a picture-perfect village nestled under tilted palm trees and situated just a few feet off white shoreline sands. Not far out, waves fluff softly across the jagged coral that fingers into the ocean, offering a ceaseless rhythmic rumble. I stay with a high talking chief, Tago (pronounced Tango), and his family. In traditional Samoan culture, a high talking chief is next in line down from a high chief (who is of such importance that he has the high talking chief to speak for him) and is a rank of considerable merit. Although Tago is not the highest ranking man in the village under the traditional Samoan system, he is also the mayor of Amanave, which makes him of higher importance than even the high chief for official government purposes. A bit confusing, yet such distinctions come into play at different times as Tago assumes different roles.

Tago himself is enormous. Standing six-feet-three, he weighs around 325 pounds and is so heavy that he always seems to be sweating slightly. In fact, all Samoans seems larger than Tongans, which is strange because they're all Polynesians and share fairly similar diets—or at least used to. Circling just below Tago's waist and down his thighs is an intricately designed tattoo, perhaps two feet wide, that fits like a vala (called a *lavalava* in Samoan). He tells me that he should be able to walk around without clothes, wrapped only in his tattoo. I never see him do this, however. Many Samoan men of certain rank and some chief's daughters have large, beautifully designed tattoos encompassing them.

In Tonga, the only tattoos I saw were simple words or pictures, nothing on the level done here. Around the house, Tago wears a *lavalava* and usually a sports shirt. His thinning black hair is combed straight back, and he sits and walks openly, with his feet spread outward, his forward movement sort of a rolling, shifting of bulk. Occasionally Tago smokes a pipe, but most often he chews tobacco and spits the excess out into soft drink cans.

Tago, 52, lives with his wife, Tia, 48, and their daughter, Iva (which we would pronounce as Eva) and her three children. At least, that's my immediate assessment of the relationships. I first meet them individually and with various neighbors about, so I don't know who's part of the family and who's not. Tia is a squat, chunky woman with a flashing set of perfect teeth that I guess aren't real, based on what I've observed of other island people with similarly perfect teeth. She seems friendly and agreeable to having me stay, but her English-speaking ability is limited and my Samoan language skills are even less notable. The best I can do is understand a smattering of words that are the same in Samoan as they are in Tongan. Hence, Tia and I have rather simple conversations—although we do manage to talk about God, religion, one's obligations to one's church, smoking, drinking and gambling. Not bad topics, considering. Iva, the daughter, is 29 and nearly eight months pregnant. Standing about 5'6", she probably weighs around 175 pounds. She has a pleasant, open face, keeps her long hair in a tight bun most of the time, and usually wears a *lavalava*, which wraps around just under her arms (no taboo about baring shoulders in this society) and hangs down to her knees. Despite the fact that she has to take care of three children and has another one due shortly, it is Iva who is primary cook and housekeeper, not Tia. Tago does no cleaning, but he, as do other Samoan men, does cook and prepare certain foods, especially yams and dishes containing coconut. Iva seems shy at first and I wonder where her husband is. I guess that she might not speak much English either. If that's so, then Tago will be my main source of information. Iva's

three children are Ata, a sprightly nine-year-old girl with a big smile and a missing front tooth; Sunia (called "Junior," which is close to how his Samoan name sounds), a cute five-year-old boy with shoulder-length jet black hair, and Kili, the hellion, a four-year-old with a mean streak; his close-cropped hair gives him the look of a young prison camp inmate. Although slightly shorter than Sunia, Kili is much meaner and wins as many fights as he loses. The children are perpetually in motion, running, screaming, fighting, jumping endlessly until an exasperated Iva or, more often, Tago, reins them in. When Tago takes me into his home, he says that I am not just a visitor. I am one of the family.

The house I am to call home dwarfs Salesi's; in fact, its unattached kitchen, situated just behind the main house, is roughly the size of Salesi's whole home. The rest of Tago's house is impressive. The main portion is about 40 feet square with the rear third divided into two small rooms on each end and an inside food-serving area with a counter in the center. The only cooking that goes on there, however, is done in a crockpot; there's no stove or sinks. At the back of this is the door leading outside to the real kitchen and to the bathroom. The bulk of the main living room, which also functions as the family bedroom, is empty except for a support post that goes from the floor to the peak of the corrugated metal ceiling. All pieces of furniture, such as they are, are backed against walls: A long table, covered with a sheet decorated with the names of every National Football League team, rests against one wall. On it are a clock, a vase containing paper flowers, some children's toys, a couple of framed portraits of family members, and assorted other items. A similar table graces another wall and holds, among other things, a large ghetto blaster radio-tape player. A few feet from it are several steamer trunks and some large suitcases, in which clothes are stored. I see no bureaus or dressers anywhere. There are two wide wooden chairs that sit against a third wall, and at the other end of the room is a small table on which sits a television set and next to it, a videocassette recorder. The walls themselves are mostly bare, except for three velvet paintings (two of them the

same "Last Supper" scene in different shadings as those hanging in Salesi's church in Hunga, the third a depiction of Jesus with a flock of sheep), and three battery wall clocks, one in the side of a swan, one in a imitation wood frame, and one which chimes the hour with different songs, such as "Home on the Range," "There's No Place Like Home" and "Happy Birthday." Along the very top of the wall where it connects with the roof is a strip of red cloth about two feet wide with drawings of large seashells at the bottom and the names Tonga and Samoa alternating along the center. This decoration runs around the living room and an outer room, over a hundred feet of it. The outer room functions as a greeting area. It's about 25 feet square and similar to the big main room except that it has no windows, or rather, nothing in the windows, no glass or wood to close out wind, rain and whoever wants to climb over the short base wall into the room. The base wall is cement and brick, two to three feet high, the rest, up to the ceiling, is sheet wood. Just outside the greeting room are three graves: Tago's parents and a sibling. Next to them is a tin garbage can, situated below the V-point where the roofs from the outer and inner rooms join together. When it rains, the water streams down that joint into the can. It is used for cooking and drinking. A hose in the backyard provides water for washing. As if Tago's house itself weren't noteworthy compared to Tongan homes, there is more: In front of the home is a sort of guest house-ceremonial gathering place. It is built as traditional Samoan homes were in long ovals (perhaps 50 by 30 feet in this case) open at the sides with columns holding up the roof. The only difference is that this one's made of concrete, instead of wood, and has a metal instead of palm leaf roof. It looks somewhat like a rounded Greek temple. Next week Tago will be host to a visit by a government inspector and the mayors of several nearby villages. A number of families seem to have such ceremonial structures but not all use them in traditional roles. The family next door has ropes strung up from column to column and laundry hung out on them to dry.

As high talking chief, it is Tago's duty to give all the official speeches at ceremonies. And so, on my first night in the village, we go to a funeral for an Amanave man. Relatives and friends of the deceased show up at the dead man's house, bringing gifts of mats, food and money. As each gift is presented, Tago accepts it on behalf of the dead man's family, elaborately thanking the contributors and praising their compassion and respect for the dead. Because the ceremony is in Samoan, I don't know exactly what is being said, nor is Tago helpful in explaining it to me in English. "I thank the people for what they give," he says. What they give, in fact, is quite a bit. Each family donates 10 finely woven mats, fistfuls of cash, and 5-gallon cans of cured beef or boxes of frozen chicken legs. Tradition requires the family to give back some of the largess: half the mats, some of the food and a dollar or two from the money. The ceremony takes the whole evening, from about 6 p.m. until 2 in the morning. The room has no furniture. Close family members and village chiefs sit cross-legged on mats, with their backs against the wall opposite the front door. The house is a fairly modern wooden structure with neon lights blazing in the night, two tubes in a line like arrows chasing one another along the top of each wall, centered in a strip of paneling that circles the room. Also fitted in the paneling are photographs of family members. Below them, the dead man's wife and daughters, dressed in black, take turns sitting next to the open coffin, looking at the man, touching him, straightening his clothes, crying, slapping away flies, occasionally spraying the room with bug killer. A few feet away, a young man tapes the ceremony with a videocam recorder. Four times during the evening, a complete meal is served. It is a strange combination of foods: traditional Samoan yams, but also chop suey, cured corned beef, canned tuna, barbecued chicken legs, and rice. Unused to sitting cross-legged for hours (or even minutes), I try to stretch as inconspicuously as possible and keep a leg out straight to ensure circulation. I will be censured for that break in protocol later. After all the individuals have presented their condolences, ministers and choirs from five Amanave

churches come in to pay respects, some carrying their own portable organs. The choirs sing at least two songs each and the ministers give short speeches to the family, although one church puts on a full hour-long service complete with sermon. The Assembly of God Church, to which the dead man belonged (as do Tago and his family), shows up with portable organ, two electric guitar players and a keyboard man. Their songs don't sound like the usual Bach, Handel and Wesley rendered by the other denominations. No, their tunes are jaunty, finger-snapping ditties with rousing finales! Not only that, but one guitar player wears pants—the only male in the whole evening's affair to do so. The only other person who stands out is a Catholic Church choir member who in spite of lipstick, mascara and eye shadow is clearly male. When the ceremony finally ends and assorted sympathizers have gone, the family has received more than a hundred fine mats, gallons of cured beef, dozens of boxes of chicken parts, and \$7,000.

Around 9 in the morning, after a brief respite, the group regathers for the formal Assembly of God funeral ceremony. Hit by an attack of diarrhea (not exactly surprisingly), I miss it but manage to attend the noon burial, which takes place in the dead man's front yard. It is a slightly cursed event. First, the casket is too long to fit into the cement-lined grave, so the handle is taken off one end. Graves in Samoa are not covered with dirt but with cement lids. This lid, however, is too narrow and won't cover the opening. On the spot, fresh cement is mixed and another lid is made. This takes about an hour, and most people leave the gravesite before the replacement lid is done. I stand around, impressed at the impromptu creativity, and am one of only a few to notice that curious dogs are walking across the still damp cement, pawprinting their presence on top of the grave. No one seems to care.

* * * *

Somewhat bedridden for the rest of the day and much of the following days, I observe the routine of home life in Tago's house between urgent trips to his bathroom,

which becomes quite familiar. Unlike the pit outhouses on Hunga, Tago's is relatively comfortable, measuring about 4 by 4 feet, some 7 feet high, and has a cement floor and a regular flush toilet. Unfortunately, it's broken—sort of. It flushes but no water comes into the tank to replenish that which goes out of the bowl. To compensate, a 55-gallon drum partly filled with water is located next to it. One can scoop water from the drum into the tank or directly into the bowl to flush. The scooper, however, is a tiny leftover food container and at least a dozen scoops are needed to effectively flush anything. Meanwhile, the large drum has a hole in its side about half of the way down, so that water is always seeping from it and very quickly the scooper ends up nearly head first into the drum trying to get sufficient water for flushing. To compensate, one can use the hose in the backyard to fill the drum, more or less, in order to more easily fill the toilet. In either case, the bathroom seems always awash with water. None of this, of course, is of any importance to those whose individual disposal systems behave properly. But for he whose body has betrayed him, trips to the bathroom become liquid enactments of the myth of Sisyphus, forever transferring water from one emptying tank to another. And not only that, Tago keeps the bathroom locked, so the struggle starts at the door and goes on from there. At least no cockroaches appear to patrol the room here.

In the meantime, I start figuring out the family's routine and what it does when there are no funerals to intrude. Tia is, by her own account, a religious person, saved by Jesus and acting under the guidance of God. I learn bits and pieces of this each day, usually beginning at 5 or 6 a.m. when she wakes and turns on the radio or slips a religious tape into the cassette player. The music blasts out and she responds in measure to it. When the songs or sermons raise in praise of God, she answers, loudly in kind: "Praise Jesus," or "Thank you, Lord," or "Hallelujah," or "Glory God," or "Amen." I am blessed, because I alone in the house am awakened by her proclamations. Although my room is one of the small ones to the rear of the main room, and although everyone else

sleeps on the floor of the main room where Tia plays her radio and tape recorder at maximum Armageddon alert level, no one else stirs. They sleep through it.

The morning after the burial is Sunday, and at Tia's urging, I go to church with her. I am curious how Samoan and Tongan church services compare, and Tia assures me that I'll see a traditional Samoan service. But if anything, the Assembly of God Church gatherings are the most Western, or American, of all those conducted in Samoa. In addition to the electric guitars and keyboard that were used by Assembly members during the funeral, at the Sunday service there is also a drum set employed. Although from outside the church looks somewhat like a 19th century California mission, made mostly from cement, on the inside it is all polished wood and bright neon lights. In fact, the interior looks like any of thousands of churches found in the United States. At the front is a small, recessed stage for the choir, a lectern with microphone, and a simple cloth-covered table with cross and flowers on it. The minister, dressed in a suit, speaks in front of the congregation, leads the prayers, gives the sermon, and an assistant preacher reads some of the bible lessons. There's a fair amount of singing, but the songs are not somber hymns done in the unique Polynesian harmonies, as in Hunga, but are like those at the funeral: jaunty, upbeat, western. The choir and congregation wave their hands in a kind of joyous counterpoint to the tune. Everything is conducted in Samoan, but during prayers parishioners will call out in English, "Praise God," "Thank you, Jesus," and so on. Unlike the church in Hunga, in this one most children go into a separate room for Sunday school, then come out and join their parents near the end of the service. There is little aimless wandering around by youngsters here. The children appear better behaved and there is only one full-fledged slap by parent of child. A few babies are in attendance, held by their mothers or, it seems, any young girl who wants to hold them for a while. Dress here is not as formal as in Hunga. Neither men nor women wear mats, as they do in Tonga, but not many wear ties, either, and only a few wear suits. Many men sport

flower print shirts, open at the collar; the women wear muumuus or thin white dresses. Much more sensible clothing, considering the weather. As in many church services, collections play a prime part. During the middle of this one, Viliamo, the minister, a handsome young man who received his church schooling at Bethany Bible College in Scotts Valley, California, announces the names of those contributing funds and how much they've given. I had seen this same subtle intimidation form of acquiring donations used in Hunga, although not on my recent visit. But here, prizes are given to the parishioners who give most money to the church. They also earn the congregation's applause. When the service ends, Tia asks if I liked it. I try to sidestep a direct answer by saying I found the affair much the same as services in the states. She eyes me carefully, as if deciding whether I need saving or not, then smiles. "Yes, it's good. Just praise Jesus every time, Audrey," she advises, mispronouncing my name.

The second most important Sunday event occurs later in the day. It is, as the KVZK-TV chief engineer predicted, the World Wrestling Federation bouts. Around 5:30 p.m. people in the village start appearing in Tago's living room. They often don't ask to come in. They're just there. It's time for wrestling. I don't see much of it because I'm still fighting the effects of diarrhea, but I'll see it next time. One of the villagers tells me that they watch it every week.

Although the television set in Tago's house is on a lot, video movies shown on the VCR probably occupy the screen for an equal amount of time. Tago has a few videos that he owns, plus those he gets from villagers who exchange rented videos with each other. It seems the tapes are rented by the week rather than day, as is most common in the states. At least that's how it is in Tago's house, where no one seems to worry about returning the rental tapes he has. Most of the films Tago owns and rents are action movies, low budget kung fu and karate flicks. During my stay I see several of them time and again, plus a smattering of more recent American action films, including features starring Sylvester

Stallone and Roger Moore (James Bond). The first tape I see on a sunny weekday afternoon is one Tago owns, a karate film called Cavalier, in which a young Asian woman who can beat up almost everyone, falls in love with the one man who bests her (maybe that's one of the basic karate story lines). He, for some reason, wants nothing to do with her, in spite of the fact that she's beautiful and clever. He spends most of the film fleeing from her, except when the two join up to fight off various villains. It is almost all action, with a bit of blood (but not much considering the mayhem involved), and no sex. Iva and the children watch it and seem to like it; Tago and Tia are elsewhere. When it ends, they put in a recent American film, Running Scared, a male-bonding tale of two cops, starring Billy Crystal and Gregory Hines. It has less action yet more blood in its violence. The children lose interest and start playing among themselves. Iva watches it, but a neighbor, Fa'a, the son of one of Tago's sisters, comes to visit. He watches for a while but also loses interest, perhaps because he's seen it before, and we all talk together, while the TV plays in the background. Fa'a, 29, is another large presence, standing well over six feet tall and easily weighing more than 250 pounds. He spent seven years in the Navy, in San Diego, Pearl Harbor and somewhere in Alaska. He exhibits many western traits and a sailor's vocabulary, using "fuck" as a common interjection. He proudly relates that a military buddy from the states taught him the 4 Fs: "Find 'em, feel 'em, fuck 'em and forget 'em," and that he had a "haole" girlfriend in Hawaii by whom he fathered three children. They broke up, Fa'a says, after she came to Samoa with him and decided life here wasn't for her. Now he's married to a Samoan woman and the father of one child by her. She supports them by working in a hospital as a nurse. Fa'a says he can't work now because of a traffic accident which badly cut up one leg. He also declares that he is a devout Christian, a member of the Assembly of God Church, and that he no longer chases "chicks," as he refers to women. We go swimming together later that afternoon, and Fa'a tells me of a Navy friend from the states who came here to visit him. Fa'a says he

arranged a date between his cousin and his friend. The friend and cousin, who was 19, went off into the bushes and had sex, then spent the night together, Fa'a reports. He says he wasn't angry at the man because the man was his friend. Some activities are expected and accepted, he indicates, "no big thing." Other matters than sexual ones are considered more seriously. Almost off-handedly, Fa'a says he heard I had stuck my legs out in front of me during the funeral service the other night. That was taboo, a social faux pas.

That evening, the television comes on just before dark, but even though everyone in the family is there, only the children pay much attention to the first show, a PBS nature special called "Antler Kingdom." The youngsters watch the pictures, but I notice the sound is on so softly that even if they could have understood the English-speaking announcer, they probably couldn't hear him. I couldn't. The show that follows is about the Kyoto Drummers of Japan, and I figure there will be interest in it here because the drummers' playing is similar to Tahitian percussion, with which Tago seems familiar. He does watch it briefly, but a villager comes to visit and they talk together, joined a bit later by Tago's older sister, Fa'a's mother. The children look up at the screen occasionally, but don't pay it much notice, and Tia and Iva are busy serving food and cleaning up. Again, the sound is too low to hear much of the narration, and other conversations are being carried on all around. Usually when villagers come to visit, they sit at the opposite end of the room from the television set, about 30 feet from it, and Tago seldom gets closer to the screen than 20 feet. Hence, television, while an obvious presence, does not kill conversation here as it often does in American living rooms where it is the center of attention. During my three-week stay, this pattern of television as background noise and occasionally interesting pictures was commonplace, with the exception of wrestling and one or two other shows, usually the news in Samoan. Naturally, the ability to easily understand what was being said greatly enhanced a TV show's popularity in this household, where the command of English was tenuous. In fact, the range of English

skill levels in American Samoa was surprising. I expected few Tongans in Hunga to have much command of English; the island is relatively isolated and the need to use the language is slight. But I had thought most Samoans would be fluent in English, especially on the main island, where there was frequent contact with English-speaking people, and where the American presence in the country and in the education system was a longstanding one. I was obviously wrong. Although those who spoke to me used English, the villagers with few exceptions used Samoan to speak to each other.

My conversations with Tago are filled with pauses as I try to grasp what it is he's trying to say. Then I give my interpretation of what I think he's saying and he either agrees or restates it. One of our earliest talks is about the "free life" in Samoa. I've heard these kinds of descriptions before, so I understand the general idea before I even hear the specifics. "Life in Samoa is free," Tago says. "We have everything. The land belongs to our family. We have food from the land. The fish." This is sort of a litany, repeated by island people in far flung areas and is true to a point. The point comes at about the time outside technology and commercial goods intrude. Because after that, things stop being free. I look around Tago's living room: he's got the ghetto blaster, TV-VCR, a crock pot, clocks, a power lawnmower and two power saws in the outer room, a trunk full of toys for the kids, and sundry other items. Although hardly overwhelmed by material goods by western standards, Tago and his free life ideal have been severely constrained by reality. As if to accent that, Tago reveals that he's out of money at the moment and needs \$40 to buy raffle tickets! Because he had refused my offer of money to house and feed me, I give him the \$40. I had intended to buy food and gifts for the family, but if this is what he wants, so be it. I'll still get them things.

Amanave is far enough away from Pago Pago so that traffic is negligible on the one road through it. Buses seem the most frequent vehicles passing through, along with occasional small pickup trucks. Samoans commonly walk along the middle of the narrow

road, and some of the older, dumber dogs sleep on it. The buses are worth mention because each is individually decorated. Each village is served by one or two buses, sometimes referred to as *aiga* buses because they're owned by a family in the village. Obviously the islanders will take their own village's bus into Pago Pago, and once there, they will usually wait to catch one of their own buses for the trip back, even though other buses might go through their village. The buses, small compared to the behemoths laboring along most American streets, average perhaps 25 feet in length, with small, pinched-nose engines in front of windows that look like giant eye glasses. Brightly painted, usually in at least two colors, the buses can easily be identified at a distance. Fa'a, whose family owns three buses, says the cab and engine portions are standard, but that the passenger-carrying compartments come in assembly kits of various sizes. Every bus has a tape deck and stereo system, so music pours out as the buses cruise by, and loud bass beats reverberate throughout the island. The drivers, often the bus owners, fix up the interiors to reflect their tastes. Some have flickering lights that flash in time with the music. Many have flags, decals, posters ("Life is a Beach," "I Got Lei'd in Hawaii"), and emblems on or near the dashboard, and gaudy wallpaper. The music itself is often a Samoan version of a stateside or Australian hit, and occasionally rock versions of religious tunes. Fa'a insists that the buses are an excellent source of income, drawing up to \$1,000 a week gross per bus. If the owner or other member of the family is driver, most of the money stays in the family.

Tago, Tia and I take the Amanave village bus, called Taputapu Transfer, into Pago Pago the next day. Tago says he has business to do in town, but I tell him everything will be closed: it's the fourth of July, which is celebrated as a holiday here. We go anyway, and all government offices and most businesses are shut. But Tago and Tia have other matters in mind. They play poker. Not real poker, but electronic poker, 25 cents a game. It's a clever set up because—although there's no pay off, exactly, for winning—you can

make money in a round about way. It works like this: Depending on how good your hand is, you win extra games to play for free. And you can exchange those extra games for money, at 25 cents each, which can add up to a handy sum as some people quickly rake up 200 or so free games. As in all gambling, however, you can also lose quickly. You can put in extra money per game—bet more per hand—so that if you win you also win more free games, but if you lose, all the money goes with it. Tago asks me for \$20 so he can play, promising to pay me back. I give it to him and the 100 quarters disappear quickly into the slot, never to be seen again. Tia borrows \$5 from a friend and just as speedily loses it. I will learn later that she is much more addicted to the game than Tago, but they are not alone. Samoans seem enamored of these small change gambling affairs. The large food market in the center of Pago Pago turns into a giant Bingo pit on weekends and holidays. Today, hundreds of Samoans are playing Bingo but not the simple game of children. Instead, they sit with 10, 15, 20 or more cards—at \$1 each per card per game—playing and hoping to win the \$1,000 prizes. When they lose, they recount the exact numbers they had, what numbers and letters they lacked and how closely they came to a Bingo. I wonder about Tia, not because any self-righteousness about gambling on my part, but because she proclaims so steadfastly her own strict morality and enactment of her church's teachings. Yet she smokes and gambles, both of which her Assembly of God Church defines as sins. How does she justify these prohibited matters to herself? When we return home, I ask her about this seeming contradiction. She says she knows Jesus is with her because she "usually" wins. As for smoking, although the church doesn't like it, "Jesus is taking care of me," she asserts, "body and soul."

