

A close reading of a specific and familiar space



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

The Traditional house Traditional house The cultural orientation of a traditional house in olden societies had varied characteristic that were always observed. Its elements, components, meaning of each as well as the life's stages that human beings undergoes up to death were all entailed within the house. The house presents the relationships and roles of male and female. This was emphasized by different tools and characteristics of each gender as they grow up. The house illustrates how different activities that took place inside and outside the house (Bourdieu, 1971).

The general structure of a traditional house was partitioned based on functions of each room and what items were kept by who (male/female) and where within the house. In ancient period, most houses were divided into two parts at a point one third of the way across its length using a small lattice work wall reaching the top of the house. The main area is reserved for human living and was covered by a layer of black clay and cow dung that women polished over it with a stone. The other reduced area paved with flagstones was meant for animals. These rooms had only one entrance and the house was organized in such a way that one end has provisions ready for consumption like flour, figs, and leguminous plants that had been preserved. Near the door, there was water jars while on the stable part from any type of tool and equipments, a number of straws and hay for animals were stacked up and this region is where the children and the women sleeps especially in winter. The male on the other hand, slept on the larger area as a symbol of authority as they were known to have visitors and could share the room. A number of items inside this house have different names with different meanings. For instance, kanun was the upper part of the stable where kitchen earthenware was kept (cooking pot, ladle, and dish for cooking

<https://assignbuster.com/a-close-reading-of-a-specific-and-familiar-space/>

bannock). A fireplace was also on the woman's side and was place of cooking. The male sleeping area is usually dark since it symbolize place of intimacy and recreation. After birth, boys and girls were isolated based on their sexes and introduced to their roles within their early stages of life. However, males needed to undergo additional cultural rite to make them courageous and face the outside world suitably. Women stayed within the house most of the time as their duties were mainly cooking and washing dishes while male perform their duties outside herding or hunting for food.. The division of labor was so significant that women were to remain in the dark part of the house. These illustrate the different oppositions existing between men and women and none was supposed to be found on the wrong side doing the other sex cores. This was done to protect males' fertility and that of the field to the dark area of the house (Bourdieu, 1971).

On the central part of the traditional house, between animals room and human beings area stood a main pillar holding the control beam and each of the house frameworks. This control beam is the master beam symbolizing male part while the main pillar on which it rests symbolizes feminine term. These two beams interlock each other to show physical union and support they need for each other for strong family upbringing. Within the cultural house, there is a sacred place for offerings and women are mostly in charge of this area. Crimes were unheard off due to sacrilege made and that may provoke nif (family head) that may subsequently lead to community evils. Because women always operate within the house with a beehive of activities, traditionally, they are equated to the world or are the inverse of the earth while men tasks are found outside the house to protect the family from any attacks. This led to the statement that women know just two residents, “ the <https://assignbuster.com/a-close-reading-of-a-specific-and-familiar-space/>

house and the tomb.” Therefore, the antagonism developed between external universe and the traditional house have complete meaning in relation to women since if taken from this point of view, i. e. the house is entirely split as per rules that counter the other term. Therefore, the simple traditional house despite its small size, it represents the outside world where people have various roles based on gender (Ehret, 2000).

References:

Bourdieu, P. (1971). The Berber House. Exchange et. communications.

Mouton, pp. 151-161 and 165 - 169.

Ehret, C. (2000). The Civilizations of Africa: A History to 1800.