structures which mark it and is given identity within the context of the larger consolidated descent group.

A Samoan adage alludes to the differences that mark diverse descent groups. The term *o le fili va i fale* means the enemy in the space between the houses. These enemies refer to weeds growing at compound boundaries and the minor arguments which can arise between neighbouring families (Schultz 1985:48). Each lineage possesses its own houses and its own property; physical spaces which both reflect and support the social spaces. Unproductive weeds are commonly only left to grow on the strips of land which are not clearly claimed by one or the other group. When cutting the grass, which is usually done by hand using a long 'bush knife', the 'gardener' always stops at the property line although there may be no physical marker to indicate its location. A row of uncut wild vegetation between buildings visually indicates the separation between the two families. In their physical division of property, the weeds provide the boundary between houses just as quarrels reinforce the segregation of distinct families. At the same time that weeds are the enemy of agricultural production, these quarrels are contrary to the production of social relationships. The reinforcement of divisions between separate families is mediated here through language using the metaphor of the house. However, the analogy does not end with this rather simple association. Rather it is continued through the conceptual linking of architecture with divisions both within and outside the family and the conditions of those social-spatial entities.

As well as using *fale* as a metaphor to define the individual extended family, architectural terms function to delineate group or individual-based divisions within the larger entity. The term *ita paepae* means the sides (*ita*) of the foundation (*paepae*) and refers to the edges of the rectangular stone base of an important *fale*. It was common in the recent past for prestigious guesthouses to be raised up five feet or more on this stone base. The term *ita paepae* is also applied to title divisions which occur within an individual descent group in one village. Such partitions can arise through the consensus of various branches of the family or can be imposed by the Lands and Title Courts. 'Most splits occur originally between brothers or between their children. The splitting of a title is one way of avoiding open conflict among contending branches' (Shore 1982:83). The use of *ita paepae* to designate these groups acknowledges their origins in a single family and their structural interdependence as the infrastructure of what was once a single house.

The word which designates different, potentially competing, family branches is *fuaifale*. When used as a suffix *fuai* (or *fua'i*) denotes a dividing or detachment from others. *Fuaiala* is a village division, *fua'ifa'i* is a single banana. *Fua'iniuina* is the passive form indicating to be broken or cut off, i[redacted]

used as a prefix or suffix, *mata* incorporates ideas of sight and the visual world. At the same time that the architectural element is denoted, *matafale* also means the caretaker of a title. By extension this means the guardian of the family and the physical spaces signified by that title. The top of the roof of the house is in effect the leader of that group which resides within. David Herdrich (1991:405) has suggested that the positioning of large stone ritual platforms on ridges during pre-Christian times was an attempt to provide a point of mediation between the world of the living and the supernatural heavens above. The role of *matai* as family priest would have been a behavioural corollary to this function. Such a correspondence would also be intimated by the association of the chief with the highest point in the *fale*. In addition to the linking of *matai* and gable, on Upolu the wall posts are called *atuao*. This term means 'the row of chief's heads' (Pratt 1911:36). This derives from the designation of the peripheral ring of support posts as seating places for *matai* when engaged in formal council. The word *mana* or spiritual potency has long been regarded by Polynesians as residing in the head. In addition to *matafale* and *atuao,* further reference to a chief as the structural component of a *fale* exists in the word *tulafale* or talking chief.

The word *tulafale* not only indicates a talking or orator chief, but designates a place on which a house stands. The suffix *tula* provides the meaning of open or standing. For the *matai* this suggests his position when delivering a formal greeting or speech; i.e. erect holding the identifying flywhisk and staff. For the house *tula* indicates the actual position of the structure. The use of *tulafale* for both the orator and the house location suggests a link between the two. In at least one myth the talking chiefs restore the house of their high chief after its theft by carrying it upon their backs as they swim. Just as the chief is the foundation of the family, the location '*tulafale*' provides the base for the house. The *matai* as the support of the house-family is reiterated in the saying *A gau le poutu, e le tali poulalo*, 'When the middle post is broken, the sides cannot withstand' (Schultz 1985:42). In the round *faletele* the centre support poles carry the entire weight of the structure. This adage is recited when a family experiences the death of a *matai*, emphasising the strength and support that are now lost. Those chiefs that have died are also said to become house posts in Pulotu, the Samoan underworld (Stair 1896:36). There they physically become what they verbally represent in life.