Samoan boys and girls, both teenagers and slightly older, seem a bit more openly friendly to each other than Tongan youngsters, acknowledging a sexual undercurrent and potential in their interactions, kidding with each other, sitting close, pushing against themselves, subtly touching. But, as in Tonga, not once, never do I ever see them

displaying open affection in public. I notice, too, that Samoan men don't ogle women and hardly ever stare at them, like American men frequently do. They don't whistle or yell out sexual and sexist comments at passing women. In fact, during the day, they don't seem to pay much attention to women at all. Love, sex, interest in, or infatuation with others are simply not demonstrated in the light of day here. In the bush, behind and under trees, in shadows and in the dark, yes, the Samoans mingle like the rest of us. But the full light of day imposes stringent, inhibiting forces on human interactions here.

Some of these cultural restraints must be especially difficult to adhere to for those who have lived outside of the islands for any appreciable length of time. In addition to Fa'a having lived in the United States, I learn that Tago also spent several years in Hawaii working as a carpenter; two of Tago's nephews, Hui and Filipo, both in their early twenties, spent the last few years in San Francisco, going to the city college there; a niece who owns the small grocery store just in front of Tago's home lived in Denver for seven years, and Tago himself has family now living in San Francisco. There are always relatives or neighbors coming in from and going to the United States for visits or extended stays. In fact, Tago says he wants Sunia to go back to the states with me so he can "get a good education." Several villagers I speak to indicate dissatisfaction with the schooling here, even though it's supposed to be comparable to American standards. Because schools here are now closed for summer vacation, I can't begin to judge their standards, but perhaps the belief in superior stateside schools is just an excuse to leave Samoa.

During the next few days we watch some more karate videos, American Ninja and Monkey in the Shadow of the Snake, among others, and I notice that Tago laughs at violent sections, somewhat as the Hungans did. Maybe it's embarrassed laughter or maybe it's just because the violence is so ludicrously depicted. It just seems so inappropriate. Like something young teenagers would do. The television is usually tuned to children's educational shows during the early evening, programs such as "Sesame

Street," "Mister Rogers' Neighborhood," "Reading Rainbow" and "3-2-1 Contact." Iva's daughter Ata is the most involved viewer, watching these shows far more closely than the two young boys. But almost without exception, no video movie or television show is carefully watched all the way through by those in the room. The set stays on, shows come and go, but whether anyone is watching or not is incidental. For instance, the PBS show about French cooking, "Madeline Cooks" (which strikes me as one of the most unlikely programs to be broadcast here), begins and holds everyone's attention for a fraction of time, then loses it for the rest of the half hour. Yet, although no one looks at it, the show remains on. As mentioned before, the only shows that draw serious appraisal are the Samoan news, the weekly wrestling, and, as the chief engineer also indicated, "Days of Our Lives," the afternoon soap opera that is played here at 10 p.m. The Samoan evening news is only 15 minutes long and is as lightweight a news show as I've ever seen. It presents few stories, which could be good because those that are shown then could be treated in some depth and detail. But they're not, they're just given length. This is a typical day's coverage: 1) the opening of the Samoan legislature, a ceremony; 2) a discussion of problems with an airline serving Samoa, interviews with disgruntled passengers; 3) an award to a education official, a ceremony; 4) an award given to the head of a local church, a ceremony; 5) the opening of the little league season, a ceremony; and 6) a brief mention of the governor's plans to attend the Democratic convention (he was mentioned in four of the night's six stories). And that's it. The stories are then told again in the 15-minute English version of the news, with those interviewed now speaking English, if they are bilingual, or other English-speaking people used. As Blauvelt said in evaluating the TV news, if you want to learn about Samoa, read the newspapers.

(Occasionally a sports show is broadcast for what I assume are specific interest audiences. I saw a high school basketball game filmed in a "remote" telecast. Only one camera was used. It followed players up and down the court in a continuous long shot

from one side of the gym. No announcer, play-by-play or otherwise, was present to explain either the obvious or the sublime, and no scores were superimposed on the screen. The only way viewers could learn the score was when there was a time out or break in the action. Then the camera could be focused on the scoreboard. There was narration, however, on the longboat races which depicted 20-men crews of Samoan oarsmen competing against each other or Tongans in long rowboats. Along with wrestling, these matches garnered the most attention of the Samoans when shown on television—even though the races had been held months and sometimes years before and all viewers knew the results of them.)

The following day begins at 5 a.m. when a man drives up to the house and yells for Tago. I get up about half an hour later and see that preparations are underway for a feast for the visiting government inspector and mayors. All morning, supplies keep arriving: frozen chicken legs and thighs, cured beef, hot dogs, chop suey, and yams. Tago and two chiefs from the village scrap taro, breadfruit and coconut for cooking and boiling. Iva and Fa'a prepare the barbecue fire, Tia assembles mats, and I roll out long 3-foot wide sheets of linoleum in the ceremonial house. The inspector and other guests arrive around 10 a.m. Purpose of his visit is to inspect the village for cleanliness, but I see no sign that he or anyone else check out the place. I notice that right outside Tago's house is a pile of refuse, and the visiting officials themselves nonchalantly toss soft drinks cans onto the ground behind them outside of the ceremonial house. Once the inspector, visiting mayors, local chiefs and *matais* are seated, the ceremony begins. The inspector receives 10 or so fine mats, some 5-gallon cans of cured beef, a long 'ava root branch, and of course the food. The visiting mayors also receive long roots of 'ava, but nothing else except food. Then a formal 'ava ceremony is performed. 'Ava (called *kava* in Tonga and other Polynesian countries) is a drink made by crushing the root of a pepper plant, adding water to the pulverized root and straining out the pulp. The resulting liquid, said

by some to be slightly narcotic, is poured into coconut shells and, following a special ritual and speeches, distributed to people in order of rank. These ceremonies are traditionally part of many formal events in Polynesian and Melanesian cultures. Drinking kava informally is also a common leisure activity in Tonga, but I didn't observe it in American Samoa. After the ceremony concludes and the guests have gone, Tago complains to me about its expense, the cost of the food, kava and mats. It is the Samoan way, he says, but "it's too difficult." Later, Tia and Iva likewise complain about the cost of ceremonies—especially when they come closely upon one another, such as this government visit on the heels of the funeral. In a few days another ceremony will occur, the wedding of a relative, that will again demand Tago and his family give mats, food and money. The complaints will be even louder then.

That evening, Tia is at church and Tago eating dinner when a villager comes to talk and give him some mats for the wedding. On television is a Samoan celebration filmed the year before. It earns everyone's attention while it is on, but when it ends, dial switching begins and Iva and the children only occasionally glance at the screen. The chosen channel now features a PBS show on Soviet law, in which Russian-speaking authorities have their words translated almost simultaneously into English, which must be even more difficult for Samoan-speaking viewers to comprehend. The show runs its almost hour-long course even though Tago, Iva, Ata and Sunia are asleep. The visitor, a neighbor named Tulu, and young Kili watch. Tago's nephew Filipino comes in, watches for a while and falls asleep. When Tia returns, Tago wakes and they talk together about him going on inspection tours to other villages tomorrow. The Samoan news, which is broadcast twice each night, starts up again, but the rain is so heavy on the metal roof that the news can't be heard and no one turns it up. Even though the kids and Iva are still sleeping, they are woken so that mats can be spread on the floor for them to sleep on for the night. Pillows and a few light blankets are brought out. Tago uses a *kali*, or wooden pillow built like a

small bridge. Sometimes visitors stay the night, sleeping on mats themselves. Most of the evenings duplicate this one, often with Fa'a or one of Iva's friends coming by to watch "Days of Our Lives," which Iva usually insists on seeing. Tonight she sleeps through it.

At 5:45 the next morning, I wake to the family singing prayers. Iva tells me that they do that every morning, if they're not too tired. Yet this is the only time during my three weeks that I hear them singing. As Tago prepares to go out on the inspection tour, he and Tia talk of his nephew, Filipino, who apparently publicly cursed Tia in the marketplace the day before. The few times I've talked to Filipino, I've found him to be pleasant but a bit spacey. Iva says he took "too many" drugs when he was living in San Francisco. Maybe. He says "man" a lot, and speaks in a slow, dreamy sort of way. The thing that amazes me is, if Filipino did something wrong, why didn't anyone do anything about it, either in the market yesterday or when he came to watch television last night? Why didn't anyone throw him out, I ask Iva. She says Samoan custom doesn't allow that. "You put the anger in your heart and say nothing—no yelling or punching," she says.

When Tago goes off, I head into town myself, to interview Leo'o Ma'o, who's been the station manager for KVZK for the past three and a half years. I'm curious if his interpretation of the station's procedures will contradict or reinforce Blauvelt's, his chief engineer. I'd written to him before I came to Samoa, asking if I could see him and he wrote back saying he wouldn't have time. Now that I'm here, however, and with an introduction from a government officer who knows him, I am accepted. A handsome Samoan dressed in western clothes—white slacks, semi-dress white shirt and sports jacket—Ma'o tells me that he's worked at the station for 23 years. He thinks television is a positive force in Samoan life for about 80 percent of the time "because Samoa was and is isolated (from the rest of the world) from an information standpoint." The other 20 percent of television, especially its violence, he says, is negative, but he isn't exact about

the nature of how it is negative. Asked about what the viewers want to see, Ma'o says he doesn't know what's popular. He hasn't done an audience survey since 1976, and hasn't changed programs since he took over. In the early days of television here, 25 years ago, dozens if not hundreds of villagers, would crowd around the few TV sets in the villages, according to Ma'o. Now, he says, almost everyone has a set. I ask him if he thinks videos are cutting into the TV audience. He doesn't think so, he says, based on conversations with friends and his brother, who owns a small video store. "I think people tried video as something new when it came here three or four years ago but are tiring of it now and not getting what they want. They're coming back to television," he declares. For someone who has been working as long in television as he has, Ma'o gives off no sense of either enthusiasm or disdain for it, and although there are papers carefully placed on his neat desk, they are blank. He doesn't appear busy.

When I get back to Amanave, a minor crisis is occurring, this one involving Filipo's younger brother, Hui. According to Iva, Hui had also indulged in too many drugs while in San Francisco. Apparently late this morning, Hui's mind snapped. I had spoken to him briefly before I went to town and he seemed a bit unfocused. Now I can hear him in his house wailing, proclaiming his dedication to God and Jesus at the top of his voice. Iva says he's been going on like this for several hours. Tago and Fa'a get Hui into a pickup truck and, along with Hui's mother, they drive off to the hospital. The irony is that Hui, Filipo, and their mother were to have taken a plane back to San Francisco tonight.

Incidents such as the one involving Hui provide jarring reminders that while I'm blithely observing people's lives, sort of expecting the normal routine of day-to-day existence, those I'm watching are busy living their lives, making decisions based on all the variety of experiences they've accrued on this planet. My little window looks at them within a three-week frame, but they've got no defining proscenium that proscribes their

actions. Things that seem unique or revelations to me appear so only because I'm an outsider looking in, rather than one of the cast of characters in a slowly evolving but basically logical and coherent novel of life. The script makes sense to them, and things that seem indecipherable to me are not only not the fault of the islanders, but not really of any consequence to them. They are not performing for my benefit. Later that day, Iva mentions something off-handedly, which means that it is common knowledge and everyone knows about it but me: Kili is not her son, but the son of her sister. Kili's father is Tago's brother-in-law, who is also Fa'a's father. According to Iva, Fa'a's father refused to admit his involvement in the affair (although everyone in the village knew about it), and her sister, after giving birth to Kili, returned to her home in Western Samoa. Iva says the man refuses to acknowledge anything and no one, Tago and Tia included, have demanded he at least confess his parentage, let alone provide monetary support. As it stands, Iva says, she's the person solely responsible for Kili's upbringing. Everyone else, she complains, simply looks the other way about the matter. This piece of information explains a minor point to me—the fact that when disciplining the children, Iva seems to reserve the most severe punishment for Kili. If she slaps them all, Kili is the one who gets the hardest swings. Still, I don't know who's the father of the rest of her children, including the one she's carrying. I hesitate to ask, assuming the question may be painful if her husband has abandoned her—an answer, I realize later, that has no rational basis except my wild, unsubstantiated fear that for some reason Polynesian men may be more likely than Americans to cast aside their impregnated mates. As it turns out, there is no husband and the father has always been around. I just haven't opened my eyes wide enough to recognize him. But I don't see him yet.

What I do see in Tago's home are strange surface contradictions: the place has many modern conveniences, noted above, but the family frequently dresses in tattered and old clothes. Tia wears frayed sweaters, the children wear pants and shirts split at the

seams, and occasionally Kili wears a little girl's dress. Two reasons for the state of clothing occur to me: one, the rough, hand-wash method of cleaning clothes (which sometimes includes soaking them overnight in a bucket of undiluted bleach) probably weakens fabrics faster than machine washings; and two, the fact that household finances fluctuate wildly here from month to month or week to week. If anything is going to be cut back on, clothes seem to be top on the list. Each family member has nice *lavalavas* to employ for special events or trips to town; around the house, there's no need for special attire. I have no clear picture of Tago's income as mayor, even though I ask him about it several times. He says he makes \$4,600 a year, but apparently some of that money comes from his sisters in San Francisco. Nevertheless, \$4,600 is a tidy sum for life in Amanave, but hardly a luxurious one. Although Tago has no vehicle to maintain and no house payments, clothes and foodstuffs here are priced about the same as in the United States, if not slightly higher. If all his family ate was Samoan yams and fresh fish, Tago's income would go a long way. But most of the time they eat canned food, frozen chickens, and store-bought fish. So, when there's a strain on the budget, such as those incurred by funeral and wedding ceremonies or visits by government officials, cutbacks are necessary. There is, however, the possibility to make money or at least get some back from the wedding activities. And even though Tago bemoans the upcoming nuptials, he will temporarily come out ahead in that match.

For the next several days, Tago and Tia scramble about trying to obtain the needed number of fine mats to give as gifts at the wedding. On the morning of the ceremony, they still are short. Tago wants 20 to 30 mats but they've collected only 14. They put in four more of their own. The rest have come from Tago's family and extended family. Because of the funeral last week and government inspector's visit earlier this week, everyone in the village is a bit short of mats. Iva expresses anger about an older man named Tulu, who is Tago's cousin. She says that one of Tago's sisters in San Francisco

helped Tulu and his six daughters and three sons come to the United States, get the proper papers and found them places to stay in the city. Now they have all returned to Samoa and although all of them have jobs, none contribute mats. This dishonors the family, says Iva. In desperation, Tago and Tia scavenge their old mats, take the feather decorations off some of the poorer ones and glue them onto the better ones. So-called fine mats are woven of the same bark material as regular mats, only the weave is much tighter and thinner, a quarter inch or less, rather than a half or full-inch. Although the wedding has been the focus of activities for days now, Tago and Tia are unconcerned about getting to it on time. We arrive just as it's ending. And in spite of the fact that Tia says it is a traditional Samoan ceremony, it differs little from stateside affairs: the pyramid of bride and groom in center, flanked by bridesmaids on one side and best men on the other, all formally attired in gowns and suits. The minister, Viliamo, in a pale grey suit, stood before bride and groom giving instructions. The young couple, she in bright white gown, he in a pure white tuxedo and white shoes, exchange a quick (embarrassed?) peck after the vows, and leave the church through an archway of white flowers. They climb into a long, white, chauffeured Cadillac, and are driven off, chased by cars full of shouting, horn-honking guests. Traditional Samoan? The reception that follows is similarly western in flavor. Held a few miles away in a restaurant decorated with the appropriate streamers and flowers hanging from ceiling and post, the reception features a small dance floor with obligatory mirrored ball above it, and a long table set off at the front for the wedding party and cake. There is no band, and the stereo system set up to provide music, malfunctions. Hence the whole affair lasts only an hour, ending shortly after the catered food (the ubiquitous chicken leg and thigh, chop suey, fish sticks, yams, beef teriyaki, and some egg concoction) is served—mostly cold, because the kitchen is outside and heavy rain falls on the dishes as they're brought in. Tago gives a short speech, that no one seems to listen to, and the newlyweds dance. Then it's over. The one thing that makes the event

worthwhile for me has nothing to do with it. Before most of the guests arrive at the reception, I sit with Fa'a's brother, a man named Toa'toetu, who is also a minister for the Assembly of God Church in Amanave. I'd heard hints of things that indicated a feud between Tago's family and his sister's family. There was, of course, the fact that the husband of Tago's sister had gotten Iva's sister pregnant, but Iva was incensed also that the sister's son, Toa'toetu, had taken several bunches of Tago's bananas without asking for them. Given the difference in severity between the two acts, the taking of bananas seemed hardly significant. I guessed there was more to it than that. Toa'toetu tells me he doesn't approve of Tia. He doesn't like it that she plays poker and smokes, in direct opposition to the church's teachings, and he indicates that Tia keeps the fine mats she asks for as gifts for others, and sells them. I find that a bit hard to believe, but I can understand his displeasure with Tia. She displays a self-righteous arrogance about religion that must be especially difficult to contend with if you're supposed to be her minister. Whenever I point out to Tia that she's doing something contrary to her religion, she tells me that it's all right, God will take care of her. Her allegiance to the Assembly of God Church ends whenever she chooses to do something beyond its dictates. Her attitude is certainly nothing uncommon, nor is it confined to Samoans. It's something she and Toa'toetu have to resolve. But he tells me one other thing that catches me off guard. Tia, he says, isn't married to Tago, even though they've lived together more than 10 years. Tago is married to a woman in San Jose. A few minutes later, we have to rearrange the tables for some reason and Tia comes to me, demanding that I sit with her. I tell her I want to continue talking with Toa'toetu, but Tia becomes visibly upset and insists I join her. I move to her table, feeling angry and confused. I am a guest in her house and do not want to insult her or the family, but I don't like being treated like an errant child. Later Tia asks to borrow money to buy a rum and Coke. What the hell. I treat her.

Wedding activities continue that afternoon in the bride's house, where Tago performs more of his duties as a high talking chief. He makes an impassioned speech, cajoling the villages assembled to bring more fine mats to give to the groom's family. The prestige of the village is at stake, he says, among other things. The pitch is successful: 270 fine mats and a piece of tapa are piled in the middle of the floor. Then the goods, along with a huge roasted pig, are packed into several buses, pickup trucks and cars, and the Amanave people head off to the village of the groom's family, a half-hour away. Once there, the bride's family presents the gifts to the groom's in a great, lengthy show, 10 or so mats at a time, in addition to the pig, plus cans of cured beef and fists full of money. Before each presentation, someone standing outside of the house loudly proclaims what the gifts are and who's giving them. Then a stream of villagers carry the mats and money to the groom's father. Tago makes more speeches. In response, the groom's family gives back money, approximately \$2,500 (it's supposed to equal \$10 per mat, Tago says, but it doesn't quite), and some of the cured beef. Finally, the Amanave contingent head back to the bride's house, where Tago distributes the money in proportion to the number of mats given by each family. Beginning with the wedding, three full meals are consumed during the course of this day, plus two separate servings of wedding sweets and cakes. It's easy to see why one has to be large to survive as a Samoan. When Tago gets home that night, he snacks on cake and yams before going to bed.

By 4 or 5 a.m. the next day, Sunday, I hear Tia and Tago talking and then the radio come on, church music rising from it. Tia offers refrains of "Praise God," "Hallelujah," and "Amen," and I go back to sleep. When I get up an hour later, Tia's music is still playing loudly, although Iva and the children remain sprawled out asleep on the floor. Tago is off fixing an *umu* with Filipino. For some reason, Tia doesn't insist I go to church with her, perhaps because she thinks I'm godless, or maybe because it's raining so hard that she herself isn't in a rush to go. She has her bible and religious music and

doesn't really need to go outside to commune with God, she says. When the children finally arise, the two boys play together and Sunia takes a stick and makes "whoosh, whoosh, whoosh" sound effects similar to the sounds of swinging swords in the kung fu movies he frequently sees. Unable to find a comparable stick, Kili makes the same noises while swinging his hand. Iva, the last to rise, straightens the sleeping area, rolling up the mats and sweeping the floor. Her daughter Ata helps, collecting the 10 or so metal stands that held mosquito coils. Made of a material that burns slowly like incense, the coils produce smoke that is lethal to mosquitos (and obviously not the finest substance for humans to inhale, either) but only if they fly in it for a while. Generally, the mosquitos flee from the fumes, so in effect the coils serve as a shield rather than as a bug slayer. I'm a bit surprised the family uses the coils, figuring they'd either be accustomed to the mosquitos or immune to them, as Salesi seemed to be in Hunga. Once the clean-up is over, Iva tells me she won \$34 the night before playing Bingo. She pays back \$10 she borrowed from me, and everyone seems in a good mood. In addition to Iva having money, Tago's got \$400 from the mats he and the family donated for the wedding.

Lunch consists of food from the *umu* and contains more traditional Samoan dishes than any meal I've had so far: baked fish, breadfruit and yams cooked in coconut, plus a lamb and vegetable soup, cured beef, tea and soda pop. Afterwards, some married friends of Tia's come to visit. The wife is almost a mirror image of Tia—short, squat, hair tightly piled on her head in a bun, and a lit cigarette always hanging out of her mouth. The husband is a *matai*, or head of a large family unit. He's in his 50s, wears a worn teeshirt with a surfer pictured on it, and a *lavalava*. They discuss the wedding, and Tago speaks highly of the usefulness of all the fine mats the newlyweds received. He tells Tia's friends that he gave out \$10 per mat to all who contributed them, but gave nothing to those who gave no mats, an apparent slap at his sister. Iva tells me later that Tago's sister has many mats but never shares them. This is the flip side of Toa'toetu's complaint about Tia. The

feud between these two families must run deeply, but it's hard to believe it is just over a stolen bunch of bananas. It may have even predated the impregnating of Iva's sister by Tago's sister's husband, which happened about five years ago. The fascinating thing is that although members of each family speaks ill of the other when they're apart, they still have contact, and visit and appear friendly with each other when they're together.

In the afternoon, Iva makes cocoa the old-fashioned way, from the beans picked off cocoa trees on Tago's small plantation. First Iva heats the beans on the lid of a 55-gallon drum, then peels a membrane-like skin from each. Next, she heats a huge stone and a wooden block, in which is a deep hole. She puts the beans in the hole and methodically crushes them into a paste with the stone. Boiling water turns the paste into a rich and potent drinking cocoa, so much more bitter than the milk chocolate liquids consumed in the states that a liberal amount of sugar has to be added to it. The process takes about two hours and isn't easy, but the results are worth it to the family, all of whom enjoy the drink. Unfortunately for Iva, just as she's about to enjoy a leisurely cup or two, the house is invaded by villagers bringing with them the videotape of last week's funeral. About a dozen of us watch this recent piece of history, which begins in the hospital, apparently just after the man has died. The body is shown being lifted, carried and placed in the coffin, and the coffin being put in a car. The ceremonies in the man's house come next, including the different choirs singing and various villagers giving gifts. Also shown are the various chiefs and visitors in the house, including me, with my leg extended, the taboo that will be noted by all Samoans each time the video is rerun, and a few murmurs and cluckings among those assembled occur now. Before the video has run its course, however, Tago turns it off. It's 5:30 p.m. Time for wrestling. Iva, who had hesitated to serve the cocoa, possibly waiting until the group cleared out, realizes that most of the visitors are going to stay awhile. She gives each a cup and goes back to the kitchen to whip up a new batch. Both the men and women intently watch the wrestling, commenting

on it and laughing at the various outrageous antics of the wrestlers. Wrestling is even important enough to make sure the picture on the tube comes in clearly and in color. Tago's antenna is fastened to the side of his guest house, and occasionally village children will grab its aluminum tubing and swing around on it, turning the antenna slightly and messing up the picture on the set. No one bothers to fix it for routine programs, but for wrestling, a clear picture in sharp color is required. When the wrestling matches end, the funeral tape is started again and most of the ceremony is shown, except the burial. It's dark now, well after 7 p.m. The karate film Cavalier is put on but perhaps like me, most of the viewers here have seen it, because they pay it little attention. Before the group breaks up, though, a young man rushes in with another video and this one has a guaranteed audience. It's a two-hour extravaganza of highlights from The International World of Wrestling. Some 20 villagers are in Tago's house by now, cheering their favorite wrestlers and discussing the matches, which, from a technical standpoint, are pretty well staged, if a bit predictable and repetitious. It's clear that the villagers believe the fights are real, not acted and rehearsed. I'm intrigued by the way people come into the house. Many just walk in, sit down and say nothing, never acknowledging the others. And the others, in turn, don't acknowledge them. After a while, again without saying anything, they leave. Some are given food and drink. Most smoke. Iva, weary after hours of making cocoa and food for a seemingly unending crowd of villagers, tries also to contend with her children. Sunia complains that he has to "doo doo." Tia, meanwhile, demands that Iva hurry up with the food. Frustrated and briefly angry, Iva responds that if she isn't left alone, "Sunia will shit in the cocoa pot." Then she sees me looking at her, surprised, and she laughs. Ultimately, most of the villagers go home, but one couple, Tia's friends and their son, sleep that night on the floor with the rest of Tago's family. It's been a long hard day for Iva, especially considering she's eight months pregnant. But for her such days are not uncommon.

Iva is almost always stuck in the house, working. Tia and Tago go to town, but Iva stays home cleaning and taking care of her kids. She becomes more and more my primary informant and her English skills improve the more she speaks to me. If I mention I've met someone or seen someone new to me, Iva gives me background on the person—usually who that person has coupled with. I learn that the man in the Catholic Church choir who wears lipstick, mascara and eyeliner is also a performer in some Pago Pago bars and that, according to Iva, *papalagis* from the hotels often visit him for sexual favors. Some of the young village boys also visit him, she says. She tells me that a 15-year-old girl I met at the burial service and who spoke fluent English, lost her virginity a few years ago (I don't get the time frame exactly) in a liaison with one of Iva's relatives. Iva says the boy "broke" her. Iva says that Fa'a's sister, named Mati, was beaten up by her husband on the night she gave birth to their first child. The husband accused Mati of having an affair with another man who was responsible for the baby. Iva says she advised Mati to leave her husband, but instead, Mati told him what Iva said, which simply made him mad at Iva. The husband is extremely jealous, Iva tells me, and that's why Mati hasn't been visiting Iva much since I came to stay in the house. He doesn't want her to have anything to do with other men, me included. Meanwhile, says Iva, the husband, who works on Manua, a nearby island, sleeps with many other women. "Stupid woman," Iva says of Mati. Iva shows me a textbook she had used when she went to the community college, a few miles from Amanave. It was for a sociology class she was taking to help her understand human nature and male-female relationships, she explains. Her numerous pregnancies have kept her from finishing school, she says, but she continues to observe the various pairings and maneuvering of men and women in the village—and on "Days of Our Lives," her favorite show. She diagrams the relationships of characters on that soap opera to me as if they were real people, and suddenly the incongruity of the show's popularity here disappears. It seems much closer to her day-to-

day life than it is to many viewers in the states. I ask her directly why she watches it. The example Iva gives as a reply stuns me. She discusses two male characters who don't know who their real father is and the confusion that causes, and how one of them hates his mother. Iva says he has to be told the truth about the real father so that he won't feel that hatred. This acknowledgement of the real parent is especially important to Iva because she has a son who doesn't know that Iva is his mother! Her son, she reveals, lives in San Francisco with one of Tago's sisters. The sister, who is not married, wanted a son and asked Tago for it. Samoan custom, Iva says, meant Iva had to give it up. "But I can't go and bring it back because Samoan custom is too hard," she says. "Maybe I could go and tell him he is my son. Maybe he recognize me because of the blood (relationship), he know me. Maybe somebody tell him and he come and find me...." But why can Tago make you give your baby away? What about your husband, I finally ask.

"I have no husband," Iva says. "The old man, Tago, he is the father."

And then the whole story comes out. Iva is Tia's daughter, but as Fa'a's brother, Toa'toetu told me, Tia is not married to Tago, even though they live as a couple. According to Iva, Tia can no longer have children, and Tago wanted some sons to carry on his name and estate in Samoa. Apparently he has children who live with his wife in San Jose. Tia suggested that Tago use Iva as surrogate wife to bear his children. Iva tells me that Tia did not mention this matter to her. She was 19 at the time, and she and Tia were living with Tago in Amanave, when Tia left for a few days to visit relatives in Western Samoa. Iva had spent the day swimming and was going to stay the night at a small house in the bush. Tago, Iva says, told her he would be in the house in the village. That night, however, Tago showed up in the bush and, Iva says, "he broke me. I didn't know what to do. I was ashamed." Afterwards, when she began to bleed, Tago took her to a stream to wash. She says she kept her eyes closed and wouldn't talk. Her lips were swollen, she says. "The people know," she says, meaning also that they knew. But no

one said anything. In traditional Samoan custom, concubines often accompanied the wives of chiefs and bore the chiefs' children. When Tia returned from Western Samoa, she urged Iva to marry Tago but Iva says she didn't want to. All of Iva's children, including the one in San Francisco and the one she is carrying, were fathered by Tago. Iva says she loves the children, and she doesn't seem to bear any grudge toward Tago, at least not now. What she most regrets, she says, is the loss of her future. She has nothing to look forward to. She had a boyfriend but Tago chased him off years ago, Iva says. And her duties as a mother have kept her from finishing school. Iva's days are housebound and maid-like. Her only escape is when she slips out once a week or so to play Bingo, and in the evenings, when she can watch the days of someone else's life. When Tago returns that evening, he looks bigger to me, colder, but I can't find cruelty in his face, as if he was some heartless villain. It is obvious that he loves his children, and they rush to embrace him whenever he comes home from work or town. Iva does not display hatred of or anger at Tago. Their relations are usually cordial, occasionally warm and mixed with laughter, and the only snappishness that occurs is based on household problems, not deep-seated emotional scares. In spite of my sense that I should somehow be upset with Tago for what he did to Iva, that reaction seems misplaced here, especially if Iva herself bears no outward animosity. But everything here shifts slightly off-center in my consciousness. The prism tilts, the personalities appear differently to me now.

On several mornings, Tago goes off to his office in a nearby village. He never stays more than a few hours there doing his official business, but I'm never quite sure what that business encompasses. He says it mainly concerns passing on government edicts to the people in the village, such as the importance of cleaning up litter. If this is the case, however, the message is not well-obeyed. Every village between Pago Pago and Amanave is peppered with litter; thousands of cups and cans and pieces of paper line the roadway. The situation is worse than anything I have seen in the states, and it is

especially bad considering that the past few days have been focused on clean-up campaigns. There seems to be acknowledgement of the problem without the accompanying will to do something about it. On most buses, signs direct passengers to deposit trash in receptacles, but everyone from the driver on down tosses trash out the window. The pristine beauty of the country is marred by this ugliness which stands out like thick white dandruff in jet black hair:

This morning, both Tago and Tia go off on the bus, and according to Iva, they're going into town to play electronic poker. Iva's both worried and upset because Tia took the money Tago got in exchange for the fine mats at the wedding, plus money Iva had hidden to be used to bring her sister back here from Western Samoa. Iva says she has no bank account, so she hides the money wherever she can find a good place around the house. But Tia always manages to locate it. When Tago and Tia return that evening, there is no joy in their faces. Tia wears a tight smile. "No lucky today," she says. "Lucky tomorrow." Tago says nothing. I hesitate to inquire about how much the lack of luck lost them. The television is on, but no one watches it. When a documentary special called "Guns, Guns, Guns" comes on, Iva and Tia look at it, but Tia thinks it's about cocaine users because people are shown being shot and police are involved. She doesn't understand the narration, which is about the number of guns available in the United States and who has them. Iva, too, has trouble grasping the words. She can see people who have been wounded, but she doesn't know the who or whys involved; the pictures don't tell the whole story here, as they do in most action films the family usually sees. Later, when "Days of Our Lives" appears, Tago tells Iva to change it because the children are still awake. He doesn't like the sexual intimacies pictured on that program.

They lost a bundle. That's what Iva tells me the next day, although even she's not sure how much. She thinks it was somewhere around \$300. I have trouble envisioning someone putting (at least) 1,200 quarters into a machine, but what do I know? Iva tells

me that Tago waited for me to leave the room last night before he berated Tia, saying she was stupid and brought shame to him. Today, he couldn't go to a mayors' meeting because he didn't have any money to get there, Iva says. Apparently Tia lost everything they had, including Iva's savings, and the family hasn't money for food or for Tia's cigarettes and Tago's chew. I start supplying their vices, buying the children cans of soda, and bringing in other minor supplies the family needs, like bleach and laundry soap.

Tago seems to be home most of the time now during the day. We sit watching a "transformer" carton, called "Voltron," I think—Iva, the children, Tago and I. It's 3 o'clock. A *matai* comes in, watches with us. Tago seems bored. He puts a Charles Bronson film, Murphy's Law, into the VCR and he and the *matai* pay relatively close attention to it. A few scenes of quick nudity slip by without comment, but when it appears that a rape is going to take place in the film, Tago tells Ata to fast-forward the movie. Another potentially sexy scene is also fast-forwarded, but nothing is done to keep the rather graphic scenes of violence in this action film from the youngsters' eyes. The Samoan news follows, the family eating in a semi-circle before it, serenaded next by "Mister Roger's Neighborhood," and then "Reading Rainbow," the usual line-up. Again, the sound is almost too low to hear. Tago doesn't pay much attention to the shows, but a story a few minutes later about bats and turtles on "3-2-1 Contact" grabs him briefly. He's familiar with these kinds of bats and turtles. The show reminds him of a Samoan tale about a mouse that asked a bat to loan it its wings. The mouse flew away and never returned the bat's wings, and that's why, Tago explains, Samoan bats don't fly. Tago likewise finds interest in a PBS interview show, "Tony Brown's Journal," which features Dick Gregory speaking on addiction to drugs both legal and illegal. Gregory discusses rearranging difference balances in the body, chemical and spiritual, to free it of the need for drugs, a fairly complex concept. Tago, however, seems to understand it. He calls Gregory smart because of Gregory's recommendations about stopping the supply of

cocaine into the U.S. by watching banks and money coming into them, and using satellite photos to spot crops. Both Brown and Gregory are black men, and because of an earlier conversation with Tago, I'm surprised at his comments. A week ago when "Tony Brown's Journal" came on (with comedian Bill Cosby as guest), Tago asked me if there were "too many" black people where I lived. I had noticed that at least some Samoans used the word "too" to mean "very," and so I responded to both possible meanings. I said there weren't very many black people where I lived, although the family in the house behind mine and one just around the corner were black. And I said that it didn't matter how many people there were or what their color was, there would always be good ones and bad ones. Not exactly profound. But why did he ask the question? Tago said that his sisters in San Francisco lived in mostly black neighborhoods. "Did they ever do anything bad to you?" I wondered. Tago said no, but that blacks in San Francisco walked around in a certain way, and he tried to demonstrate a sort of cockiness that does not come naturally to Samoans. He said, too, that they were noisy, by which I assumed he meant "loud talking," another trait that Samoans seem not to have acquired. Except for praying, I don't recall any Samoan or Tongan ever speaking loudly, unless the islander was drunk. The conversation went no further, and I filed it as a sign of potential prejudice, examples of which I'd observed expressed by island people toward each other elsewhere—Tongans saying Samoans are bad, Fijians saying Tongans are bad, Samoans saying Fijians are bad, etc. In fact, the only clear cut example of prejudice I really heard from Tago was against Western Samoans, which struck me as especially misplaced since both Tia and Iva are from Western Samoa. He said simply that the Western Samoans in Amanave were not good people, and the owner of the store in front of Tago's gave a similar assessment, saying her worst customers were from there. Anyway, Tago's approval of Dick Gregory tonight makes me reassess his earlier observations. And a few minutes later, "The Taiwan Hour" begins, a show whose broadcast surprises because there appears to be no sizable

Taiwanese population in Samoa. Nevertheless, everyone in the family here seems to love it, and sit transfixed before it. It is bright, gaudy, filled with singing and dancing and lots of children. The fact that it is in Chinese makes no difference. The youngsters on the show, whether in the audience or on stage, are well groomed, seemingly intelligent, and talented—at least they sing and dance with enthusiasm, if not always skill. "Smart kids," says Iva. "That's what I like."

Two hours later, the television drones on but as usual, attention to it is minimal. It's dinner time again. Because the family has no fresh funds, food is mostly yams and rice and canned tuna. During the wanning hours of the evening, Tago, Tia, Iva and the children seem to take turns falling asleep and waking while the TV showers them in its heat-less glow. If the children wake, especially Kili or Sunia, they wake whichever elder is sleeping. As in Hunga with the Tongans, there is no innate respect for snoozing citizens. The dividing line between being awake and asleep is not the sharp demarcation here that it is in the states. Sleep begins and ends as quickly as a falling or rising eyelid. Ultimately, when all the mats are arranged, blankets spread and lights darkened, the family sleeps as one, but even then, not for long. At 1:30 a.m., a metallic commotion jars me alert. It is pouring, the rain drumming so heavy and steadily on the roof above my bed that little other sounds seep in except for a racket that reminds me of a deep drum being struck. I force myself back to sleep and learn in the morning that Tago had gone outside when the thick rains came and emptied his garbage can of the water standing in it. Then he washed it out with a brush, swirled the water around in it to rinse, dumped the can, and set it out again to collect the freshly cascading current streaming off his roof. All of this under a torrent of tropical rain.

Tia, as usual, plays a religious music tape at 6 a.m. to begin the next day, but Sunia is up not long after that and turns on CNN, watches it for a minute or two, then wanders away from it. Tulu and two older women come by shortly after 8 a.m., sit in a

circle with Tago and Tia and talk for for an hour as the television drones on across the room. It is too low, again, to hear. I sit closer to it than they and cannot make out the words. The CNN reports are not news here, they are background activity. I give Iva \$10 to play Bingo, and she, Tia and the children take the bus into Pago to do so. After the visitors leave, Tago goes outside to repair the screens on his windows to keep out mosquitos. Although he has carpenter's tools, he has no supplies and ends up pulling boards off part of his house to use for siding and to obtain nails. I help, holding the wood and hammering clumsily, and once we finish, Tago seems at a loss as to what to do with me. He knows that I am studying the use of television here, and he wants to be useful to my study so he puts a video tape in the machine, a docudrama about Eisenhower, that we've seen before. Whenever I think anyone in the family is watching something because of me, I leave the room and stay away for as long as I think is necessary to allow them to change the channel, or turn off the TV, or do whatever they might normally be doing had I not been there. It is, admittedly, an imperfect experiment. Because I am there, they are obviously behaving somewhat differently than they would if I wasn't there. Any change in the basic composition of an entity, such as this family, is bound to have some ramifications. Nevertheless, most of the time they appear to be acting normally, at least in relation to watching television and videos. And with the exception of Tago's hesitancy to criticize Tia while I was there the other night, few attempts have been made to either specifically bring me in or pointedly leave me out of other activities. I'm just there. If I want to be included, I can ask to be. Because I don't speak Samoan, family members can talk together as privately as if I didn't exist at all. A bit later, a youngster brings in a James Bond movie, The Spy Who Loved Me, which Tago dutifully puts in the machine, watches for a while, then walks out on. I leave too, go watch a dozen teenagers play volleyball on a small blacktop nearby. They don't seem to keep score, and just keep serving and volleying, laughing and smashing the ball, which frequently bounds off down

a slight ravine into a stream that empties into the ocean. Attired in shorts and teeshirts for the most part, with a few of the girls in *lavalavas*, they're on the court for at least two or three hours almost every afternoon except Sundays, and often play until the shadows start filling in after sunset. Daytime television apparently holds no great lure for these youngsters.

Back at home, Tago sits before a baseball game on TV, his face reflecting no interest in it, let alone emotion for or against the competing teams. The rest of the family has returned, defeated, from the Bingo wars. Tia is getting desperate; she has no money to buy cigarettes and seems to be going through withdrawal without them. I feel awkward about it. I can buy her cigarettes but I don't really want to support her habit. Yet she and the family have shown me kindness and care. At the same time, Tago is still mad at Tia for having lost all the money and considers that her going without cigarettes is sort of justifiable punishment. Iva feels the same way. So each morning, I buy Tia one pack, which she goes through in less than a day. That way, I don't feel totally guilty, but Tia doesn't escape all discomfort, either. Still, when I see her ransacking the house looking for a stray cigarette at 10 that night, I cringe. Lack of cigarettes will not only make her miserable, they'll come back to haunt me. Tia doesn't sleep well if she doesn't have her smokes, and she gets up even earlier, around 3 a.m., the next day to play her religious music. As usual, everyone in the house but me sleeps through the singing. After breakfast, she and I go over Revelations once again. The world is coming to an end, Tia tells me, and Jesus is coming to save only those who praise him through the Assembly of God Church. The rest of the world, she declares, is "rubbish." She doesn't like to talk about anything else but God and Jesus because "it's useless." Earthly things will not survive. I suggest that taking care of the present world, since God apparently made it too, might be of some value, but she interprets concern with the world as following Satan's pathway. "Only praise Jesus every time," she says.

It's getting close to the day when I'll be leaving, and Tia surprises me by becoming maudlin. "We love you, Audrey," she says, her smile less fixed than usual. "We love you. You come back anytime." Iva tells me later that Tago said he was sad I would be leaving. I wouldn't have guessed such sentiment from either of them. Nothing they did openly demonstrated a sense of closeness toward me—concern, yes, but not affection. So much for my insight on that matter.

Before I go, I still have to conduct interviews concerning attitudes about television and other western values. In Hunga, where I was already known, I started the interviews almost immediately. But in Amanave, I wanted the villagers to get used to having me around before I went out questioning them. Fa'a has promised to be my interpreter and guide, but after making that offer (several times, in fact) and pledging to show up the next morning to begin, he disappears. I don't see Fa'a again until just before I leave. I explain my problem to Tago and suggest that I use as guide, a young man I met at the wedding named Albert, who spoke perfect English. "He is from Western Samoa," Tago warns, "not a good man." Well, who, then? Ultimately, Tago says he will be my guide. This no small offer, for, as Tago explains, he is a chief and does not go out to visit others, they come to see him. I have some reservations about Tago helping out, in addition to his relatively limited skills in English, but I have to have someone who will be accepted by villagers. It proves to be a mixed blessing.

Tago has definite ideas about who should and should not be interviewed, and when. After Tago puts off our interview journey for two days with promises to do it "tomorrow," we finally set out on a Saturday when, he assures me, people will be home. Makes sense, but most villagers are home other days as well. We conduct interviews with four families, but the going is slow because in two places we visit, we are offered food. Naturally, the presence of Tago, a high talking chief, in one's house is an honor and food must be served. In a third home we are given a fruit drink and dessert. At the end, about

three hours later, Tago and I are ready to return home. My stomach can't take any more and Tago is tired.

"Hard work," he says, lying flat on the floor and patting his belly.

"We'll go out again tomorrow?" I ask, hopefully.

"Yes, early, before church. Maybe five o'clock," Tago says.

"Well...maybe not so early. We don't want to wake people up."

Tago nods. "It's all right." I'm not sure he means that it's all right not to start so early or it's all right to wake people, but I figure I'll find out tomorrow morning.

Most of those I talk to about television approve of it. One of the people I interviewed, a shop owner, tells me he believes television is very important to Samoans. "The older folks watch it to laugh and to see Sunday church shows," he observes. Like others, he prefers wrestling and action shows which, he indicates, are less liable to be offensive to viewers. "Days of Our Lives," he points out, is a good show to watch but not while his sister or other females are around because of its sexual nature. As in Tonga, there are taboos here about brothers and sisters, men and women, seeing sexually oriented material together. Doing sexually oriented activities, one assumes, is perfectly fine.

But one voice is raised against it. Albert, the young man I met at the wedding, was highly critical. "Television," he told me, "sullies the formalities of proper English and Samoan language usage. The evening devotional (prayer) has been displaced by it. And evening activities are curtailed promptly at 10 p.m. so that 'Days of Our Lives' can be seen." Albert's concern with evening prayer is perhaps more pronounced than others, because he is a devout Mormon whose church emphasizes such "devotionals" and evening family activities.