A more indirect referent to the support activity of a chief concerns the word for a formal, arranged marriage: *faletauta*. Here the word for house is joined with *tauta*, denoting an attempt to stand or dangerous underwater coral blocks. This term (when combined with a variety of roots) results in compounds which carry connotations of service and the desire to become a chief. Although *tau* alone has at least 19 meanings, many of these are concerned with the idea of characteristics. The suggested meaning of *tauta* is that of having the attributes of erect posture, stability and sharpness. Most formal, arranged marriages (in the past and today) are between a chief and a girl of high status. Such an agreement would be entered into for the social and political good of the extended family. In this act of familial support, the participating *matai* also serves the corporate descent group, a prime requirement of his role as chief.

In contrast to their references to chiefly support and power, architectural terms are also used to define the limits of a *matai's* influence. The *mutiagiagi* are the four rafters that can be found at the apex of the round end or *tala* of an indigenous-style Samoan house. While the lower ends of these rafters are lashed to the centre end post, the tops are not fastened with sennit. Rather, they remain hidden by the rest of the roof support structure. The term *fa'amutiagiagi* (i.e. like the *mutiagiagi)* is applied to a chief who only resides temporarily in a

village. This *matai* is not entitled to take part in the formal *fono* discussions or receive any food which may be distributed (Schultz 1985:41). In terms of the respect afforded him and his position, the titled individual in this case is treated as a *matai*. However, his influence is limited (as is the lashing of the gable rafters) by his lack of connection to the village through one of its constituent families. He appears to function as a form of village support. However, the effect is illusionary as is the physical support afforded by the *mutiagiagi* rafters.

The concept of chiefs (especially *tulafale*) as the support for the physical structure of the house is engendered in an ancient account collected by Bradd Shore. This story concerns the origin of orator chiefs. It is said that at one time the Tui Manu'a (the paramount chief of that island) possessed a *fale 'ula* 'crimson house' thatched with red parrot feathers. The house was stolen by people from the island of Atafu in the Tokelaus. The Tui Manu'a ordered his men to retrieve the structure. They succeeded in obtaining the *fale* after engaging in battle with the thieves.

> Each man had a pole to carry, and they all swam in the sea with the house resting on the poles which lay on the necks of the attendants. So that is the real origin of the word *tulafale*: *tuluga-o-le-fale* [resting place of the house]. This is your calling, he said, and I will spill over my strength to you and you will execute the power [*pule*] of my dignity [*afio*]. (Shore 1982:315; brackets Shore's)

Here the role of the orator chief as *fale* support is acted out, not just implied. As the underpinning for the house, the chief is also the basis for the social space which is the family.

The use of the term *fale* to mark exclusive social divisions has particular importance when used with reference to *matai* 'chiefs'. The word *faletu* indicates the residence of the head of the family, the chief's domicile. Originally this house would be of the large *faletele* 'round house' or *faleafolau* 'long house' styles. Today if the family can afford it, the *matai* resides in a prestigious enclosed Western-style house. This is in contrast to the *faleo'o* or more simple structure which shelters the various common members of the family. Among its many meanings, *tu* refers to a submerged block of coral in the lagoon, a potential danger to canoes which might ground upon it. As an adjective it indicates a firm, stable, or sharp entity. As a verb *faletu* means to stand or stand up, as a chief stands to deliver formal oratory. The residence of the *matai* and the *matai* himself are seen as strong, prominent and possibly dangerous.