Iva herself expresses less than total enthusiasm for television, although she does find some positive attributes in it. "It tells me what's new, what's useful for your life," Iva says. "It is different from Samoan life. I think it is valuable." But, referring to some of

the violent things she sees on television and on video movies, she adds, "I don't like to see it. It's too sad. It is awful to see the blood come out. I close my eyes. I don't like my kids to watch because the kids like to see (action shows). Sunia—I think he's not interested if someone's killed. He just look at it. He does not feel love if someone is hurt. Maybe just Ata does. I think it's not okay to see. If I say, 'hey, don't do that,' the old man (Tago) says to leave the kids alone. He doesn't think about it doing things to their minds. Tago and Tia never mind for the kids. I tell Ata that (certain) movies are not for the kids. But Kili, he always watch."

Iva and Albert's fears may be too little and too late. Albert noted that the only people "free from television's influence are those in rural areas who can't get reception." There are few of these places left in American Samoa, I'd guess, and there are always other homes nearby where reception is good. But others don't find negative implications bound to television. A man named Fonoti, the government official who was instrumental in finding me a family to stay with here, tells me television "is the most important thing in Samoa. What else is there to do?" he rhetorically asks in way of explanation.

I get up early Sunday, about 6:30, but Tago is not ready to go out interviewing. "Later," he says. He and Hiu, who seems to have recovered from his bursts of religious fervor, prepare a *umu* to cook yams in the backyard. When Tago returns, I ask him again about doing interviews. "After church," he says. That time, too, comes and goes. Around 1 o'clock, a villager appears, complaining about his water pipe not working, and we go to his house to investigate the matter. While there, Tago suggests I do an interview. Meanwhile, Tago sends villagers off to fix the pipe. We return home two hours later and Tago is greeted by visitors. For the next three hours he and his guests talk, watch television and eat. Again I inquire about us going out to do interviews. Not now, Tago informs me: It's almost time for wrestling. A few hours later—dinner over, guests gone—I make my last request. Tago, spread eagle on the floor, declines. "I'm

very tired," he declares. Tomorrow will be my last day with the family and there are matters I have to wrap up in town. But Tago promises he'll go out with me during the next evening.

As it turns out, the following evening I get suddenly and violently sick to my stomach and can barely crawl, let alone go out asking people questions. But one of my last questionnaires is filled out by Tago himself. Among the answers he gives are those indicating he would rather live in American Samoa than anywhere else in the world, that he prefers the Samoan way of doing things to Western or American ways, and that he'd rather take things easy than make lots of money. Although he concedes that he has his fair share of material things, Tago says he believes happiness depends more on religion and "having food" than anything television can supply.

Before leaving for the airport the following morning, I am presented with a fine mat from Tia, some *lavalavas* from Tago's sister and from Iva, two necklaces from another of Tago's relatives, and a *lei* from the shopkeeper at the store in front of the house. I shake hands with Tia, hug Iva—who giggles—and Ata, wave goodbye to Sunia and Kili. Tago is out on another village inspection tour. He tells me he'll be back by 10 a.m. Fonoti, the government official who brought me here, promises to be by at 9 or 9:30 a.m. to take me to the airport for my plane, which departs at noon. He shows up at 10:30, but Tago hasn't returned. Fonoti urges me to go with him and search for Tago on the way. We drive through the villages where the inspections were to have been held but can not locate Tago. Fonoti gives up. "We can't be looking fucking everywhere," he says, suggesting that Tago might make his way to the airport on his own. But he never does. I never see Tago to say goodbye. It is like the missed appointments we had to conduct interviews. I'm not surprised, just disappointed. A sense of completion to my stay is absent.

Before we arrive at the airport, I question Fonoti again on his feelings about television. He says TV brings the outside world to Samoa and gives Samoans the opportunity to learn how more sophisticated societies exist and succeed. I ask if he's concerned about television possibly breaking down family relationships and harming other valuable cultural attributes.

Fonoti shrugs. "You can't keep it out," he says.

CHAPTER III

PROGRESS IS A COMFORTABLE DISEASE

Hindsight, it is said, is an exact science. But even perfect recall of an event doesn't necessarily supply its meaning. What an act represents is not always obvious from the action itself. In this chapter, therefore, I'm going to supplement the descriptions of daily life in Tonga and Samoa pictured in Chapters 1 and 2 by placing them in contexts that may not have been apparent. I'll discuss the origins of Tongan and Samoan cultures, citing anthropological references to their traditional behaviors to demonstrate the validity of comparing the two, and I'll point out those customs which both societies still observe. Next, I'll examine what culture is and how it changes. Then I'll consider pertinent literature concerning the effects of television on viewers in American Samoa and similar societies, and I'll compare the changes that have occurred in Samoa with those that have taken place elsewhere which have been attributed to technology, specifically television.

And finally, in Chapter 4, I'll present my conclusion: that based on this study, the effects of television on American Samoa are surprisingly slight. It has neither dramatically changed the people nor their way of life.

Origins of Tonga and Samoa

First, is it legitimate to compare Tongans and Samoans? How are they related? They are Polynesians, which some consider a racial group, as are the original Hawaiians, Tahitians, Cook Islanders, and other people in the Pacific including the Maoris in New Zealand. (The other primary "racial" group in the Pacific is Melanesian, such as the natives of New Guinea and New Caledonia.) "The striking unity of the languages spoken in these different islands, as well as sufficient similarities in their arts, culture, customs and tradition

allow world scientists and anthropologists to agree that the Polynesians are a racial unit," writes Su'apa'ia (1962, p. 109). But there is on-going debate about where exactly the Polynesian people came from. Heyerdahl (1950) argues convincingly for Peru and the northwest American coast, while others, primarily Buck (1938) and Suggs (1960), offer the generally accepted theory that they came from Asia. There is also a lack of agreement about the origin of the Tongans and Samoans. Su'apa'ia, noting that the word "tonga" means "south," believes that the first Tongans came from Samoa and named their new home Tonga because it was south of their original home. Oliver (1989), likewise pointing out that Tongans and Samoans are closely related in language and other aspects of culture, says that both the Tongans and Samoans migrated from Fiji, an island group to the west of them, 4,000 years ago (p. 118-119). Suggs says also that they came from the Lau group of the Fiji islands, "probably (beginning) during the first half of the first millennium B.C." (p. 88). But he believes the Samoans came from Tonga, although the "two groups were probably colonized at approximately the same time" (p. 88). Whichever way the Tongans and Samoans migrated, they are clearly similar in their cultures and language. "The early cultures of Samoa and Tonga were undoubtedly much the same," Suggs writes (p. 90), but by A.D. 1000, "the cultures of Tonga and Samoa developed and probably began to diverge, evolving local differences in various items of material culture" (p. 94). Still, one can readily assume that two island nations a mere 300 miles apart would have been in relatively frequent contact with each other, and Suggs, Su'apa'ia, and Tuiteleleapaga (1980), among others, acknowledge that Tonga ruled much of Samoa from 1200 to 1600, which indicates an obvious cultural influence. "The Tongans and Samoans also maintained some contact, which had the effect of keeping regional cultural variations from becoming greater than they were by the mutual exchange of any innovations" (Suggs, p. 99). Oliver, too, notes that Samoan "isolation was, however, not complete; their traditions contain many allusions to

continuing contacts with Tonga and Fiji, including wars, marriages, and trade" (1989, p. 145).

Buck (1960) includes Tonga and Samoa as key members of the cultural center of western Polynesia, which demonstrated different cultural traits than islands in central Polynesia. Focusing on those traits, Burrows (1938) assembled a list of 40 actions that distinguish the western islands from those in central or eastern Polynesia. Tonga and Samoa shared 36 traits, including the use of a special language for chiefs, the brother-sister taboo, the kava ceremony, similarities in home construction, canoe design, and tapa cloth preparation, a similar evolutionary myth for the origin of man, the same or similar names for the "underworld" and months of the year, and the use of wooden slit gongs. Hence, it seems safe to say that the societies formed in Tonga and Samoa, while certainly not identical and while having evolved independently for the most part, probably were more alike than other Polynesian nations separated by water and time. Yet today, the people on Hunga in Tonga seem to approach life in a different manner than the Samoans in Amanave. Food, dress, work, housing and entertainment are often distinct from one another in the two countries. Why is that? I think the distinction is more frequently a matter of proportion—more Western clothes and food in Samoa, for instance—than a difference in underlying values. Those cultural values that still carry significant importance in the two societies will be examined below, but first, a brief sketch of both of these island countries

American Samoa

The seven islands of American (or eastern) Samoa lie about 2,300 miles southwest of Hawaii, about halfway between it and Sydney, Australia. They cover an area of only 76 square miles (Western Samoa, comprised of nine islands, covers more than 1,000 square miles) and the five inhabited islands are volcanic in origin. The first European to visit the

Samoa was first stopped by in 1772, and a few other European explorers touched land there during the next 100 years. But not until 1830 when John Williams of the London Missionary Society came ashore did the presence of the islands themselves become widely known. Up until 1860, the Samoans were ruled by tribal chiefs, but from 1860 to 1899, the Samoans came under the control of the British, American and German consuls. Around the turn of the century, the Germans made Western Samoa their colony and the Americans took over the rest of the islands (Bunge & Cooke, 1984). As a territory, American Samoa was administered by the U.S. Navy which ran a naval coaling station there for the first half of the 20th century. When the naval base was closed in 1951, the administration of American Samoa was transferred to the U.S. Department of Interior, under which it was governed by a U.S.-appointed governor and a bicameral legislature, called the *Fono* (Coleberd, 1972). That procedure continues today, except that the governor is now locally elected by American Samoans (Western Samoa became a Trust Territory of New Zealand during the years after World War I and finally achieved independence in 1962.) American Samoa remains an "unincorporated" territory of the United States, meaning the U.S. Constitution and certain other laws don't apply. It is represented in Washington by a non-voting congressman. Political development is now aimed at the attainment of a congressionally-approved Samoan constitution and the phasing out of the Department of the Interior. "The Samoans have no desire to be brought under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Constitution as this would mean an end to their system of chiefs and family-held lands and would open the territory to uncontrolled migration and business competition from the U.S. mainland" (Stanley, 1986, pp. 231-232).

The *'aiga*, or family, including all relatives, is the basic unit of the Samoan village community. Extended family units are ruled by a *matai* (elected head of a family) and beyond that by a hierarchy of chiefs and high chiefs, who are similar to heads of state and premier. Each chief has a person who represents him and often speaks for him, known as a

talking chief or orator. Most Samoans live in small villages; except for Pago Pago, the capital, there is no western-style town in the country. After a hurricane in 1966, the U.S. government provided funds to rebuild the thatched Samoan *fales* with plywood and tin. All land, except for a small area owned by the government, is owned by Samoans. The family *matai* assigns use of this land to different members of the *'aiga*.

Kingdom of Tonga

About 300 miles to the southwest of Samoa is Tonga, a collection of 150 islands—some volcanic, some coral—which comprise a land mass of 269 square miles. Fewer than one-third of the islands are inhabited. Tonga, first "discovered" by Europeans in the early 1600s, was visited by Captain Cook in 1773 and again in 1777, and by Captain Bligh in 1789, just before his crew mutinied. But it was in the 1820s, when missionaries came to the islands, that changes began. By mid-18th century, all Tongans were converted to Christianity (an act which, in reality, happened because the then-king proclaimed it). The country had been run by kings, three separate lines with some overlapping family ties, and civil wars rocked the islands as warriors for different kings did battle (Wolff, 1973). Finally, one king won out and he, George Tupou I, introduced a constitutional form of government, established a parliament, privy council and cabinet, and instituted land reform policies which are still in effect today. He was also the man who made his people Christians. The British influence in government and education, as well as religion, is obvious, and the country was considered a protectorate of Great Britain until 1970, when it became a fully independent member of the British Commonwealth. But it is still a monarchy and the present king, Taufa'ahau Tupou IV, is a direct descendant of King George Tupou I. The current ruler is no figurehead; he runs the country and controls the

parliament. One does not blithely cross him, but then a true Tongan would never dream of offending his king.

In Tonga, family members are *kainga*, which rhymes with the Samoan word for family, *'aiga*, which has a sounded but not written "n" before g's—as in Pago Pago, pronounced Pahngo Pahngo. Tonga has an elaborate hierarchy system. It has no chiefs, but there are nobles, a hereditary class of 33 men who are the next level down from the king. Each village has a town officer and usually a *matapule*, who is a representative of the noble. He functions somewhat like the talking chief or orator does in Samoan society. The nobles come from different areas of the kingdom and, among their other duties, they distribute a small plot of land in their domain to each male when he becomes 16. All of the land in the country technically belongs to the king. However, as the population (currently about 100,000) of the tiny kingdom has increased, the amount of unoccupied land has diminished, and now some young men have to wait years before receiving their land grants. The Tongans live in small homes, also called *fales* as in Samoa, but most of these, too, have been changed from the thatched roof and bamboo structures to plywood and tin.

Both Tongans and Samoans generally have large families, and they are all extremely religious. Tonga has a strictly enforced Sunday law: no driving, playing, running, yelling, swimming—just going to church and eating. In American Samoa, swimming at most beaches is prohibited on Sundays, and the buses run only until 2 p.m., but most Samoans spend the day in church, also, or relax at home, eat and are relatively quiet, to begin with.

Traditional Behaviors

The traits that will be described next are traditional cultural activities both noted in the literature and also observed during my stays in Tonga and Samoa. The aim here is to demonstrate those aspects of traditional culture that still figure prominently in the lives of the

islanders. Foremost of them was the use of fine mats. Many anthropological studies of Samoan life (Mead, 1928; Murdock, 1934; Su'apa'ia, 1962; Holmes, 1974; Tuiteleleapaga, 1980; Freeman, 1983) note the significance of fine mats in that society. Su'apa'ia, a Samoan himself, is perhaps most explicit. He points out that the words "fine mat" do not fully convey the meaning of *Ie-Toga* which is what it is called in Samoan. These mats are woven so finely that the material can be worn as a soft garment, like a robe, and the ones given to chiefs have individual histories.

Ie-Toga is never used as a mat; it never was and it will never be. It fails to describe the true value of the sacred ceremonial robe as the Samoans see it....The wealth of the chief is measured according to the number of *Ie-Toga* he has and the history attached to each robe in his collection. It is the most precious medium of exchange in Samoa (Su'apa'ia, 1962, p. 48).

He adds, "It is hard to convince strangers that the *Ie-Toga* plays the most important part in the lives of Samoans....No function or sacred ceremony is ever complete without a gift or display and exchange" of them (p. 51). Freeman says much the same thing:

The main valuables disbursed on major ceremonial occasions are the exquisitely made fine mats, which for the Samoans are among the most important measures of traditional wealth and rank. These mats frequently become the objects of rivalrous contention (p. 152).

Murdock, too, comments on the "finest mats, which resemble the best Panama hats in texture," and calls them "the natives' choicest possessions (which) serve as a sort of medium of exchange" (pp. 55-56). And Mead observes:

Woven of the finest quality of pandanus which has been soaked and baked and scraped to a golden whiteness and paper-like thinness, of strands a sixteenth of an inch in width, these mats take a year or two years to weave and are as soft and pliable as linen. They form the unit of value, and must always be included in the dowry of the bride (p. 18).

As noted in my account of life in Amanave, the fine mats are still a primary unit of exchange in ceremonies. One of Tago's main duties was to assemble fine mats from members of his extended family and village to give during the funeral, to present to the visiting government inspector, and to give to the groom's family following the wedding. I observed no exchange of fine mats in Tonga during this stay, but during my earlier

residence in Hunga, I saw both mats and, perhaps as often, tapa cloth commonly given as gifts during ceremonies.

Another traditional activity noted in the literature is the kava ceremony. Kava is a drink made by pounding the root of a shrub (a relative of a pepper plant) into a fine pulp, adding water to it and then straining out the root. "Kava is drunk socially by all Tongans, regardless of class, and yet the positions of individuals in the kava drinking circle are strictly defined by social etiquette," notes Wolff (1973, p. 19). Ruhen (1978) says that in Tonga, "the drink is always treated with respect, and some ceremonial is always observed" (p. 57). In Samoa, reports Murdock (1934), "kava is made and served according to an elaborate ritual as a necessary preliminary to every event or undertaking of social, economic, political and religious importance" (p. 53). Holmes (1978) calls kava "the most sacred ceremonial element" (p. 48), and Freeman (1983), while pointing out the importance of the formal kava ceremony, which "primarily has to do with rank," discusses who gets to drink first, last and in between (pp. 126-8). Tago made sure that the kava ceremony was observed during the visit of the government inspector, and a six-foot long piece of kava root was given as a gift to him and to the other visiting chiefs during the ceremony. However, the formal wedding activities I observed did not include kava because, I was told, the Assembly of God Church considers it an intoxicating and therefore forbidden drink. Although I didn't attend any kava ceremonies in Tonga this visit, the sounds of kava being prepared (a stone is used to pulverize the root against a larger stone) could be heard often during the evenings in Hunga.

A key aspect of both Tongan and Samoan cultures is the role of sisters in the family. Although both cultures are patriarchal, in each a man's sister and his sister's children have a certain power over him. The sister (known as a *fahu* in Tongan), has the right to take any of the man's goods (Gailey, 1987; Bunge & Cooke, 1984; Wolff, 1973). In Samoa, "a man on succeeding to a title distributes valuable presents to his sister and her descendants; a

sister's son makes free with his uncle's property" (Murdock, 1934, p. 69). Mead talks about "the oldest female progenitor of the line, that is, the sister of the last holder of the title...has special rights over the distribution of the dowry" (1928, p. 45). Holmes refers to a "general pattern of deference to the female side of the family" (1978, p. 20). And Burrows (1930) lists the "privilege of sister's sons" (p. 90) as one of the traits separating western Polynesian from the rest of the Polynesian system. It is on this principle, I believe, that Tago was petitioned by his sister in San Francisco to give her the young firstborn son of Iva. In Samoa, a brother would not think of refusing such a request because, says Murdock, "a brother dreads his sister's ill-will with a superstitious fear" (1934, p. 69), and Holmes says that to go against the sister's wishes "would result in family misfortune and even sickness or death of family members" (p. 20).

Closely aligned with the rights of sisters on brothers, is the brother-sister taboo, referred to earlier in Burrows (1938) list of traits distinguishing the western from eastern and central islands of Polynesia. Wolff (1973) makes note of this, stating, "This particular tabu is not strictly Polynesian in nature, for Hawaiian chiefs often married their sisters." But in Tonga, she says:

Individuals who are true brothers and sisters, or even those who are cousins of the opposite sex, usually do not live together after the onset of puberty, if arrangements can be made. It is improper for them to speak together intimately or even sit close together. In strict Tongan tradition of old, it was improper to mention a man's name to his sister. Nowadays the tabu has relaxed to the extent that brothers and sisters may eat together, but not talk familiarly. Even with modern Tongans who have lived with Europeans and Americans for extended lengths of time, to tell an improper joke in the presence of a sibling of the opposite sex will cause the Tongan to leave the room in embarrassment (p. 46).

The fleeing of sisters from the sex scene in the video in Hunga is an example of that taboo still observed. Holmes (1978) points out that in Samoa, siblings, as well as cousins, "must adhere to a set of norms which has commonly been labeled 'brother-sister avoidance'" (p. 20). Mead (1928) comments on the same taboo in Samoa, noting that brothers and sisters, usually at puberty, "may not touch each other, sit close together, eat

together, address each other familiarly, or mention any salacious matter in each other's presence" (p. 25). Although I did not observe this taboo in Tago's home, the children there had not yet reached puberty. Tago did, however, take pains to censor sexual matter on television and in the videos watched when the children were present. He'd either fast-forward the video, as I noted, or make sure the youngsters were asleep and weren't watching the sexy scenes in "Days of Our Lives." The Amanave shop owner also referred to that show as good to watch but not while his sister or other females were around.

Still, Mead believed that Samoan adolescents were sexually active and that, compared to youngsters in the United States, Samoan girls were relatively unconcerned about losing their virginity—with the exception of the village's ceremonial princess or *taupou*. For the *taupou*, who was to marry with a chief or man of high ranking, evidence of virginity was important, and her movements were closely watched. Other young girls, however, would frequently meet young boys "under the palm trees" or elsewhere out of sight for fleeting moments of sexual pleasure. Freeman, in his 1983 critique of Mead, argues that Mead romanticized life in Samoa with her free love portraits, that virginity was, in fact, highly valued, that few illicit sexual acts actually transpired and that those who participated in them faced condemnation. But regardless of whether Freeman is correct about virginity being important to all Samoan girls or not, he himself notes that:

The sexual mores of pagan Samoa are still in many ways, extant. Youths of no particular rank still vie with one another, and given half a chance will boast of their exploits in deflowering virgins. A Samoan youth, it is said, keeps count of his conquests (1983, p. 236)

And Tuiteleapaga (1980), a Samoan chief who was one of Mead's informants and interpreters, writes that although mothers in years past vigilantly tried to insure their daughters' virginity, "many girls became pregnant" (p. 126). Hence, sexual activity was taking place, one way or another. Rose (1959), in fact, goes so far as to write that if a Samoan "girl hasn't had a succession of lovers by the time she is seventeen or eighteen she

feels she is 'on the shelf,' and becomes the laughing stock amongst her companions" (p. 161).

Holmes (1987), although he likewise disagreed with Mead's appraisal of the sexual freedom "supposedly enjoyed by young people" (p. 103), goes on to admit that "I am sure she had greater rapport with teenagers than I (and probably Freeman) did....There was considerable evidence in the form of illegitimate children and divorces with adultery as a ground to indicate that a fair amount of premarital and extra-marital sexuality existed" (p. 103). That finding echoes the stories told me by Iva and Fa'a in Samoa, and duplicates the situations I observed in Tonga while living there in 1969-71. In neither Tonga nor Samoa did women appear to be harshly criticized or in any way quarantined because of their sexual activities or illegitimate children. According to Murdock (1934), "Children, if even illegitimate, are considered a blessing rather than a burden, and the average mother has four or five" (p. 65-67). Holmes (1987) writes: "Premarital relations were tolerated by the elders and an unwed mother faced only the short-lived anger of her parents and brothers" (p. 106). And in a postscript to Holmes' book, Leacock (1987) says, "In the end it seemed that discretion, rather than actual chastity was usually the more cogent issue" (p. 187), and concludes, "the sexual freedom of adolescents, with the exception of the *taupou*, (is) undeniable in my view" (p. 187).

Iva, it should be recalled, was a virgin when Tago forced himself on her. Tuiteleapaga (1980) writes that when a woman married a chief, she brought with her "a daughter of her brother who was, in fact, a concubine" (p. 72). It is possible that Tia who was acting as surrogate wife to Tago, a talking chief, presented her own daughter as concubine to him. And Su'apa'ia (1962) writes that "according to the ancient custom, the high chief might have a dozen or more wives and concubines at one time" (p. 55). Tuiteleapaga also observes that, "At present...many (women) have premarital intercourse and even become pregnant before they get married" (p. 127). He blames the current state of

affairs on "sex magazines and love scenes in the movies (which) have won the hearts and caught the fancy of the damsels who once were paragons of chastity and protagonists of virginity" (p. 127). He notes, too, that "adultery was and is very common in Samoa. In many instances, depending on the nature of the case, it was ignored" (p. 152). This seems to be the case regarding the impregnation of Iva's sister by the husband of Tago's sister.