As *faletu* designates a *matai's* residence, *faleto'a* refers specifically to a chief's sleeping house. At one time such a house would have been surrounded by a wooden fence as a means of protection during war and of thwarting assassins. The suffix *to'a* incorporates ideas of steady nerves, calm and control; attributes of the high chief or *ali'i*. It is also the chiefly word for sleep. Like the coral block implied in the word *tu*, *to'a* indicates a rock near to the sea's surface on which a canoe might strike. In both *faletu* and *faleto'a* the idea of chief is linked with danger and strength. 'A house built of the wood of the breadfruit tree [*'ulu*] is particularly durable and may, therefore, be compared to a chief or a *tulafale* who is able to protect his family' (Schultz 1985:42). Even today breadfruit is the customary and often required wood for many of the structural elements in a traditional-style guest *fale*. It is associated with productivity, human control, and chiefs. Thus, the strength of a *matai* is emphasised when he is referred to as *O le malu i fale'ulu*: the protection provided by a house constructed of breadfruit wood.

Along with strength, the dangerous aspects of chiefly power are suggested in the word *falefuitui*. According to Buck (1930:69) a *falefuitui* is a *tulafale's* house where men gather in council. Pratt does not include this word in his dictionary and no one I interviewed was

familiar with the term. It is possible that the usage was limited to Tutuila or the Manu'an Group, that it has died out since the early twentieth century or that Buck was misinformed. Therefore, the following discussion is tentative.

The talking chief, if not speaking as head of his own lineage often represents a more highly titled relative during formal social discourse, although *ali'i* 'high chiefs' can and do speak for themselves on some occasions. The significance of *fui* in *falefuitui* is unclear. It may relate in its meaning as a bunch or cluster of fruit and thus refer to the gathering of chiefs that takes place in the *fale*. However, *tui* has several connotations which appear to be directly relevant. The word *tui* means shellfish in general and one species in particular. It is the title of the Tongan paramount chief, the *Tuitoga* and in Samoa indicates a high chief or king. More importantly, it also means to beat, pound, strike with the fist, or to devote to destruction. The chiefs gathered in the meeting house for council hold great power, the potential for destruction as well as production, and are thus dangerous in the authority they wield. They are, as individuals, responsible for supplying food for their families and, as a group, for feeding village guests. It is this association with food that distinguishes a chief as much as conspicuous power.

While the correlation of chiefs with sustenance is not strong in the word *falefuitui*, another word with *fale* as its root directly associates the *matai* with food and food production. A word for the *Palolo* feast is *faleali'i* (*ali'i* meaning high chief). The *Palolo* is a sea annelid which is only available during the period of the waning moon in October or November. At this time the worm expels its reproductive organs into the sea above the coral. The organs, when bursting open, eject eggs and sperm into the water. The annelid is considered a delicacy and was the basis for a major feast. Even today the moonlight gathering of *palolo* is a celebratory event, although secularised. When the gathering of *Palolo* on Savai'i was witnessed by O'Meara (1990:97–98), he noted that all the canoes grouped above the reef were manned by *matai* 'chiefs' in bright *lavalavas*. The exclusive access of the chiefs to boats further underscores their link with the proceedings. The colourful attire helps reinforce the atmosphere of revelry. In *faleali'i*, the *matai* (or specifically the high chief '*ali'i*') is linked to the sudden productivity of the annelid and the subsequent feasting. In daily life and ritual it is the leader of the family who is responsible for the distribution of food and his position is visually and verbally marked.

As the chief is the embodiment of the lineage, the premises of *matai* are distinctly designated in formal language. The *fale* of a high chief is a *maota*. It has also come to mean palace in modern usage. In contrast, the house of an orator is a *laoa*. Both of these *fale* can be used for village council meetings. However, it is a prerogative of an *ali'i*, a titled nobleman, to have an official meeting house built on his land. Every village will have at least one of these grand *maota*, usually located at the edge of a *malae*. For the most important titles, the house site itself is remembered with reverence long after the building itself has been dismantled. As with titles or places in the council, a *maota* retains an existence even when not in use. Important orators have their houses too, called *laoa*, but on the most important occasions a *fono* will be convened in one of the larger and grander of the *maota* in the village (Shore 1982:79).