One minor point in passing: Su'apa'ia reports that "to avoid frequent use of the chief's name, he is addressed in the family circle as 'father' or 'old man'....The term is never intended as an insult, as it sometimes is among the Europeans" (1962; p. 38). Iva called Tago "the old man" when she identified him as the man who was the father of all her children.

Mead (1928) makes note of the lack of touching in public that I, too, observed in both Tonga and Samoa. She writes:

A couple whose wedding night may have been spent in a room with ten other people will nevertheless shrink in shame from even touching hands in public....Husbands and wives never walk side by side through the village, for the husband, particularly, would be 'ashamed.' So no Samoan child is accustomed to seeing father and mother exchange casual caresses (p. 75).

That this custom still exists strikes me as especially telling, considering the fact that Samoans have seen hundreds of television programs and films that show everything from mild affection to near pornographic passion. They are bombarded with signals from outside their culture indicating that public displays of affection are acceptable, and yet they do not display affection publicly. They have not changed.

One other trait that has not changed despite outside influences is the beating on children, which I observed in all my stays in Tonga and on my visit with Tago's family. Mead (1928), Murdock (1934), Freeman (1983), Holmes (1987), and others have commented on it. Freeman notes that "punishment is almost always physical and severe...if the child persists in crying aloud the parent continues to punish him" (p. 206). The disciplinary actions of the mothers and young girls with their younger siblings in the church

in Hunga and of Iva and Tia with the children in Amanave reflected this. Tuiteleapaga (1980), after recounting an episode in his life when as a probation officer he slapped about two teenage-delinquents who were disrespectful of him, explains: "I firmly believe in not 'sparing the rod and spoiling the child'" (p. 125). If the American television shows seen in Samoa are remodels for proper living, then ostensibly, the Samoans should not beat their children—since no parents in situation comedies on TV ever raise a hand to a child. But because the Samoans still do practice physical punishment, we can argue that the influence of television in this instance, at least, is limited, and that traditional attitudes remain intact. Leacock (in Holmes, 1987) notes, however, that child abuse is beginning to be acknowledged as a social problem in American Samoa.

Many reports on Tonga and Samoa mention the occurrence of feasts for almost any kind of ceremonial function (Freeman, 1983; Tuiteleapaga, 1980; Ruhen, 1978; Wolff, 1973; Murdock, 1934). During my short stays in both places, frequent meals and eating were commonplace. Feasting, as I noted, took place at the funeral and wedding in Samoa, and during the visit of the Samoan government official at Tago's home. The hefty size of Samoans, especially, should indicate the continued importance of feasting—or at least eating a lot at mealtime. Male Samoans, it seems, have been able to turn that weight into gold, of sorts: seven Samoans play professionally in the National Football League (Sullivan, 1989), a rather substantial number considering the small size of the population. Freeman, however, points out that Samoans are extremely competitive in sports. And at least two relatively recent newspaper articles on Tonga take special note of body girth. One ran under the headline: "Tonga: Where the fatties carry the weight" (Newman, 1978), and the other, "Of bikes and selling stamps and calories and kings" (Kristof, 1987). Both touched on the size of Tonga's king, who weighs—at different times and in different accounts—between 360 and 462 pounds, and the former focused also on wide women. It quoted a 1902 observation made by a European that "the perfect woman must be fat" (p. 1C), and the

opinion of a contemporary Tongan anthropologist who said, "We don't like thin people, but we aren't really in love with fat. It's food that is admired. We just can't stop eating" (p. 12C).

Obviously, this is an incomplete list of traditional activities and cultural traits that still exist in American Samoa, in spite of the introduction of television and the increased knowledge of and infusion by foreign people and ideas. But it should be sufficient enough to demonstrate that certain meaningful cultural habits are not simply erased when confronted with other—and sometimes easier and more efficient—ways of doing things. Even when the confrontation is brought about by television.

Television and Cultures

Although it's easy and natural to make assumptions about things we observe, most of our assumptions are socially based and unexamined. If something takes place that we're familiar with, then we expect it to be followed by what has routinely followed it in the past. When that doesn't happen, we're surprised. Comedian Steven Wright bases many of his jokes on unexamined assumptions. For instance: A man goes to a store that says "open 24 hours." When he gets there, the storekeeper is locking up. "Hey," says the man, "the sign says 'open 24 hours.'" "Sure," says the storekeeper, "but not in a row." It's because these sort of exceptions to the rule don't often happen, that we can exist comfortably and painlessly by assuming things will be as they always have been. But that belief can be badly abused once we're out of familiar territory. It's simple to assume that familiar trappings in a foreign setting carry the same underlying meaning they have at home. But, of course, that's not always—or, as we have seen, even often—the case.

This outside-looking-in approach is exemplified by media critics such as Schiller (1969), Tunstall (1977), Mattelart (1979), and Smith (1980), who warn and worry about American cultural imperialism brought about, in large degree, by television. The selective—

although damning—list of American ills adopted by foreigners (such as starving Brazilian children preferring Barbie dolls to food) that Hamelink (1980) presents is indeed depressing, but is not a totally convincing indictment of cultural imperialism. For instance, he also blames American culture for the apparent popularity of a skin cream used to lighten the complexion of black South Africans. Yet Wolff (1973) reports that Tongans also desire lighter skin, but she points out:

There is evidence that this preference for a light skin is not due to an admiration of Europeans. Apparently all Polynesians were fanciers of pale skin long before the first explorers came among persons....Apparently the daughters of the king were kept from the tanning sun and their skins were rubbed with coconut oils scented with flowers. Today in Tonga it is common to see women walking to and from town carrying umbrellas to shade themselves from the sun. As well, mothers seem to be very pleased if their offspring are fair rather than dark (pp. 47-48).

I raise this exception to Hamelink's charges just to note that it's easy to mistake surface appearances as the result of foreign influences and possibly representative of deepseated cultural changes. But the mere intrusion of one aspect of culture A on culture B certainly shouldn't radically alter it (unless, of course, the intruder is a deadly disease). And even the influence of many aspects of one culture on another needn't fundamentally alter the imposed-on society, although that is a common assumption. In the popular African movie "The Gods Must Be Crazy" (Uys, 1980), a pilot tosses an empty Coke bottle from his plane and it lands near a nomadic family of Bushmen crossing the Kalahari. Up until that time, the family is shown to be peaceful, content, sharing and clever in using the resources of the desert to survive. But the Coke bottle, an unknown object to them, completely disrupts and almost destroys their primitive yet perfectly adapted lifestyle. Individual members of the family begin to covet it, use it as a weapon, and for the first time ever, harsh words are exchanged and fighting breaks out. In recognition of the evil potential of the bottle, the head of the family takes it and sets off to find the edge of the earth to throw it from. The object, he concludes, was a bad gift from a crazy god and must be disposed of in order to save his family. Few studies of the influence of "progress" and technology on unsophisticated

cultures have painted such a devastating portrait as this film. Indeed, as stated above, it is doubtful that any single product of "civilization" could have such an enormous effect on a society or family, primitive or not. Nevertheless, American television is frequently assigned this role of the "heavy," a sort of single-product bad guy who corrupts children and turns viewers violent at home, while dissolving or replacing native cultures abroad. Carpenter (1972) contends that the "media are so powerful they swallow cultures. I think of them as invisible environments which surround and destroy old environments" (p. 191). Smith (1980) worries about television audiences in developing nations becoming "mesmerized by skillfully made and perhaps only partly comprehended documentaries, series and serials" (p. 47) from western countries, mainly the United States, importing foreign values. He cautioned that the U.S. was using its "information presence" to validate "its hold on global leadership" (p. 58). In American Samoa, of course, this hypnotic power over audiences would have even more telling effect because, with few exceptions, all the programming is American. That being the case, however, we should see far more American cultural traits than Samoan ones. What we see at most, though, are American appearances. Here are some examples from the popular press: A Los Angeles Times reporter (Siegel) writes on June 19, 1979, that he finds it strange to walk past village after village where television screens are burning brightly in most of the thatched-roof *fales*. He observes also that once Samoans saw commercials for items they had never heard of, they started to desire them. One store owner told him items he had stocked which had never sold, started selling like hotcakes after they were shown on TV. A Wall Street Journal reporter (Sterba) writes on Sept. 24, 1983, that "village sounds these days include a beeping school bus and the rhythmic tattoo of alien Droids disintegrating on the Space Invaders video game at Jerry Matautia's grocery store," and he wonders where all the free love Margaret Mead recounted, has gone. An Associated Press story from Western Samoa on Sept. 17, 1986, complains that some of the islanders "speak with an American accent picked up from watching

television programs such as 'Magnum P.I' and 'Miami Vice' broadcast from Pago Pago." Yet such observations, even when valid, are hardly conclusive evidence of any overwhelming effect of television on the native culture. Writing in Pacific Islands Monthly magazine in March, 1964, before television was even brought into the islands, reporter Ed Johnson said that 10 years earlier (in 1954) it was common to see Samoans walking barefoot in Pago Pago and wearing only *lavalavas*. By 1964, he wrote, it was unusual. Men wore colorful shirts and trousers and chiefs wore "tailored" *lavalavas*, shirts and ties and often coats. Women no longer wore long *lavalavas*, but slacks, shorts "from knee-length to the last vestiges of decency or even skin-tight toreador pants" (p. 63). What brought about this change? Television can't be blamed here. And was it a major cultural change? Not if my experience in Pago Pago is valid. In 1988, 24 years after Johnson's observation, I saw no skin-tight toreador pants on any women; most wore *lavalavas*, as did most of the men. Some of them, depending on their jobs, wore shirts and ties or had "tailored" *lavalavas*, but not many, and some wore pants. So what?

Some travel reports are more perceptive than others. Looking a bit deeper into the culture is a Sept. 11, 1988, San Jose Mercury story by Alicia Shepard that observes the usual facades: "On store fronts and shelves, you see the comfortably familiar signs for Radio Shack, Mobil, Shell, Ace Hardware, Oscar Meyer bacon and Sara Lee chocolate cake." But she observes this, too: "stores also sell taro and breadfruit." And in describing the Samoan dress, she too notices that while the top half is often American, the bottom half is usually traditional *lavalava*. Then, after noting the litter, the potential for theft, and the lack of seafaring Samoans who still go fishing, Shepard writes:

Although on the surface the Samoans appear American, underneath they cling to much of their culture and laws....Among Polynesians in the South Pacific, the Samoans are considered the group that works hardest to retain their ancient customs....And yet, they receive Social Security, belong to the Boy Scouts, have a Goodwill store, drive American cars, eat turquoise-colored Popsicles and play video games.

There are, of course, numerous examples of basically superficial observations made in other countries about western—usually American—television seeping into everybody's life. The unspoken implication is that American TV is popular everywhere because everyone wants to be Americans. Consider: A TV Guide piece on Jan. 28, 1989 (Hickey), that points out the popularity of U.S. TV shows in Estonia; an Oct. 20, 1988, Associated Press article that tells of millions of Egyptians "riveted before their television sets" to watch "Falcon Crest"; a Feb. 17, 1988, Associated Press story reporting on the dismay "'Dynasty' stirs up" in Arab states; a Jan. 2, 1988, TV Guide story (Hickey) on the widespread broadcast of American shows in Singapore. But what about this one: a Feb. 3, 1989, AP story (Faruqi) about the Japanese soap opera "Oshin" that has become "the rage in fundamentalist Iran"? Think, for a moment, of that last reference. Would we even begin to assume that the Iranians are somehow being made into crypto-Japanese because they enjoy that Japanese soap opera? Even if we learned they started eating sushi, driving Toyotas and using chopsticks? Of course not. And if the Estonians and Singaporeans and Egyptians put on Levis, drink Cokes, and drive Chevys, we still wouldn't consider them Americans, either. Cultures run deeper than that. But the impression we get from media critics like Smith, Schiller and Hamelink, not to mention UNESCO (1980), TV Guide and most of the popular press, is that once people in developing countries start exhibiting American traits, they start becoming Americans and that that's bad and that television is responsible.

I examined 23 years of Pacific Islands Monthly, a news magazine that covers that great expanse of ocean, noting each report of items concerning American and Western Samoa. In compiling nearly 100 pieces, from 1963 to 1985, I found few that could arguably indicate a change in lifestyle solely due to television. Items that seemed to be most indicative of modern life—riots at the Western Samoa Teachers College, increased crime, unemployment, and so on—could not neatly be tied to television alone. There were, however, some reports that showed old traditions survived in spite of the presence of

television—for instance, the 1976 killing of a member of the Samoan Senate in by a Samoan chief because of a breach of old custom etiquette (Va'a, PIM, January, 1977). And there were examples of activities for which television could obviously claim no credit, such as spreading transvestism (PIM, August, 1978), which is actually more traditional than contemporary and is noted also by Wolff (1973) in her study of Tonga and Mead (1928), of Samoa.

What most of the popular press and many of the contemporary media papers focus on, observes Jeffres (1986) in an analysis of dozens of cultural effects studies, are changes in appearances, not values. He concludes that while the media do have cultural effects, these "are also constrained by various filters and activators—familiarity with foreign cultures, media literacy, media credibility, etc." (p. 352). He says foreign media seem to have the least impact on self-images, and adds:

Some affective changes also were noted but there is only scanty empirical evidence of such long-range cultural effects stemming from imported media products. Media are successful, however, in changing popular tastes that range from music to clothing and ideas of beauty (p. 352).

Tracey (1988) and Bertrand (1987) are also among the media critics questioning the theory of cultural imperialism. Just because western media are nearly all-pervasive doesn't mean they're all-powerful, Tracey asserts. After pointing to a widespread lack of empirical evidence in the cultural dominance argument, Tracey notes that even at face value it doesn't always apply. He cites studies which show, for instance, that in news coverage, foreign countries (understandably) tend to emphasize news about their region rather than the western world. He notes, too, that just because developing countries can and do import western television entertainment, doesn't mean these shows are as popular as home-grown programs. "Dallas," although a hit in many countries, has failed to generate audiences in some nations, notably Japan. Declares Tracey:

It is, in fact, simply untrue to say that imported television programs, from the U.S. or other metropolitan countries, always have a dominant presence within an indigenous

television culture. Certainly they do not always attract larger audiences than homemade programs, nor do they always threaten national production (p. 408).

"As far as we can tell," he adds, "audiences discriminate and tend to prefer home-produced television, rather than slavishly pursuing imported programs" (p. 410). Browne (1983) concurs, saying that when "reasonably well-produced domestic entertainment is available, it usually will outdraw the foreign competition" (p. 200). This proved true in American Samoa, where—with a few rare exceptions—the shows which emanated in Samoa, the local news and special features, were always most closely and carefully watched. Other shows were more often glanced at in passing or for short intervals. The reason why some television shows are popular in many countries, Tracey suggests, is not simply because they are available for viewing, but because they touch on and tap certain universal themes that human beings have always been captivated by regardless of culture and class.

What doesn't seem to have taken place in American Samoa is the sort of displacement Meyrowitz (1985) says television can make. He takes McLuhan's (1964) "global village" concept to a logical if somewhat frightening extreme, arguing that television is erasing our "sense of place" and blurring various distinctions between societies, sexes and ages, as well as public and private acts. His contentions are more applicable to American society, as he himself suggests, than to the many less technologically sophisticated cultures that did not evolve as smoothly from oral, to print, to electronic societies as ours. The relatively sudden imposition of electronic media, mainly radio, television and film, onto oral societies has made abrupt but, I think, superficial changes in them. Depending on the strengths and traditions of these societies, they should be able to make alterations and adaptations to incorporate what is advantageous to them from other cultures without significantly replacing their own valued underpinnings. Smith (1980) observes, somewhat paradoxically considering his earlier reservations, that it is the "'mass,' so-called, which remains tied to the ethnic culture and which is therefore comparatively immune from Western information

dependence" (p. 65). Even Hamelink (1980) notes that cultures are often enriched when mixed together. His argument is that, while in the past the mixing was two-way, between both cultures and therefore beneficial, today it is one-way, from America to other countries and therefore detrimental. And television is usually accused of being the one-way delivery system that paints the whole world in its western—mainly American—content brush. But as studies on television by Severin and Tankard (1979) and others have noted, pinpointing the exact effects of television is a lot more difficult than merely conceding they exist. Pointing out television's effects in foreign countries is more difficult still. First, countries don't use television, individual people do. As Cantor and Cantor (1986) assert, "the domination thesis would assume that viewers are passive and powerless to reject the entertainment given them. We found that far from being powerless, they are highly assertive and in some cases even aggressive in obtaining the television entertainment they want, whatever its country of origin" (p. 515). Some countries may employ TV (and other media) as a tool to accomplish certain ends—to erase and reshape Tiananmen Square history in the People's Republic of China, for instance. Or, to function as a school teacher, as in American Samoa when television was first brought in (see Appendix B). But regardless of what the message is being sent out, it is individual people who are receiving it and, as Lull (1980) observed in "Social Uses of Television," people use it in myriad ways: to facilitate or avoid conversation, to establish role models, to punctuate time, to provide background noise, to demonstrate authority, and so forth. In a like manner, Messaris (1983) reported how families use television for purposes of discussion and learning behaviors. And, as seen in Tago's home, all of these activities took place in front of the screen. TV was often background sound, occasionally seen by Iva as a role model, functioned as a center of conversation for the villagers watching wrestling, was a teacher for the children viewing "Sesame Street," and so on. What it clearly did not seem to be was an imperialistic tool, but I'll get back to that.

Gerbner and Gross, in their 1976 study, pointed out that the distinctive nature of TV compared to other media was that it was free, ubiquitous, and did not require literacy or mobility (why radio doesn't meet those standards, I don't know). They wrote: "It (TV) now rivals ancient religion as a purveyor of organic patterns of symbols—news and other entertainment—that animate national and even global communities' senses of reality and value" (p. 77). But, it seems to me, that can only happen if, as Noelle-Neumann (1978) contends, there is no other reality being transmitted but the one presented by the media. And, with the possible exception of North Korea and communist China, such narrow realities are seldom the case. In Samoa, the reality of daily village life, as mundane as it might have appeared from my report, still holds far more significance for the Samoans than news and even entertainment from outside, however it is brought in. Additionally, as Allen (1980) noted in her survey of media serving the South Pacific, American Samoa also receives news reports from other island countries, although "little regional news is used" (p. 121), and gets newspapers from Fiji and Tonga, as well as producing several tri- and by-weekly papers of its own.

Bertrand (1987) criticizes the cultural imperialism indictment for its sins of omission, among other things. "Nobody ever mentioned cultural imperialism in relation to the spread of the potato or corn, which both originated in America" (p. 259). He argues that the United States is being blamed by so-called third world nations for the actions of the old colonial empires. But in many cases, he says, these new nations are simply looking for a scapegoat for their own problems, and the charge of American imperialism is an easy one to level. Pointing to the imposition by France and Britain of their language, educational, administrative and judiciary systems on their colonies, Bertrand says there is nothing new about the idea of cultural imperialism, only about the media's role in it. And he notes, too, that it is not "high culture" that is being criticized, nor scientific, technological knowledge imported from the west, only "mass culture" carried by the media. That being the case,

Bertrand believes the complaints should be on an economic level (which Hamelink, 1983, also observes). But the imperialism charge doesn't stick as well there. The people American media barons want to reach are not the poor folks living in developing countries, he says, but the people living in industrialized parliamentary democracies such as Canada, Italy, Japan, France, Australia, Britain, and West Germany, "because they are both numerous and wealthy" (p. 26). Because the United States is a powerful nation, it is bound to exert a profound influence. But to assert that it sends out its culture in hopes of subtly brainwashing the rest of the world into becoming American is only possible through studied myopia. Imperialism has to be undertaken intentionally, Bertrand says. "It can only result from the policies of a sovereign state using some kind of force" (p. 259). And that's not what the United States or its media operators are doing. "Mass culture is largely a creation of the American commercial media, whose purpose is not to serve an elite, but to satisfy consumers" and whose products "are, with a few exceptions, made for the American market, not for foreign publics" (p. 264). Additionally, Americans themselves are continuously absorbing foreign cultural items: Russian vodka, Mexican tortillas, French wines, Chinese food, Japanese and German cars, and so on. Meanwhile, there are American cultural products that don't succeed elsewhere, regardless of their popularity here, such as football and (except for Japan and central America) baseball. Notes Bertrand:

The resistance of a native culture is immense. Think of the Spaniards: after centuries of military occupation did they become Arabs? In the United States itself, despite the invasion of millions of Catholic Germans and Irishmen, then of Jews, Catholics and Orthodox from Southern and Eastern Europe, the original culture has managed to keep its dominance. And what about Puerto Rico, an American 'colony' since 1898? In spite of the strongest pressures to be Americanized, its inhabitants have kept their Hispanic culture, more so even, apparently, than have certain parts of South America (p. 266).

Both Nam (1983) and Smith (1980) report on Iran rejecting the Shah, electronic technology, and modernization, in general, because these influences were so clearly contrary to the traditions of the dominant Shi'ite Moslem culture. "The dominance of American programs sometimes brings about a cultural backlash" (p. 223), writes Nam.

More recent examples of traditional customs surviving outside influences are not hard to come by. An Aug. 21, 1989, article (Branson) in the San Francisco Chronicle noted that despite 39 years of Communist rule, the people in the Anhui area of China still practiced traditional Confucian laws that allowed for the selling of women. "In a throwback to the past," the article said, "child brides and young women are being sold in China's poorer provinces." The article, based on a People's Daily report, said also that many Communist rules were:

ignored in favor of tradition by hundreds of millions of Chinese....One of the greatest obstacles to stamping out the sale of girls and women and arranged marriages is that it is often done with the approval—and bribery—of local officials who see nothing wrong with carrying on old customs (p. A2).

In other words, cultures aren't pushovers. They don't lie down and die in the face of foreigners, or foreign stand-ins, like television and movies. They are, in fact, just as likely to stand up and fight back or cleverly slip the punches off to the side. Nam (1983), however, offended by appearances, concludes that "the Americanization of world culture...is evident in the familiar sight of young people in any Third World metropolis, dressed in blue jeans, drinking Coca-Cola, singing the latest 'rock' hit" (p. 226). But this is just another example of mistaking the surface of a society with its substance. The cultural imperialism theory, as Bertrand (1987) concludes, "has a poor opinion of mankind." It implies, he says,

that human beings are easily manipulated and that the extraordinarily diverse cultures that they have developed over thousands of years are fragile and petrified, unable to evolve without falling apart, unable to be fertilized without being raped (p. 270).

All this is not to say, of course, that cultures do not change. So let's look at what exactly culture is and how it changes. Jeffres (1986) notes that more than 100 definitions of culture have been recorded by social scientists. But for the purposes of this study, two definitions work best. Culture, Hoebel (1956) states succinctly, "is the integrated sum total of learned behavior traits which are manifest and shared by the members of a society" and is

"wholly the result of social invention...it may be thought of as social heritage for it is transmitted by precept to each new generation" (p. 168). Adds Murdock (1956):

Culture is the product of learning, rather than of heredity. The cultures of the world are systems of collective habits. The differences observable among them are the cumulative product of mass learning under diverse geographic and social conditions (p. 247).

Cultural changes, Murdock writes, "normally have their origin in some *significant* alteration in the life conditions of a society. Any event which changes the situations under which *collective behavior* occurs, so that habitual actions are discouraged and new responses are favored, may lead to cultural innovations" (p. 249, italics mine). He then lists the sorts of events that tend to cause cultures to change: major population increases or decreases, movements to different environments, contacts with different cultures, natural and social catastrophes such as floods, crop failures, epidemics, wars, depressions and so on, and the rise to power or fall of strong leaders. He acknowledges, also, that certain inventions or innovations can lead to change and of the latter form, "cultural borrowing is by far the most common and important" (p. 253). Obviously "cultural borrowing" is the positive term for "cultural imperialism," and like many subjective terms, its use depends on the point of view of the recipient, on motivation and results, not on the material being supplied or borrowed. Murdock takes a long range view, one that might soothe those wary of evil American intent behind our cultural exports. "It is doubtful," he observes, "whether there is a single culture known to history or anthropology that has not owed at least 90 percent of its constituent elements to cultural borrowing" (p. 254). Lest we get too swell-headed, Murdock points out that people are selective about what they borrow, that new innovations must compete for acceptance against tradition, often losing, and, more important, that frequently "all that is borrowed is the external 'form' of a custom and not its 'meaning', i.e., the collective ideas associated with it" (p. 256). He offers this tidbit for contemplation:

Every innovation that has been socially accepted enters, as it were, into a competition for survival. So long as it proves more rewarding than its alternatives, a cultural habit will endure. But when it ceases to bring comparable satisfactions, it dwindles and eventually disappears (p. 258).

Somewhat harshly Murdock concludes:

What man has lost, in the main, is a mass of maladaptive and barbarous practices, inefficient techniques and outworn superstitions. New errors arise, of course, in each generation, but it is comforting to realize that the mortality of error is vastly greater than that of truth (p. 259).

But what kind of major changes might one expect to be caused by a foreign culture dominating a native one? A good example of an island culture being abruptly changed is that of Tahiti, which presents perhaps a worst case scenario of the damages outsiders can do to a society. Even the titles of some books on the topic indicate their point of view: Tahiti: A Paradise Lost (Howarth, 1984); The Rape of Tahiti: A Typical Nineteenth-Century Colonial Venture Wherein several European Powers with Their Iron, Pox, Liquor, Creed, Commerce and Cannon Violate the Innocence of a Cluster of Lovely Polynesian Islands in the South Pacific Ocean (Dodd, 1983), and The Fatal Impact: An Account of the Invasion of the South Pacific 1767-1840 (Moorehead, 1966). Moorehead's 1767 date denotes the first European ship to have stopped at Tahiti, but the body of his tale concerns Cook's stops in Tahiti and elsewhere in the Pacific. Cook liked the islanders, but observed that they were not perfect, that they practiced infanticide and human sacrifice, fought tribal wars, and stole from him and his crew. But they also lived in harmony with their surroundings, enjoyed dancing and lovemaking and feasting. Moorehead writes that they did little hard work, had plenty of food growing or swimming around them, used underground ovens to roast food in, and drank kava. They wore clothes made of tapa, often went topless, were adorned with tattoos, and had good teeth. "In the main, they knew no sickness except the decline into old age and death" (p. 5). The Tahitians also had their own religion and temples and religious festivals. While they were not the "noble savages" Europeans such as Rousseau and Diderot described, they were, Cook believed, human beings who lived in accordance to

their own cultural standards and could only be harmed by outsiders. Wrote Cook on his last visit to Tahiti in 1777:

I cannot avoid expressing it as my real opinion that it would have been far better for these poor people never to have known our superiority in the accommodations and arts that make life comfortable, than after once knowing it, to be again left and abandoned in their original incapacity of improvement. Indeed, they cannot be restored to that happy mediocrity in which they lived before we discovered them, if the intercourse between us should be discontinued. It seems to me that it has become, in a manner, incumbent on the Europeans to visit them once in three or four years, in order to supply them with those conveniences which we have introduced among them, and have given them a predilection for. The want of such occasional supplies will, probably, be felt very heavily by them, when it may be too late to go back to their old, less perfect, contrivances, which they now despise, and have discontinued since the introduction of ours. For, by the time that the iron tools, of which they are now possessed, are worn out, they will have almost lost the knowledge of their own. A stone hatchet is, at present, as rare a thing amongst them, as an iron one was eight years ago, and a chisel of bone or stone is not to be seen (Moorehead, 1966, p. 70).

And Cook's worst fears came true. In 1792, Captain Bligh traveled to the islands and reported, wrote Moorehead:

A disastrous change had overtaken Tahiti....Whaling ships had begun to call there, and the corruption of the natives had outstripped anything that even Diderot had imagined. Many of them were now addicted to drink and had discarded their own elegant clothes in favour of the dirty shirts and waistcoats given them by the sailors. They no longer washed as they had formerly done, and it was 'difficult to get them to speak their own language without mixing a jargon of English with it (p. 77).

Additionally, venereal and other diseases such as tuberculosis, small pox and dysentery were diminishing the population, which numbered about 40,000 when Cook first landed there. By the turn of the century, because of wars, infanticide and disease, it had dropped to 15,000 to 16,000. "By the eighteen-thirties," Moorehead says, "the figure was down to 9,000 and it was eventually to drop to 6,000" (p. 88). Also around the turn of the century, the missionaries arrived and over the course of the years, succeeded in tearing down the temples, destroying the ancient idols, and dressing the natives. Moorehead writes that Thaddeus Bellingshausen, a Russian navigator who visited to Tahiti in 1820, reported that:

The natives, though still gay and ebullient, were changed beyond belief. All those who could wore European clothes, and both men and women had their heads shaved—that lovely gleaming black hair which once fell to the girls' waists was

apparently regarded by the missionaries as both sinful and unsanitary. Tattooing had been discouraged, liquor was banned, and no one danced any more or played Tahitian music. Even the weaving of garlands of flowers was forbidden....The ruling clique no longer lived in huts open on all sides to the breeze, but in enclosed houses made of timber, and they slept in beds rather than on the ground. Human sacrifice with all other manifestations had long since been swept away....Morality police roamed the countryside by night pouncing on illicit lovers (p. 83).

Other problems facing the Tahitians were escaped convicts who jumped ship on their way to penal settlements in Australia and beachcombers, who simply hung out in the islands until their money ran out. The Tahitians found themselves with nothing to do. They had lost many of their native habits and skills, and were unwilling or unable to adequately adapt to European ways of life, with the possible exception of drinking to excess. Their teeth went bad. The French annexed Tahiti in 1843 after missionaries there tried, through a figurehead queen, Pomare Vahine III, to obtain British annexation. The British had no desire to come to the rescue since they were busy establishing colonies in New Zealand and Australia. Moorehead notes that Herman Melville, who as a sailor deserted ship in Tahiti and promoted a mutiny, was jailed on the islands. In his two autobiographic books, Typee (1846) and Omoo (1847), Melville bemoaned the plight of the Tahitians and blamed the French for being the barbarians and the missionaries for being "the real purveyors of cant and superstition" (Moorehead, p. 92). Paul Gauguin, famous for his paintings of Tahitians, came to the islands in 1892. Moorehead points out that in Gauguin's Tahitian paintings "no man or woman ever smiles; supine, defeated, despairing and beautiful, his people gaze in a reverie into the lost past. They have no hope at all." And he quotes Gauguin: "The natives, having nothing, nothing at all to do, think of one thing only, drinking. Many things that are strange and picturesque existed here once, but there are no traces of them left today; everything has vanished. Day by day the race vanishes, decimated by the European diseases" (p. 95).

Although it is hard to conceive of greater decimation of a culture, this too came to Tahiti: since the late 1960s, the French have used one of the outlying atolls of the island group as site for its nuclear testing and thousands of French troops and technicians entered

the islands to facilitate the tests. But wait: somehow the society is surviving, the culture is coming back. Today, the population has more than doubled that when Cook was there, reaching 115,820 in 1983, even though only slightly over two-thirds are native Tahitians, according to Stanley (1986). But Stanley also observes that some things have gone from depressing to encouraging, considering the circumstances described by Cook, Bligh, Melville and Gauguin: "Tahiti remains a delightful, enchanting place. In the late afternoon, while Tahitian crews practice canoe racing along Papeete's waterfront, and Moorea gains a pink hue, the romance lingers" (p. 89). In an Oct. 8, 1989, San Francisco Examiner feature article describing her life in nearby Raiatea island, Jennifer Tefaaora pictures an existence much like that in Tahiti of a century or more ago: "Aside from household chores, fishing and growing taro and other vegetables are my main work and entertainment." She, too, calls her life there "enchanted." And writing from Tahiti on Dec. 18, 1988, Leonard Michaels (also in the Examiner) sets up flawed scenes of the island, only so he can fix them: "Today, visiting Tahiti, we are likely to discover less innocence and a lot more industry," he begins. Then, a paragraph later: "the primordial colors all about tell you this is how it was when God said, 'Let there be light.'" Later, after noting that canned tuna is popular with the Tahitians, "formerly the among the greatest sailors and fishermen who ever lived," he tells of watching a Tahitian man calmly straddle an ordinary wooden board and proceed to paddle his way more than a mile across a lagoon. In other words, although these stories don't come right out and say it, traditional customs and skills and ways of life still exist. Tahiti faced perhaps the most oppressive intrusion from outside of all islands in the South Pacific, yet even it retains vestiges of its former self.

Of the two island nations considered in this report, Tonga was the less affected by outside influences—or progress—and Samoa slightly more so. Both countries, however, encountered the same type of foreign encroachment, were imposed upon by missionaries, soldiers, bureaucrats, derelicts and well-wishers. Strange diseases afflicted them all,

Christian religion replaced their own, clothing changed appreciably and (especially in Tonga) often inappropriately, outside influences, tools and technology, changed living styles. And yet, to me at least, the Tongans and Samoans are basically the same people in slightly different costumes and settings. Underneath, they are still Polynesians, a group of humans different than others I've encountered, and I'd expect the Tahitians to be similar, although I have no personal knowledge of that. Mead makes note of one aspect of this ability to adapt and yet stay Polynesian in her 1972 introduction to Coming of Age in Samoa (1928): "In the years between (1928 and 1972), I met many Samoans who came to the United States; I saw how effortlessly they put on and put off American clothes, American speech, and American manners, without losing their Samoan distinctiveness" (p. xii). Stanley, in his impressively thorough guidebook (1986) to the South Pacific, makes a similar observation:

Although the Samoans have eagerly accepted the conveniences of modern life, the *fa'a Samoa*, or Samoan way of life, remains an important part of their lives. Thus far, the Samoans have obtained many advantages from the U.S. connection without the loss of lands and influx of aliens which have overwhelmed the Hawaiians. While this part of Samoa will always be American, the Samoans are determined to prevent it from going the way of Hawaii (p. 229).

Still, it seems obvious that television, at the "external form" level Murdock (1956) talks about, has had some impact as a borrowed innovation in American Samoa. It arrived in the country (see Appendix B for history) all at once in 1964 as an educational tool. New schools were built, electricity was brought into many villages for the first time, and television sets were put into the classrooms. This was an abrupt intrusion, and its immediate effects have been noted, most prominently by Schramm, Nelson and Betham (1981). They wrote that it was obvious television viewing took away time that Samoans had previously spent doing other things, but they didn't know what those other things were. They also said Samoans had become more knowledgeable about news events and world affairs, and that TV offered models of behavior. Youngsters were mimicking western dress

and other styles favored by mainland teenagers. TV, Schramm et al, indicated, was introducing new values into the culture. But American Samoa, as noted above, had been an American territory since 1899; surely many American cultural values had already been assimilated by the island people on this archipelago 4,150 miles from the mainland. Also, as Siegel (1979) observed, it was difficult to separate television's influence from the general impact of the American dollar in Samoa. When Samoans have ample money to buy food, Siegel wrote, they preferred canned goods to fresh fruit and fish (just like the Tahitians). Bunge and Cooke (1984) reported that 70 percent of the Samoan budget was provided by the U.S. Department of Interior, and that half of its workforce is employed by the government. And Stanley (1986) noted that the country is home to about 10,000 Western Samoans and 5,000 Tongans, which means that together they form nearly half of the islands' 35,000 population. Additionally, American Samoans are U.S. "nationals," giving them free entry into the U.S. Stanley said some 60,000 now live in Hawaii and California, many of them in the armed forces. Bunge and Cooke put the estimate of American Samoans now living in the United States at close to 80,000. All of these factors indicate a native culture in flux, for ideas and lifestyles are brought in not just by the media, but by people, Samoans like Tago, Fa'a, Hui and Filipino, who have been to the United States, as well as by Tongans and Western Samoans.

Again, the difficulty is not in recognizing change but in determining when it came and what caused it. Davis and Baran (1981), in their examination of various media effects theories, observe with understated common sense, that

mass communication probably affects our lives and our society because it has become so much a part of our everyday communication. This intrusion is usually very subtle....The media's most significant effects, then, are not necessarily the most observable or dramatic. They may be those that alter our lives in subtle but meaningful ways (p. 7, 9).

Their use of the word "subtle" is significant. Schramm et al (1981) reported that in comparing a survey they conducted in 1977 with an earlier one taken by Baldauf in 1972,

they found Samoan youngsters appeared to have become less conservative, more independent, more competitive, less respectful of authority, ascribed less importance to the family, and valued success less. But how much of that five-year change can be attributed to television? By 1972, those youngsters in the survey had already seen eight years of television. Did the extra five years make the difference Schramm et al reported? And would an additional five or 10 years demonstrate something along the same lines or a lessening of television's impact? My abbreviated survey (Appendix A) of adults shows that the Samoans prefer their traditional lifestyles over "modern, western ways" just as much as the Tongans. In fact, the Samoans were far more likely to choose "taking life easy" over "making lots of money," than the Tongans!

The most recent study in Samoa, conducted by Thomas (1986), supports Schramm et al about the effect television has on the use of time. Thomas writes that after television was introduced in Western Samoa, "the inter-action between people, story-telling, singing, taking part in community activities either stopped or were significantly reduced. Less time was even spent on prayers and eating" (p. 19). Her survey was conducted over a one-week period, but unfortunately it does not say how many people were surveyed or exactly when and where. Nor does it say what kind of a survey it was and how it was conducted. Thomas does note, however, a few things that I also observed, including the fact that the most popular TV programs (and videos) "include a high incidence of action and violence" (p. 18) and rely very little on dialogue. And she discovers that "Days of Our Lives" is the favorite program of women. She writes:

When I asked them why they liked it, they said, 'Because it is just like us. That is just like our lives here in Samoa.' I couldn't have imagined lives more different—until I sat down and thought about it. Indeed it was just like their lives. They identified with what they recognised and they recognised human emotions—love, hate, power relations, jealousy, marriage, adultery. The trappings were immaterial (p. 20).

Her thoughts here echo the opinion of Tracey (1988), given above, about television shows being popular not because of their country of origin or production values, but

because they tap universal themes humans have always been captivated by. Nevertheless, Thomas concludes that television, while not necessarily a negative factor in developing nations, has generally not been used to help those nations. She tends to agree with the cultural imperialism theorists:

Throughout the Pacific the telecommunication revolution has provided little that could contribute to social or economic development and virtually nothing that might serve to reinforce Pacific Island cultures, values or identity. In the case of television, this has not been its purpose (1986, p. 18).

Two other relatively recent studies conducted on television's effect on Eskimos suggest that the kinds of changes observable through empirical surveys are somewhat limited. One of the studies, investigating the first-time exposure of TV on Inuit children's cultural images (Caron, 1979), determined that what a group of 41 youngsters saw on TV made them more familiar with their own and other ethnic groups. The other, a study of satellite television viewing patterns on adult and adolescent Eskimos (Coldevin, 1979), revealed that the two groups were both affected by viewing, but the older Eskimos preferred shows that emphasize traditional mores, while the younger ones opted for programs demonstrating contemporary values, thus widening the gap between young and old. Neither of the studies' conclusions was especially earth-shaking, but both were narrow in focus and worked with more or less "virgin" groups who had not been previously exposed to television. A similar study was conducted by Bouck (1986) in four remote Northern Territory communities in Australia, two with and two without access to television. Bouck questioned 158 Aborigines, separated into two categories: adult heads of households and school pupils ages 11 to 16. The questionnaires revealed that those with access to television demonstrated a higher political knowledge and a greater desire for European lifestyles than those without access. The youngsters in particular reflected that desire.

A mixture of field research and small scale survey was undertaken by Christol (1980) in her study of television as a factor in acculturation in a southern Mexican town. She spent one week living with a middle class family and a second week with a lower class family,

observing activities around the home, especially television viewing. She also conducted 30 in-depth interviews with a random sample of the population: one-third middle class women in households with television; one-third lower class women in homes with television, and one-third lower class women in homes without television. Among Christol's findings were that middle class families watched more television overall, particularly more news, public affairs and American programs, than lower class families. She also learned that both middle class and lower class women with television had more liberal attitudes and generally accepted women working outside of the home. Lower class women without television retained more traditional attitudes about women's work roles, basically believing a woman's proper place is in the home. Although her study does not correspond neatly with mine, I, too, observed that people in Tago's home paid more attention, in general, to news programs, especially in Samoan, an observation also made by Schramm et al (1981). I would assign Tago to upper class, because of his high talking chief rank, rather than his income, which is relatively low. But determining whether Samoans without television think differently than Samoans with television may not be possible. As Schramm et al found out when they attempted a survey in Western Samoa, which has no in-country television, it was almost impossible to find anyone who didn't have access to television sets that received broadcasts from American Samoa. In Western Samoa areas "where television could supposedly not be received," they wrote, "ingenious methods were used to overcome difficulties and bring it in. In other words...there were no such sharp divisions between television and non-television samples as we had assumed" (p. 169-170). Using Christol's survey as a model, I asked the same survey question about women working outside of the home as she did. Seven out of nine respondents in American Samoa said they preferred that; but, unfortunately, six out of those same nine likewise said they preferred women taking care of the home and children. The Tongans I asked, however, were much more

consistent and traditional: 19 out of 22 responded that women should take care of home and children; reversed, only three said women should work outside of the home.

A far more extensive study was conducted by Williams (1986) in Canada. She and a large crew of researchers observed the effects of television on three communities: one with no TV reception to speak of; one with one channel broadcast to it, and one which received four channels of broadcast network TV. For purposes of the report, the researchers called the three towns Notel, Unitel and Multitel, respectively. They did both cross-sectional and longitudinal studies, returning to the three communities two years after the first survey. During the interim, Notel—the town with no television reception—started receiving television broadcasts from one station. The researchers used direct observation, plus self-reports from the people involved. The economic strength, populations, amount of recreational facilities, relative accessibility to outside world, school systems, climate and other attributes of the three towns were similar. To help maintain the integrity of the survey, researchers did not tell the townspeople that television, per se, was the primary focus of the study, only that they were examining small town life in general. What they wanted to find out was how television changed the lives of residents in Notel after two years; Unitel and Multitel were control communities. And, in fact, responses from those two towns differed little in two years. But in Notel, researchers learned:

- *Television negatively affected outside-of-home activities through displacement
- *Children became more aggressive
- *Notel children's cognitive development skills, which were better than those of children in Unitel and Multitel, dropped to the same general levels
- *Youngsters were more inclined to accept sexual stereotypes
- *TV viewing replaced reading practice for children and they became poorer readers

The first survey took place in 1973, the second in 1975. Teams of investigators conducted the studies, often interviewing adults individually and children in classrooms, as well as observing various activities of the townspeople. As mentioned, self-reports were

also used, when direct observation or contact by researchers were not possible. Of the results listed, the one that seems most applicable to my observations in Samoa is the first, television displacing outside activities (which Schramm et al, 1981, also concluded), but even that conclusion is hard to certify. I don't know how much time Tago spent outside of his home before television came into it. As he himself indicated, he was a chief and as such, people were supposed to come to him, so leaving home was not his custom to begin with. He did go off to his job on some mornings, went to the funeral and wedding activities, went to his garden for food, into town for meetings and Bingo and electronic poker. Although he spent much time in his house, he was not tied to it. The children either played in the house or close by outside of it. There didn't seem to be many friends of their own age around. The two boys often fought, but I can't say that their aggressiveness was brought about by television. They did sometimes imitate sword fighting they saw on video. The two boys were not yet in school, so I can't speak of their reading skills, but Ata read some simple children's books in English and she practiced the alphabet along with puppet characters on "Sesame Street" programs. What seems logical to me is that while the introduction of television in American Samoa might have brought about some sizeable changes in the beginning, people there now have pretty well adjusted to it, paying attention to the set when it fits into their needs, and tuning it out when it doesn't.

A more closely examined picture of the effects of television on other cultures is presented in Lull's World Families Watch Television (1988), a series of qualitative studies conducted in India, Great Britain, Venezuela, West Germany, the United States and the People's Republic of China. For purposes of this paper, the studies set in India, Venezuela and China are most applicable. But, again, as Lull notes in his introduction, TV is not the only appliance that modifies existence: the electric stove and refrigerator can cause similar changes in a family's lifestyle. The fact that food need not be consumed immediately or

cooked in an underground oven over a long period of time, for instance, could change both the eating habits of and kinds of foods chosen by the family. Writes Lull (1988a):

While these changes are not likely to disrupt the essential stability of the family or other social institutions, they produce physical modifications of the material environment while simultaneously transforming some of the most basic social practices that people invent and reinvent in order to manage their spheres of living (p. 12).