Although neither *laoa* nor *maota* carries any readily discernable sub or covert meanings, their very existence as separate terms is significant. They verbally mark the chief just as their physical structure (along with the guest *fale*) visually evidences and denotes the family land. At one time the indigenous-style long house or *faleafolau* would have been used for the talking chief while the round *faletele* was associated with the *ali'i*. Within their respective

descent groups, the two types of chiefs are equivalent. However, their functions within village and extra-village socio-political structures are distinct. Although the visual differentiation between the *maota* and the *laoa* has waned, the verbal division is still in evidence reflecting modern social reality. In addition, although *maota* and *laoa* refer specifically to *matai*, they also incorporate a referral to the descent group which derives its verbal and conceptual identity from the chiefly titles which it controls.

5 House as village

Although the use of architectural terminology to verbally signify the individual descent group is quite strong in Samoa, the application of house as metaphor extends beyond the family to include the village. Each of these two groups is made manifest by the existence of architectural forms. The lineage is denoted by the buildings on the family compound, the village by the presence of prestige architecture adjacent to the *malae* 'village centre—sacred space'. Just as each family internally functions as an autonomous social space, each village is independent in its control of land and its authority over member lineages. The association of architecture and village is found in the word *fale'upolu*. The word *'upolu* is a generally discontinued first person pronoun as well as the name of one of the islands. According to Pratt, *fale'upolu* means the people and is a respect term often substituted for *nu'u* or village. Its constituent meanings (of house and pronoun) mark the *nu'u* as one's residence or place of abode. Today, *fale'upolu* is the formal appellation for the talking chiefs in a village taken as a group. In addition, specific house designations both refer to the village and its constituent *tulafale*.

In 'particular village or district greetings a reference to a group as a "house" such as "house of three" or "house of seven" may be normally assumed to refer to a body of orators' (Shore 1982:241). Fagamalo is thus sometimes identified as the *faleiva* or house of nine. The identity of the village is equated with its *tulafale*. It is these men (and women) who speak for the *nu'u* and represent it to the outside world. They lead all formal travelling parties and are on hand to greet important visitors. Within the village, they are responsible for the enforcement of all council dictates. In addition to the identification of the community with its orator group or *fale'upolu* and the designation of their number, certain villages are given specific architecture term-based identification.

The expression applied to the ruling towns of Safotulafai and Sale'aula, on Savai'i[7] is *falepule*. The word *pule* indicates both command and the authority to dictate. More specifically, the term *falepule* refers to the power to apportion food to those lower in the hierarchy by those villages that have the direction in district council. Consequently, the use of architecture as a verbal signification of a bordered social entity is found from the basic module of Samoan society (the family), through village, and ultimately district levels. In addition, the house and its parts are not linguistically restricted in function only to the definition of the enclosed group. The metaphor is also used to define those outside the unit.

[7] These are not the only villages in Samoa so designated, but are two within or close to my study area.

6 Those outside the house

Within Samoan verbal usage, the house as metaphor conveys ideas of the corporate descent group or village and district organisation, their internal divisions and leadership. Conversely, *fale* is also used as a means of distinguishing those outside actively functioning social spaces. The word *fale'esea* means to be isolated or to dwell apart, the adjective *'ese* denoting something different, wrong or foreign. Also implied is the idea of being away from or the physical division produced by a fence. Pratt (1911) specifies his definition as 'to dwell apart, as a sick person, or a husband driven away by his wife' indicating a separation that is not by choice. It also suggests that the state of isolation is not natural, but one which is contrary to the ordered working of society and the good of the individual.

Like *fale'esea* the word *faleaitu* also suggests division. In most dictionaries *faleaitu* is defined as a comedy. However, it is more than that. A *faleaitu* is specifically a humorous interlude used to separate the stages of a longer more serious performance.[8] As an interlude within a larger activity, the *faleaitu* effectively divides temporal space just as fences and other boundaries divide physical space, providing a framework for the events. As with those architectural terms and compounds which suggest the extended family or village units, it is the establishment of definitional boundaries that is being intimated in the use of *fale'esea* and *faleaitu*. Therefore, the focus in these words is upon exclusion rather than inclusion.