But television isn't just an appliance, he points out. It presents information, entertainment, role models and social values through the programs shown on it. And it is when those images and ideas differ appreciably from the values of the people seeing them that television has its greatest potential impact. The study in Venezuela, conducted by Barrios (1988), makes note of the economic and technological assistance, plus cultural influence, coming into the country from Spain, Italy and the U.S. during the middle of this century. But more important, at about the same time, television programming arrived. Today the country has three TV networks, one state owned. The privately operated networks are affiliated with American networks and show many U.S. series. Over half of Venezuelan television shows are from foreign countries. But the Venezuelan networks also broadcast five hours a day of teledramas, or telenovelas, most made in the country or in other Latin American countries. "Those programs," reports Barrios, "make up the core of Venezuelan television programming" (p. 54), gaining not only large audiences but also the most income from commercials run during their airing. Barrios observed and interviewed 13 families (nine of which had more than one TV set) in Caracas for seven days each.

Among his observations:

- *The attention span of children during television viewing was generally very short

- *Most families set aside a "sacred time" (p. 66) during which they could watch the telenovelas and not be interrupted

- *TV watching enhanced family communication

- *Watching television was seldom an exclusive activity; usually other family activities took place simultaneously with it

*Both children and adults learned things from TV viewing,
with some women using the telenovelas as advisers in personal
affairs

After pointing out that the telenovelas are the most watched shows in Venezuela, Barrios explains that the reason is "that they are one of the few shows broadcast by the television system here where Venezuelan people can watch characters that live, dress, speak, suffer, and enjoy in the same ways audience members do in their everyday lives" (p. 77). Many of Barrios' conclusions mirror my own. The youngsters in Tago's home seldom sat still long before the television set, but they did learn some things from it, as did Iva from "Days of Our Lives" (or at least hoped to). Although family communication did not seem to be especially enhanced by the viewing, part of that seems to be because Tago and the others didn't closely observe many shows; they were background noise and movement. When they did pay close attention, those watching would comment on what was happening on the screen, especially the wrestling matches and the longboat races. And I don't doubt that if the American Samoan station had the resources to produce its own telenovela, similar to the ones in Venezuela, it would be the most popular show on the air. As noted earlier, all events concerning activities in Samoa, including the news, gained the highest levels of interest, along with wrestling and "Day of Our Lives." Schramm et al (1981) likewise found in their 1976 survey that the most highly watched program was the news presented in Samoan. They noted, too, that Samoan viewers generally "turned on the commercial network channel and left it on. When they broke out of this pattern, it was usually for Samoan programs" (p. 156).

In the study conducted in the People's Republic of China, Lull and Sun (1988) interviewed and observed 85 families in four major cities. Although television first came to China in 1956, a national TV network didn't come about until 1978, and before 1980, people watched TV in public or communal settings. Now almost all urban homes have television sets and viewers have two to four stations from which to choose. "Because so

many people live in such crowded conditions, television has an omnipresent influence in the homes of families. When the television is turned on, there is simply nowhere to go to avoid at least hearing the set" (p. 204). Lull and Sun found that TV "has changed the most basic routines of everyday life" (p. 208). It has, they write, caused people to spend more time indoors, and reduced the time spent shopping, walking, going to movies or opera, listening to the radio, reading novels and playing cards or *mah-jongg*. "The set is routinely turned on in many homes as soon as stations begin to telecast each day, and it remains on at least as background noise all day long" (p. 209). They note that Chinese children, like those in Venezuela and American Samoa, can quickly lose interest in television shows, although they give undivided attention to cartoons and know the theme songs and when the shows are on. But most teenagers, Lull and Sun report, are interested neither in the cartoon nor television in general, and are more likely to spend time with their friends and playing sports. This observation also reflects the actions of Amanave teenagers who daily spent late afternoons and early evenings playing volleyball and basketball. Some Chinese families, like those in Venezuela and Samoa, had favorite soap operas they watched religiously. Viewers watched TV "with varying degrees of attention" (p. 213), usually walking around, eating, performing other actions by the set, talking to it and about the shows. A key difference between most programs broadcast in Samoa and those shown in China and Venezuela, is that in the former they were in English, not the native language, while in the latter two, they were in the languages of those countries, or dubbed or subtitled. Obviously this would change the potential involvement between viewers and the material shown. Lull and Sun quote some residents as describing life before television as "dead" or "boring" (p. 217), and that now, a machinist told them, "we have some consolation after work. Without television you come home and have nothing special to do." The machinist's words echo those of Fonoti, the Samoan superintendent of village water supplies, who told me television was good for his country because "what else is there to do?" But Lull and Sun report also that

many respondents told them that although they're happy to have television, they don't care very much for many of the shows, a feeling that seemed to be shared by Tago and his family. The television was often on in his home, but infrequently attended. And Lull and Sun reach a similar conclusion. In spite of changes brought to China by television, the two researchers declare:

Nonetheless, in some respects family relations and routines seem relatively undisturbed by the presence of television. This fact is partly attributable to the relatively low level of interest that viewers have in most TV programs currently on the air and to the fact that family life in China generally is very stable and unlikely to be radically altered by the intrusion of any technical device, no matter how curious or compelling. The speed of telecommunications media stands in ironic contrast with the historically slow and steady pace of life in China (p. 235)

Much the same could be said about American Samoa, especially the villages outside of Pago Pago, where the amount of technological change is probably far less than in urban China.

Two other pictures of television's effects on "foreign" cultures are worth examining, both in India. In a study conducted by Yadava and Reddi (1988) in Delhi and four other cities, they found television sets, because of their relatively high cost, to be status symbols that were invariably placed, therefore, "in the drawing room of the house, where members of the household usually sit to relax and to receive outside visitors" (p. 125). And they found that in lower-middle class and poorer rural areas where TV was not common, neighbors would drop by to watch shows. As in Tago's home during the wrestling matches, in Indian homes during cricket matches on TV, "the drawing room virtually becomes the playground. Almost all members of the family and, at times, many others watch together. They cheer and jeer the proceedings of the game" as if attending in person (p. 128). But perhaps more important were the behavioral changes the two researchers observed. After the novelty value of having a television in the home has worn off, they write, "watching television has become more or less an addiction for at least some members of the family" (p. 130). And as such, watching TV replaces other formerly routine

occurrences, like going to movies, shopping, strolling in the market or parks, visiting neighbors and relatives. The researchers report that they were often told that "television is antisocial" because it restricts communication between members of the family and visitors when it is on (p. 131). Eating and study habits, they note, are altered to fit around certain television shows.

Behl (1988) also studied television in India, but in a rural village rather than the big cities. Her report is of special interest because she contrasts the effect of television on one household with a picture of the family's daily routine before its arrival. A major, though hardly surprising, change is what television does to time. In the small farming household she pictures—one she observed episodically for a year (and which she admits is partially a construct)—the sun, moon and stars, nature itself, determine daily activities...until television enters the home. Then, the alterations begin: food is cooked much earlier in the evening, daily housework begins earlier, or is delayed, postponed, in case it isn't finished in time for certain television shows. Foods that are more quickly prepared replace traditional items on the menu. Family members start staying up late to watch TV. A breakdown of sexual segregation occurs, with the men coming more frequently into the women's quarters where the TV set is situated, and the men and women spending more time together. Additionally, television gives both new role models, "helping them discard the rusty image of rural life" (p. 146). Writes Behl:

Traditionally, young girls combed their hair in the room in darkness, and came out with their heads covered. They wore dirty clothes and never looked into a mirror. Now, with electric light in the rooms and TV presenting a clean and beautiful image of women, they have become aware of cleanliness and personal appearance (p. 143).

For women, she says, television makes demands on them and their time that men once made. "Not only are cooking habits and menus changing, but orientation to the TV set as cultural object frees them from the control of men" (p. 155). She notes, too, that partly because of television's influence "topics of conversation of boys have changed from farming culture to world views, political issues, films, girls and such" (p. 149). Age

barriers begin fading. A dining room table is brought into the home, "symbolizing equal status as a centrally placed platform from which all members of the family can eat together at one time" (p. 156). And on Sundays, when television broadcasting begins at 9:30 a.m. instead of 6:30 p.m., the family watches all day long. "They anxiously wait for Sunday the whole week. With the arrival of television, Sunday now punctuates the week by taking the form of a holiday, a new concept for the farmer" (p. 154). Clearly the effects of television on this family are profound ones, especially compared to the effects in other countries and on social strata listed previously. Unlike the family in Amanave in Samoa, the people in Behl's northern Indian village appear to have been much more isolated from modern conveniences and concepts. They seemed to let little of the outside world in, until the arrival of television. They are closer in lifestyle to the villagers on the island of Hunga in Tonga.

But how do viewers in Samoa compare with those in the United States, the nation most immediately associated with television and therefore thought of as housing its most sophisticated viewers? Well, it takes little perceptivity to recognize that only simple skills are needed to maneuver through channels, lower or increase sound, tape shows for later playing, or use the set for rented video movies rather than television programming. Perhaps that's why children are so adept at using TVs and VCRs. Lindlof, Shatzer and Wilkinson (1988) looked at six American families in Lexington, Ken., to discover how they watched television. Among their more enlightening observations were those that took note of viewers "monitoring" television shows or "idling" near the set. Monitoring, they write:

occurs when an activity, one which typically requires bursts of concentration, is pursued in the viewing vicinity with television engaged as a secondary source of interest (p. 177).

An example of monitoring would be a youngster, engrossed in homework near the TV, who occasionally looks up to check out what is happening on the screen, or a woman sewing while the TV set plays nearby. She has to concentrate on her work, but can, like the youngster, check out the TV program during brief breaks in her work.

And idling is:

a temporal use of television in the context of other segments of social action. In idling, the individual is temporarily and rather unintentionally engaged in viewing. Idling occurs because one is 'between assignments,' happens to be in the vicinity of the set, or simply wants to discharge some time in anticipation of an upcoming activity. It is typically not planned or habitual (p. 178).

These "sophisticated" behaviors of American viewers are probably enacted by almost all viewers, at least after they've become used to having a television set around and its uniqueness lessens. It certainly was the case in Amanave, where Tago frequently "monitored" the shows while engaged in primary activities such as talking to visiting villagers. Iva monitored shows while doing housework, and the children likewise checked in on programs in between bouts of energetic play. "Idling" was also a frequent response to television in Tago's home. Because the TV was on so much, different members of the household simply found themselves in the room with it (especially so since there was one main room where most activities took place) and watched disinterestedly for a few moments before turning their attention elsewhere.

As noted earlier, my survey in Samoa was not completed as planned. Nevertheless, I think the results are worth reporting (a complete breakdown is given in Appendix A) for the insight they give, limited as perhaps they may be. The survey questions I asked were an abbreviated and modified version of those used by Baldauf (1975) in American Samoa and later replicated by Schramm et al (1981), plus some questions Christol (1980) employed. Like many questionnaires, mine inquired about education, travel, income and possessions, as well as likes and dislikes and values. My intent was to go to every tenth house in the village, which I more or less succeeded in doing in Hunga (23 questionnaires). But my random survey in Amanave brought me to only eight homes (9 questionnaires). These are the key findings: 8 of the 9 Samoans had travelled abroad (several had been out of the country for more than five years) and most went to California and Hawaii. Only 7 of 23 Tongans had been out of the country (the longest for six months) and 5 of them had gone to New Zealand. The Samoans who had jobs annually made from \$1,600 as a woodcarver up

to \$40,000 as a special education teacher. The Tongans, nearly half of them farmers, made from \$100 up to \$3,000 a year. Asked where they would most like to live in the world, 9 Tongans said New Zealand and 6 said America, giving jobs and money as the reasons why, while one each picked Pago Pago, Tahiti, Australia, and the state of Hawaii (specifically). Only two picked Tonga. Asked the same question, 6 of the Samoans picked American Samoa, one picked Western Samoa, one Hawaii and one New Zealand. The Samoans said they wanted to stay where they were because they were "happy here," "like the life," "low crime," "everything's free here," and "it's stress free."

Questioned about their leisure time, 21 of the Tongans "often" or "sometimes" drank kava and talked, and did traditional Tongan dances and songs. Sixteen often read the Bible, 13 often visited with friends, and 9 often listened to the radio. Of the Samoans, only 2 often listened to the radio, though 4 often watched television (3 sometimes, 2 "never"); 5 often read the Bible (4 sometimes); 3 often visited with friends (6 sometimes); but only 2 often drank kava and talked, and did traditional Samoan dances and songs.

All nine Tongans preferred their traditional *valas*, while 19 Samoans preferred their traditional *lavalavas*, over western clothes. All the Tongans said they went to church each Sunday instead of sleeping late and staying home; 7 of the Samoans did; 21 Tongans and 8 Samoans preferred fresh fish and yams to canned foods. But, as noted above, 11 of the Tongans preferred to make lots of money over "taking life easy," while only 2 of the Samoans did. Eight of the Samoans preferred the traditional Samoan way of doing things (although three would also try western ways); but 7 of the Tongans preferred western ways.

My final question was an open-ended one about what happiness depends on. It was supposed to be asked only of the Samoans, but two Tongans answered it. One said happiness depends on the family, staying healthy and peaceful; the other said it depends on freedom from conflicts and wars. The Samoans said that happiness comes not from things

but from religion, food, living in brotherhood, the family, the simple life, going to church, and even watching television and listening to the radio.

What seems superficially interesting from comparing the surveys is that the Tongans, who in general haven't got much money and haven't been around much, would like to go elsewhere in the world where they can make money. And the Samoans, who in general have been elsewhere and have got money and a fair amount of things, would just as soon stay where they are and live the simple life. As one of the Samoans told me, "I had a four-bedroom house (in the United States). Now I'm happy with one room here. I've seen the rest."

CHAPTER IV

THIS OTHER EDEN

One of the main assumptions Americans seem to have—at least if what my friends tell me and what I usually come across in the media are any indication—is that places like Tonga, Samoa, Tahiti, almost anywhere in the South Pacific, are "paradise." Given that belief, any change that happens in paradise has to diminish it, paradise by definition being beyond improvement. Having lived two years in Tonga, I know that it isn't perfect and that it probably never was. Whether the Tongans ever thought it was paradise is debatable, especially considering that up until the middle of the last century, the country was embroiled in a civil war between rival kings that lasted over 50 years (Bunge & Cooke, 1984; Wolff, 1973). Tongans also frequently went to battle with Fijians and Samoans. And the Samoans, wrote Murdoch in 1934, "live in a chronic state of war. Rarely is there a time when neighboring villages somewhere in the islands are not in arms, and great wars involving two or more districts are not infrequent" (p. 63). Obviously, then, these paradises are either somewhat tarnished or our images of them are slightly inaccurate. It is, in fact, the premise that is wrong. These islands are not paradise; our images based on that premise are badly formed. Therefore, changes that occur in these countries can potentially be beneficial, instead of detrimental. All this is not to say that television is a positive influence on Samoans (or will be on Tongans). I'm just trying to keep free from the sort of kneejerk response of many media critics that television's effects on culture (or anything, really) must be harmful. My conclusion is that television, like other outside technological and human influences, is merely one minor instrument of change in American Samoa. In the grand scheme of things, it seems less potent by far as a molder of contemporary Samoan culture than foreign religion, money, jobs and travel. (Bingo and electronic poker, after all, weren't brought in by television.)

Of course, paradise or not, Samoa will ultimately change, as everything does, under the constant but unhurried pressure of time. Its traditional culture will be slowly chipped away in almost invisible pieces, like the cliffs are nibbled off by the sea. But the modification will be so gradual that few will notice it, and will assume that what is, is what always was. The fascinating thing about change is that it is often not even recognized by the locals, the natives, the people who have changed. Tia's claim that the wedding we attended was "traditional" is a case in point, as were the "traditional" Samoan meals of hot dogs, frozen chicken legs, chop suey, and rice. New traditions arise quickly and past ones are forgotten. Pollster Lou Harris (1987), after pointing out that the United States farm population has dropped to 2.4 percent of the nation's total from 15.3 percent 40 years ago, notes that farmers wield political power far beyond their number. Why? Because, Harris concludes, it "stems from the love affair that the rest of the American people have for farming and people who work the land....To most Americans, farmers still represent the best in the national character" (p. 230-231). To me, that signifies also a tie to idea of farming, a labor which, although few of us still engage in it, strikes us not just logically but emotionally, somehow, as a necessary activity. Although family farmers are becoming a thing of the past in America, we want to keep alive the belief in their existence. They're part of our cultural heritage...a tradition.

In Samoa, television will play some part in the changing traditions, but from what I can determine, it has had its shot at appreciably modifying the Samoans and has, instead, been modified by them to fit their needs, mainly as background pictures and momentary entertainment. TV has stolen time from them—or perhaps not quite that, for time is never stolen, only used in different ways. And the different uses of time will mean some aspects of their old culture will be lost. But we barter with time in many ways, trading money for it in the form of, say, jet air travel or microwave oven cooking, both of which "speed things up" and therefore "save time." Granted, television deals both in time and ideas and, as Lull

(1988a) notes, TV is not just an appliance. Even so, different people use appliances in different ways. Samoans—the ones I've seen at least—use television differently than Americans. And I think this is the reason: If television, as Lippman (1922) writes in reference to newspaper's power, has the ability to create "pictures in our heads" about the world outside, it may be primarily because we—as Americans—have lost touch with that outside world and need the media to reformulate it for us. But for Samoans (like the Tongans), the world is still too much with them; they live directly in it each day, touching the land and the sea, rubbing shoulders with each other, visiting together and living together in one room, talking and listening to tales of the village. Although the outside world beyond their islands may be created in their heads by television, TV's effect on them is still slight. Whatever information they really need comes more often from other Samoans than from informers like PBS, ABC and NBC. Television for them is more of an appliance, a conveyer of pictures and stories, and simply does not have the influence on them it has on the majority of Americans.

At best, what kind of changes in Samoa can legitimately be attributed to television? Schramm et al (1981), having made the most thorough examination of television's effects there by surveying nearly 500 secondary school students in both Western and American Samoa, conclude that "American entertainment television was at least partly responsible for the rapidly changing way of life" (p. 161). Those changes, as noted earlier, were that Samoan youngsters were: becoming less conservative, valuing success less (which strikes me as running counter to American values), becoming more independent and competitive, feeling less respect for authority, and ascribing less importance to the family. But then they added these caveats:

Even though the family has lost some of its importance, it was still very important in 1977 (to 76 percent of the young respondents in Western Samoa, 64 percent in American Samoa). Even though young people were becoming less conservative, they were still quite conservative (74 percent for Western Samoa, 60 percent of American Samoa). Even though they valued success somewhat less, more than 80 percent, on the average, valued it highly. Even though the work ethic seemed under attack, still

about three-fourths of all the young people held to it. And therefore the changes we have reported were all relative changes. The resilient Samoan culture has long proved its ability to absorb outside influences and comes to terms with them (pp. 168-169).

The final evaluation Schramm et al give to television is that it makes neither a great difference nor no difference. Instead, they say, television falls somewhere in the middle. It "helps to make a difference. It acts chiefly as an eloquent and attractive pitchman, a model of behavior, for a broader cultural invasion" (p. 172). And then they step back again, adding: "how much these (entertainment) programs contribute to cultural change must depend on the individual and a great many factors in the surrounding situation" (p. 173). Well, yes, they must. But as I've reported, the model of change being presented on television in American Samoa seems to be carrying less weight. Television now has been folded into the hundreds if not thousands of other influences that come into the country naturally and haphazardly. For Tago and his family, it is old hat. That's to be expected. After all, at one time when television was new in the United States, viewers would even sit still to watch test patterns on it. But even with television, how different is daily life for Tago in Amanave from Salesi in television-less Hunga? Tago would work early in the mornings, either going off for food in the bush or leaving to do his mayoral duties in Leone. In the afternoons, he'd rest, watch television and, because of his "talking chief" status, entertain visitors. Salesi, in Hunga, also did most of his work in the bush during the mornings and rested in the afternoons, listening to the radio. Because of Salesi's age, prestige and family ties, villagers would often visit him at his home. Neither man worked what we would consider a full day, and both spent evenings with family and friends at home. Salesi's wife, Eneio, did almost all of the food preparation, as did Iva, in Tago's home, and both worked long hours. Men were involved in food preparation usually only during special feast occasions. So although many specific parts of their lives differ, the overall pattern of existence for Tago and Salesi is much the same.

In the year and a half since I went to the South Pacific to do research for this paper, television service has come to Tonga's northern island group, although not yet to Hunga.

Only 500 subscribers in the whole country pay for the service, which is costly: \$300 hook up fee and \$15 a month, according to a new magazine there (Matangi Tonga, 1989b). But the magazine also notes that videos, which are in wider use and even sneak into Hunga on occasion, are being "branded as villains," "damned from the pulpit," "cited as an influence in youngsters' suicides," and "feared as an insidious cultural threat" (Matangi Tonga, 1989c, p. 29). Patelisio Finau, the bishop of the Catholic Church in Nuku'alofa, the capital, says that the video films present glamorous Western lifestyles. Finau observes that video

makes people (in Tonga) think they are small because they don't have this and that, so when they see this type of thing portrayed, there's a subtle inference that this is what happens in *pagalangi*-land, it's OK, it must be good. We need to judge properly, evaluate, but people do not always have the opportunity to be exposed, whether educationally or through travel...so as to make the interpretation of those things we see on movies (p. 29).

Fatu Helu, the director of Tonga's 'Atenisi Institute (college), says he has seen few behavioral changes among his students that could be regarded as attributable to the videos. But Helu believes that videos will have an enormous impact that could affect the culture. Still, he isn't frightened. He observes that the culture will change whether Tonga has video or not, and adds:

I don't see any good sense in sheltering or building a kind of protective shield over your culture. If the culture has any strength at all it should be able to withstand the onslaughts of other cultures after exposure to these influences (Matangi Tonga, 1989a, p 30-31).

Not surprisingly, there is talk of censorship as a method of keeping out the ideas and images video (not television, which the king has censored) brings in to Tonga. To some, change is always dangerous.

Donald W. George, travel editor of the San Francisco Examiner, recently reflected (Oct. 8, 1989) on the process of change in foreign societies, which he recognized as an ongoing lament. It is the experienced traveler's refrain of: "If only you'd seen (insert the country of your choice) 20 years ago—everything was so much simpler and unspoiled

then." As travel editor, George said he has heard it about many places and although he finds some truth in it, he finds it partly inaccurate. For one thing, many of the changes, such as with health and sanitation, had been for the good. "Feeble buildings and rudimentary sewage facilities, for example, may be considered intensely picturesque—but they are also dangerous and unhealthy for the people who inhabit and use them," he writes. And as disturbed as he is by the proliferation of (usually) American fast food places and the intrusion of American television shows into foreign cultures, George wonders about our right to do something about it. Should the United States (and other technologically advanced countries), he asks, prohibit the exportation of television sets and TV programs? "Should we send in retro-missionaries whose job would be to convert the natives back to their ancient ways? It is immoral, it seems to me, to ask people to remain picturesque for the sake of our scrapbooks." George acknowledges that cultures can be corrupted and urges sensitivity on the part of those who travel and do business abroad. But he concludes, as I think he must, that "Life is change, life is flow, and all this vast panorama of disintegration and synthesis, birth and destruction, rejection and renewal is just part of that flow" (p. T16).

What many tourists complain about, of course, are the major tourist stops, the places they are most likely to visit. Those who live in these tourist stops—if they want the continued trade—often make some modifications to keep tourists coming back. But even then the native culture is not lost, only altered. Pago Pago is the closest to such an example in American Samoa and the closest to being an American town. But it's clearly not. Instead, it's more like a border town, like Juarez, Mexico. Although separated (not very well) from El Paso merely by a river, Juarez could never be confused with an American city, nor El Paso with a Mexican one. Both reflect the other's culture (and economics), but remain at core true to their primary culture. Pago Pago has changed the most of all American Samoa, but it is undisputably Samoan.

Change, of course, is the only inevitable. It's the speed of change and what's lost with it that concerns us. Pool (1975), writing about the effects of direct-broadcast satellites on cultures, worries about them bringing "quantitative change so great as to become qualitative change too. Mass media and electronic communications obliterate many of the impediments that once served to slow down changes in ideas and mores" (in Berger, 1987; p. 230-231).

But even acknowledging that, Latukefu, a Tongan associate professor of history at the University of Papua, New Guinea, responds that living cultures can't be preserved because they are always changing. Latukefu declares:

You can only preserve that which is dead. Tradition and customs of our forefathers were devised by them to suit the particular needs of the day, which were largely an isolated stone-age subsistence economy. To try to pretend that the needs of the 20th century, of the atomic and jet ages, in a world which is shrinking every day, could be met by these customs and traditions, is absurd to say the least (1976; p. 19).

And finally, closer to home, an observation made by Tocqueville about American Indians some 150 years ago:

The native of North America retains his opinions and the most insignificant of his habits with a degree of tenacity that has no parallel in history. For more than two hundred years the wandering tribes of North American have had daily intercourse with the whites, and they have never derived from them a custom or an idea. Yet the Europeans have exercised a powerful influence over the savages: they have made them more licentious, but not more European (1835, p. 345 footnote).

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

Family Questionnaire

(The introduction was the same for both Samoa and Tonga, with the minor substitution of the appropriate country.)

Hello. My name is Andre Neu. I am a student studying the daily life of the people in (Tonga or Samoa) and wish to better understand your culture. Would you be willing to help me by answering a few questions? This will not take more than 15 minutes. I will keep the answers confidential so that no one outside of your family knows what you have said.

In Tonga (23 respondents):

1. Where were you born? 15 in Hunga, 8 elsewhere in Tonga.
15 males, ages 25 to 74; 8 females, ages 25 to 67
2. How long have you lived here (in Hunga)? 15 always, others 2 to 4 years.
3. Have you travelled abroad? 16 no. 7 yes.
If Yes, where? 2 to Fiji (less than one month); 5 to New Zealand for
from 2 1/2 weeks to 1 month.
4. Where were your parents born? 16 in Hunga, 10 elsewhere in Tonga, 2 in
Samoa. (Not a total recounting.)
5. Where did you go to school? All in Tonga.
Last grade completed? 7 to 6th grade, 4 to 9th grade, 3 to 10th, 4 to
12th grade, one to 14th. (Not all answered.)
6. Do you speak English? 5 yes, 7 a little. Write or read English? No
answers.
7. Do you read and write Tongan? All yes.
8. If not a student, where do you work? 12 were farmers, 5 were
housewives, 3 were fishermen, 2 were teachers, and one each was a boat
captain, carpenter and town officer (some listed more than one job).
9. What would you estimate is your family's income? Incomes ranged from
\$100 to \$3,000 and averaged \$690.
10. Do you own a radio? 15 said "yes."
Do you own a boat? 5 said "yes"—all outboards.
11. (Samoa only question)

12. Number of rooms in home? 4 respondents had 5-room homes; 2 had 4-room homes, the rest had 2-room homes.
13. Number of children in family? Average was 4.8, fewest was 1, most was 10.
14. How do you spend your leisure time? (Often/Sometimes/Never)
a. Drinking kava and talking:	4	17	2
b. Tongan dancing or singing:	4	17	-
c. Reading the Bible:	16	7	-
d. Reading newspapers or magazines:	3	12	8
e. Listening to radio:	9	12	1
f. (Samoa only question)			
g. Going to movies (or watching video):	-	17	4
h. Playing sports:	1	10	12
i. Making mats or weaving:	4	4	14
j. Visiting with friends:	13	8	1
k. Going to the bar:	-	2	20
l. Other: (reading and studying)	-	1	-
15. If you could live anywhere in the world, where would it be? 9 said New Zealand (for work and money); 6 America (for money); 2 Tonga ("because it's home"); and one each said Hawaii ("it's like Tonga"); Pago Pago ("it's close and got money"); Tahiti ("beautiful"); Australia ("beneficial to family"), and "any foreign country to earn money."
16. How do you learn about other places and people in the world?
- radio: 21
 - newspapers: 16 (mostly the Tongan Chronicle)
 - magazines: 17 (mostly church magazines and newsletters)
 - movies: 7
 - (Samoa only question)
 - friends or family who have been there: 14
 - tourists: 16 (mostly from yachts anchored near island)
 - personal visits or contact: 4
 - school lessons: 8
17. Do you prefer:
	Yes	No
a. To wear traditional Tongan <i>valas</i>	19	3
b. Or wear western clothes?	8	14
c. To eat fresh fish and yams	21	1
d. Or canned meat and vegetables?	6	15
e. Go to church every Sunday	22	-
f. Or sleep late and stay home?	2	20
g. To make lots of money	11	9
h. Or take life easy—as it comes?	13	8
i. The old way or doing things	17	4
j. Or modern, western ways?	7	15
k. To most often speak Tongan	21	-
l. Or English?	2	19
m. Women taking care of home & children	19	3
n. Or women working outside of the home?	3	18

In Samoa (9 respondents)

1. Where were you born? 7 in American Samoa, 2 in Western Samoa
6 males, ages 21 to 55; 3 females, ages 29 to 43
2. How long have you lived here? 4 all their lives; 4 between 2 and 20 years and one new arrival.
3. Have you travelled abroad? 8 yes
If yes, where? 6 to California (2 for 1 month; 1 for 20 years; 1 for 9 years; 1 for 8 years; 1 for 6 years); 4 to Hawaii (from 1 month to 1 1/2 years); 1 to Washington state for 4 years, and 1 to Fiji for 3 weeks.
4. Where were your parents born? All in American or Western Samoa.
5. Where did you go to school? 7 in American Samoa, 1 in Western Samoa and 1 in the United States.
Last grade completed? 3 graduated high school; 2 had some college; 3 had some high school; 1 had a master's degree.
6. Do you speak English? All said they did. Read and write English? 8 said they did.
7. Do you read and write Samoan? All said they did.
8. If not a student, where do you work? 2 were special education teachers; one each was a store owner, woodcarver, housekeeper, bus driver, hospital orderly, a shipping-receiving clerk, and a village mayor.
9. What would you estimate is your family's income? Not all responded, but the 5 that did said: \$3,000; \$4,600; \$16,000; \$36,000, and \$40,000.
10. Do you own a radio? All said they did; several had more than one.
Do you own a television? All said they did; 7 had VCRs (video cassette recorders)
Do you own a car? 4 did.
Do you own a boat? None did.
11. Do you own your home? 7 did.
12. Number of rooms in home? The average was 4 rooms.
13. Number of children in family? The average was 4.3.

14. How do you spend your leisure time? (Often/Sometimes/Never)

a. Drinking kava and talking:	2	3	4
b. Samoan dancing or singing:	2	4	3
c. Reading the Bible:	5	4	-
d. Reading newspapers or magazines:	1	8	-
e. Listening to the radio:	2	7	-
f. Watching television:	4	3	2
g. Going to movies:	2	4	3
h. Playing sports:	1	4	4
i. Making mats or weaving:	-	2	7
j. Visiting with friends:	3	6	-
k. Going to the bar:	-	4	5
l. Other:	-	-	-

15. If you could live anywhere in the world, where would it be? 6 said American Samoa; one each said Hawaii, New Zealand, and Western Samoa. Why? "Like the life"; "happy here"; "low crime"; "everything free here"; it's stress free."

16. How do you learn about other places and people in the world?

- a. radio: 9
- b. newspapers: 9
- c. magazines: 4 (National Geographic, People and Time were listed)
- d. movies: 5
- e. television: 7
- f. friends or family who have been there: 9
- g. tourists: 9
- h. personal visits or contact: 8
- i. school lessons: (question deleted in Samoa)

17. Do you prefer:

	Yes	No
a. To wear traditional Samoan <i>lavalavas</i>	9	
b. Or western clothes?	5	3
c. To eat fresh fish and yams	8	1
d. Or canned meat and vegetables?	4	5
e. Go to church every Sunday	7	2
f. Or sleep late and stay home?	3	5
g. To make lots of money	2	6
h. Or take life easy—as it comes?	7	2
i. The old ways of doing things	8	1
j. Or modern, western ways?	3	5
k. To most often speak Samoan	9	
l. Or English?	3(at work)	
m. Women taking care of home and children	6	3
n. Or women working outside of the home?	7	2

18. (Samoa only) Are there any television characters you would
- want your son(s) to be like? "Hunter," James Bond, Elvis, O.J. Simpson, Rambo.
 - want your daughter(s) to be like? Mister Rogers, Chris Evert, "Days of Our Lives" women, and the police woman on "Hunter."
 - want to be like yourself? James Bond and characters on "Days of Our Lives."
19. (Samoa only) Some people say that the more things that a family has, such as clothes, furniture, appliances, the happier they are. Other people say happiness depends on other things. What is your opinion?
- "Happiness (comes) through religion and having food, through TV." "
 - "Watch TV, listen to radio, say prayers—religion."
 - "Things don't make me happy. I had a 4-bedroom house (in the U.S.). Now I'm happy with one room here. I've seen the rest."
 - "I don't think things bring happiness. I think the simpler life is preferable: family and religion, husband, kids and love."
 - "Living in brotherhood with each other and under Jesus's doctrine for a better and eternal life."
 - "Television. Going to church is very important, and dancing and singing."
 - "Too much can bring a lot of trouble. I go with the Bible. Be satisfied with what you have. God will supply what you need. God first, then the family."
 - "I think the family is more important and religion."
 - "Food and clothing, and a Christian family."

APPENDIX B

HISTORY OF TELEVISION IN AMERICAN SAMOA

It was called the world's largest educational television broadcasting system, and it came to the islands of American Samoa in an enormous educational flash on Oct. 4, 1964. It did not enter gradually, a set here, a set there, picking up an off-island signal, but all at once, 300 sets in as many classrooms. And the signal they picked up was on-island, Samoan, transmitted from the new studios especially developed to spread education like rain on a parched taro field. It was an act born of guilt and good intentions. But it was not without its critics and within two years the world's largest television system was under attack. Within six years it had been severely cut back, and within 10 years it was almost out of operation. What had not quit operating, however, was the television station itself, now broadcasting a full array of stateside American network programming out to the tiny country's plentiful number of privately owned sets. The educational process shifted from the formality of the schools to the informal settings of hundreds of Samoan *fales*.

How and why television came to American Samoa is an enlightening tale, a classic example of good intentions going bad. An American territory since 1899, the islands had been woefully shortchanged in U.S. government funding for education (Schramm et al, 1981). As late as 1934, the annual per pupil expenditure by the United States for a Samoan youngster was \$8.32. By 1961, it had risen to nearly \$80, compared to an annual per pupil outlay in the United States of \$487. The schools themselves were grass-thatched *fales*, generally wall-less. What schoolbooks there were, were hand-me-downs from American stateside schools, tattered and out of date. U.S. administrations for years had been promising improvements in the educational system for the 5,000 to 6,000 youngsters of school age living on seven small islands.

By the early 1960s, the U.S. could no longer ignore them. A scathing article entitled “Samoa: America’s Shame in the South Seas” (Hall, 1961) appeared in the Reader’s Digest in both national and overseas editions. Not only did the piece decry the physical state of the country, it bemoaned the level of education being provided. It, too, noted that the per pupil expenditures were the lowest of any U.S. state or territory in the world. Teachers and students had no desks, classrooms had no blackboards, books, pencils or paper. The teaching staff was largely untrained. But the item that may have most pressured the U.S. government to act was the fact—also noted in the article—that the next scheduled session of the South Pacific Conference (a gathering of the heads of governments in the area) was to be held in Pago Pago, American Samoa’s capital. The media of the world would then see the sad state this American territory was in, the article warned.

The Kennedy administration had just come into power and was not about to be embarrassed by this matter (Thomas, 1980). In the past, the awarding of the governor’s job in American Samoa was a political plum, handed out to party loyalists. This time, however, the job was awarded to a career civil servant, Rex Lee, then deputy director of the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Lee was a man of action and set out immediately to improve both the state of the islands and the school system, which he described as “grossly inadequate” (Thomas, 1980, p. 157). Lee concluded that the best approach to reversing 60 years of educational neglect was to blanket the tiny island nation with televised instruction (Schramm et al, 1980). He maintained that this was preferable to simply pumping extra money into the existing program or replacing Samoan teachers with better trained instructors from the mainland.

I was not only intrigued with what television might do for our children and teachers, but I also was convinced that it would be a useful tool in working with the community as a whole—a community that was grossly under-educated but one that America needed to bring into the 20th century in a hurry (quoted in Schramm et al, 1981, p. 26).

Lee consulted with the National Association of Educational Broadcasters, which, not surprisingly, told him such a project was feasible. The NAEB was then contracted not only to design and operate the project, but to supervise construction of facilities for it, hire the staff and create the curriculum (Thomas, 1980). The NAEB mandated that the plan was to operate for 12 years without major alterations so that one complete group of children would have progressed up the entire school ladder, grades 1-12, before a final appraisal would be made of the system's effectiveness. This locking-into-place of a basically untested system for 12 years was to become a major factor in its ultimate downfall (Thomas, 1980).

Gov. Lee got from the U.S. Congress more than \$1.5 million to improve the educational system (Hall, 1966). He had 26 modern consolidated schools built to replace the 45 thatched-roof village schools, had them electrified (along with the villages in which they resided), and put 300 television sets inside as teaching tools. Four television studios were built, stateside technicians were brought over to operate them, and stateside teachers were brought in to give lessons over the air. In 1964, television provided the core of instruction in grades one through eight; the next year TV moved into grades nine through 12 (Schramm et al, 1981). It was an amazing undertaking, wrongheaded in many ways but not without merit. Like many quick solutions to major problems, though, it was too much, too soon, and it ended badly.

But in the beginning, the operation was covered with praise in the popular press. The same author who proclaimed Samoa's shame in the 1960 Reader's Digest wrote a new piece entitled "Samoa: America's Showplace of the South Seas" (Hall, 1966), which painted Gov. Lee as a superman who could do no wrong. The article said the school system not only taught youngsters, but teachers and villagers as well during after-class and evening programs. American Samoa, it asserted, now stood as "a first rate model of how to govern Pacific islands" (Hall, 1966, p. 162). Likewise, the Saturday Review

found the educational television system to be “the most encouraging thing to happen in American Samoa in the last 65 years” (Kaser, 1965, p. 73).

Closer to home, in Samoa, there were rumblings about it, however. In direct response to the Reader's Digest article, the associate editor of the Pacific Islands Monthly, a chatty yet newsy magazine covering all the Pacific Island territories, wrote a piece called “All That Glitters Isn't Gold in America's South Seas 'Showplace'” (Langdon, 1966). In it, he worried about Samoa turning into another Hawaii and questioned the whole concept of an “ETV” system for the islands. He noted especially the fact that all instruction was in English and wrote:

Samoa children are not only being subjected to a method of education whose efficacy has never been proved elsewhere; they are being weaned away from their own language which is the very enshrinement of their culture (Langdon, 1966, p. 39).

The lack of lessons given in Samoan meant that no concepts could be taught until the English vocabulary was first learned for them—a procedure which delayed progress in classes such as math or history (Schramm et al, 1981). In fact, Cooney (1973) argued angrily that by emphasizing the use of English in schools:

children are not allowed to engage in cognitive activities they can easily manage. They are reduced to the level of three or four-year olds as far as their verbal activities are concerned (Cooney, 1973, p. 27).

Prior to ETV's entry into Samoan education, teachers in the village schools offered simple lessons which were dutifully memorized. The use of ETV made lessons much more sophisticated; their purpose was to make pupils think as well as learn, and the pupils actively responded to the television teachers (Gillmore, 1977). But the Samoan teachers were relegated to providing lessons in support of the television offerings. Instead of being the center of instruction, they became peripheral to it. Their feelings about the use of ETV had not been solicited before its introduction and little feedback was obtained from them once it was in use (Schramm et al, 1981). During the first year of ETV, more than 6,000

lessons were telecast, some 2,000-plus hours of airtime, but the Samoan teachers often had difficulty incorporating the TV lessons into classroom activities. Additionally, supportive literature sent out by the studio instructors frequently did not reach the Samoan teachers in time for them to use it. Understandably, many of the Samoan teachers became disgruntled. Their jobs, in effect, had been usurped; their prestige in the community had been taken from them.

The stateside teachers, meanwhile, were hard put to keep up with a production schedule of several new lessons each day. Plans for them to visit Samoan teachers in their classrooms to see how the televised instruction worked were dropped because of a lack of time. Perhaps because of this, most mainland teachers stayed no more than a year or two in the system before returning home. Samoans referred to them as "tourist teachers" (Thomas, 1980, p. 161). Just when they became accustomed to life in the islands and learned something of Samoan culture and how to do their jobs, the mainland teachers returned home.

But the United States, having spent \$2.56 million to set up the ETV studios and bring in nearly 100 teachers and technicians to operate them, was not about to give up quickly.

Other problems plagued the Samoan system. Although students' test scores appeared to improve, no pre-ETV system testing had been undertaken to provide an accurate comparison (Schramm et al, 1981). In an earlier appraisal, Schramm observed that there was "a refusal to test that was almost religious in insistence on the inviolability of the original (NAEB) plan and of the methods chosen" to implement it (Schramm, 1973, p. 51). Research and evaluation was not started until after the ETV system began operation, which meant that baseline data were never reliably gathered (Gillmore, 1977). Also, evaluation continued to be conducted using standardized mainland tests, which were as culturally biased as the old "Dick and Jane" texts. Furthermore, the standardized test

scores of the Samoan pupils did not rise significantly after the system had been in use for five or six years (Thomas, 1980), a major disappointment to parents who had expected great advances, perhaps unrealistically so because of the way the system had been introduced. At the same time, as the Samoan teachers were becoming familiar with the system and capable of fitting effectively into it, no process had been established to include them fully (Schramm et al, 1981). On top of that, the upkeep of equipment in the islands, which receive more than 200 inches of rain a year, was not fully accounted for in the budget. When there were periodic power failures of generators transmitting the ETV broadcasts, school lessons had to be abandoned and the old rote system re-employed (Thomas, 1980). Wrote one angry parent to Pacific Islands Monthly:

I can understand having a slight recess in one of our school classes when a teacher has to go to the bathroom; however, to close down an entire school system for days and weeks every time some remote electric generator becomes defective is hardly my idea of an efficient or desirable school system (Spenser, April, 1969, p. 72).

And last, but not least, political personalities came heavily into play over the ETV system. Some islanders criticized Gov. Lee for being out of the country too often. (Pacific Islands Monthly noted that Lee was out of the country for 200 days in 1966, and absent the first 12 weeks of 1967.) Following Lee's departure as governor in the summer of 1969, the ETV system underwent dramatic changes. According to Schramm (1973), Lee had given backing to the ETV system and allowed needed changes to be made to it. But when he left:

The wolves felt freer to attack, and ETV was blown in the winds of politics and personal ill-feeling....But as long as he was there, there was no doubt anywhere in the government that it was our (Samoan) project, not their project, and that it would be supported (Schramm, 1973, p. 50).

Succeeding Lee as governor was Owen Aspinall, who was not overly enthusiastic about the ETV system. It was not his creation. Aspinall cut back the hours of TV instruction, took the contract for consultation away from the NAEB and awarded it to the

University of South California (Thomas, 1980). Aspinall accused the NAEB of providing an inadequate scope of education—ignoring requests for vocational training, teacher preparation and adult education. "In many ways," said Aspinall, "educational television has been a success in spite of NAEB, not because of it" (PIM, May, 1969).

Following Aspinall was Nixon appointee John Haydon, an advertising executive, who called the ETV system an "utter and complete failure" (Schramm et al, 1981, p. 80), and continued the process to reduce its role. In the next few years, televised instruction was dropped from Samoan high schools where it had never worked as effectively as at the lower levels (Gillmore, 1977), and stateside teachers were brought in to give English instruction in some elementary school classrooms in place of the now-reduced ETV broadcasts (Schramm et al, 1981). At the same time as television was being cut back in the classrooms, its hours were being expanded in the community: six or more hours a day of American network television shows transmitted over three channels.

The next two governors after Aspinall and Haydon cut the educational TV budget in half (partly in response to a tighter hold on purse strings in the U.S., where there were many petitioners for government funds), dismissed most of the staff, and moved the administration of the program from the Department of Education to the Office of Governor. By the mid-1970s few new ETV programs were being produced; most lessons being shown were reruns. Lee, the governor who had initiated the ETV system was not in office, nor was the Democratic administration which had appointed him. Likewise, the staff which had worked developing ETV and most of the original television teachers who used it were also long gone.

Still, there were successes to be found as a result of the operation, at least in pupils' abilities to better speak English (Gillmore, 1977). Thomas (1980) contended that a key factor hampering the ETV system was the NAEB's insistence that it not be modified during the first dozen years of operation. Had the system been perfect, Thomas argued,

that sort of sacrosanct requirement would have been fine. But because it was not perfect, it should have been designed to allow for alterations to reflect the differing needs of students and teachers. Also, Thomas said the system should have had a means for evaluation and for feedback from those using it.

Schramm et al. (1981) concluded that the ETV system had much in its favor but that the method of putting it into effect all at once, rather than one grade at a time with modifications as needed, was a prime cause of its demise. They declared also that had there been more time to plan the operation and had local teachers and community leaders been more fully involved with its design, ETV might still be a major aspect of Samoan education. Thomas (1980) seemed to agree.

Few if any members of the Samoan educational establishment seem to think that installing the instructional television project in the 1960s was an error, even though they believe sustaining it today, in its original form, would be a mistake (p. 166).

As noted in Chapter 2, the ETV system is essentially gone. Blauvelt, KVZK TV's chief engineer, said he didn't even know if any of the television sets in the schools still worked. And to his knowledge, none of the educational films were shown at all during the past year.