A *faleauto* is one residing away from his own village and therefore on alien land, excluded from the families around him. Such a person is welcomed and yet, as an outsider, is subject to an element of doubt and possible hostility. To be away from one's *fale*, family or village is to be a stranger and under suspicion. This helps to explain the position of the spouses of children born to the family. When villages engaged in war, daughters-in-law were prevented from hearing the plans made in *fono*. They were effectively segregated from the house which at that time symbolised the village. In other circumstances, such a meeting would be public: all seated or passing nearby able to note the proceedings. Upon the death of her spouse a woman can be excluded from the affairs of her late husband's descent group and forced to return to her own people. This is true even after a long and successful marriage. She has been an active and productive member of the household, yet always remains an outsider.

The exclusion of the outsider is expressed by the proverbial expression, *fa'alupe tupola*. Here the person who has neither home nor family is compared to the pigeon who sits on the plaited coconut leaves (*pola*) which cover and enclose the house during inclement weather. The expression *o le pola tau fafo* 'the house shutters hang outside' also indicates an individual who is not viewed as a member of the descent group. The lowering of the coconut leaf blinds effectively prevents egress into the interior space. Since there are no walls in an indigenous-style *fale*, there are no doors to be opened. A similar attitude is reflected in the phrase *fa'alupe tumulifale*, like a pigeon sitting behind the (hunter's) house, for the hunter is only concerned with those birds which alight before his hut. Here 'particular stress [is placed] on the fact that the homeless person gets no consideration' (Schultz 1985:34). Such a sentiment indicates how close the identity of the individual is linked to that of the larger descent group in Samoan society and its signification in architectural forms. Yet, at the same time Samoans are almost always willing to invite the visiting stranger into their homes.

The ambivalence between the welcoming nature of Samoan behaviour and the retention of underlying distrust is expressed in the term for guesthouse, *faletalimalo*. As physical

[8] Pers. comm. Caroline Sinavaiana.

structures the guest *fale* in a village are the most visually prominent and (as such) are representative of family pride and position. They are invariably single-room, un-walled buildings, although many today are constructed using Western carpentry techniques and materials. The word *faletalimalo* can be broken down into several roots. The verb *talimalo* means to receive guests, but this verb can itself be further subdivided. The word *tali* engenders ideas of response or greeting and is linked to the presentation and acceptance of food. Food functions as an extremely important metaphor in Samoa and its consumption and distribution is requisite for almost all ceremonial activity. The word *malo* in turn denotes visitors while at the same time exhibiting connotations of conflict, confrontation and danger. The word signifies the victors in war or games, power and authority through government, strength, and hardness. The *faletalimalo* exists to welcome visitors. However, its size and prominent placement also reveals the power and status of the extended family. The guest *fale*, in form and verbiage, denotes the family integrity in contrast to those outside. The house as symbol thus functions to define both members and nonmembers, us and them.

7 Internal characteristics

Within the *fale* terminology, one finds not only words which define the limits of various associations but also those which are concerned with the quality within such groups. This regard for the characteristics of spatial entities, whether physical or social, is expressed in the creation myth collected by Powell. There, Tagaloa the Creator was not content with the mere establishment of spatial divisions. Rather, he continued their development through the institution of social relationships and the subsequent productivity. The link between production and social ties is also reflected in the use of *fale* as a root for characterising social space.

The words *faleola* or *faleolamea* denote a house made of the rare and precious olamea wood. It also means that all offspring are living and refers to the extended family unit. *Ola* has the meaning of life while at the same time indicating both prosperity and food. As a verb it means not only to live, but also to give birth (that is, to generate life), and to end war, which results in a sustaining of life. The opposite of *faleola* is *falegase*, offspring all dying. The

always positioned at the front of the family property while lowly *fale* are relegated to the back. Within the house, space is also divided hierarchically in the [illegible]

Sapir, Edward, 1921, *Language: an introduction to the study of speech.* New York: Harcourt, Brace and Jovanovich.