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THE COMPOUND HOUSE IN GHANAIAN FILM AND FICTION

BY

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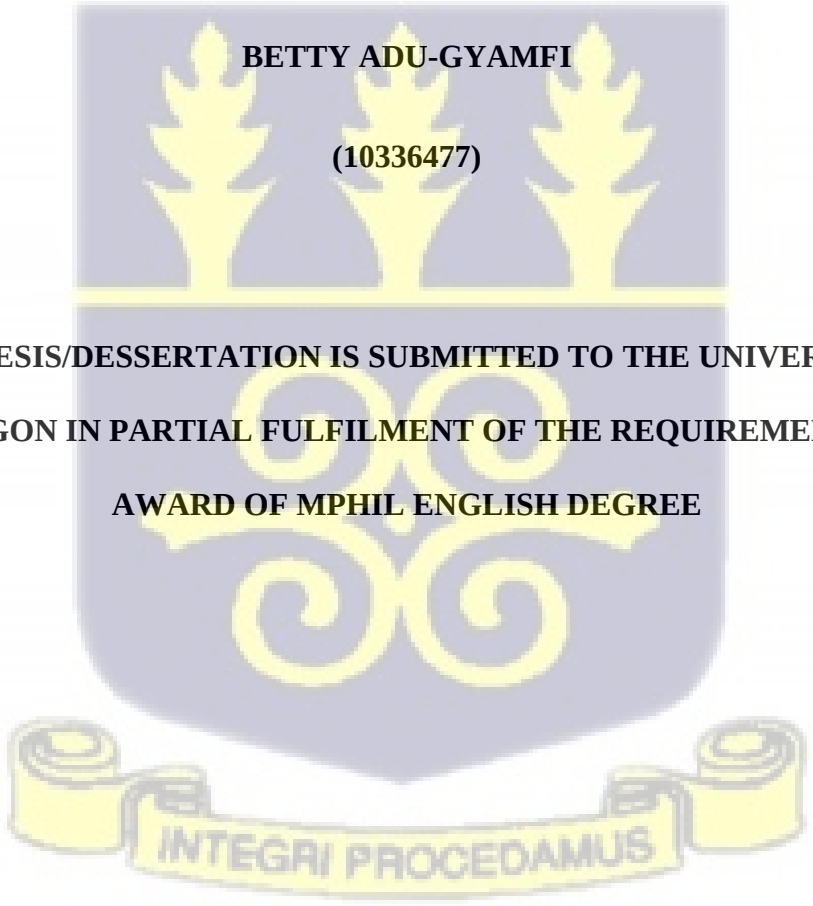

DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis is the product of my original research, and it has not been published or presented, in whole or part, for the award of a degree anywhere in the world, and that all references to other works have been duly acknowledged.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my mother, Deaconess Joyce Nana Ghartey, who on her deathbed assured me of a successful education.

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ABSTRACT

The compound house is one of the most popular urban and traditional types of housing in Ghana. The house is a prominent setting in many locally produced films in Ghana. However, due to its rich features, other literary texts have adopted it to tell their stories. This essay will be spatial analysis of the house and its representation in Amma Darko's *Faceless,* Samuel Nyamekye's *Asoreba,* and Paul Gee's *Boasiako.*

The compound house has a memorable presence in the two films and novels. *Faceless,* a novel, addresses the social issues of poverty, streetism, bad parenting, rape, and defilement. *Asoreba* is concerned with domestic violence, and *Boasiako* is woven around spiritual issues bedeviling an extended family. The three texts have the compound house as the main set. The study will focus on the different roles it plays in contributing to the lives of the characters and the development of the plot. By doing an in-depth analysis, I argue that beyond its functions as a shelter, it is a Bakhtinian chronotope that takes center stage in narratives while being responsible for the security and memories of its inhabitants. Thus, by using Giddens' ontological security theory and Bachelard's topoanalysis to read the house, the research will delve into the connection between physical spaces and the psychology of its inhabitants, bringing out psycho-social issues in the texts. These two concepts have an intrinsic relationship with the house chronotope that automatically pops up.

Keywords: compound house, chronotope, ontological security, topoanalysis, Kumawood.

Chapter 1

1.1 Introduction and Background to the Study

The modern phenomenon of space studies encourages a critical examination of the physical and psychological areas that define one's existence and construct identities. Every house, regardless of its form, shape, or capacity, is a type of space or contains spaces that are amenable to academic research in the field of literature. In this light, a prominent space such as the compound house compels one to critically examine how it is represented in Ghana's two very distinct forms of art, namely film and fiction.

Amma Darko's use of a compound house in her novel *Faceless* can be interpreted as a deliberate effort to create major physical and psychosocial spaces that sparingly define and reveal the complexities of the underlying issues that shaped the narrative and the lives of her characters. Similarly, a critical examination of the compound houses used in the Kumawood films, *Asoreba* and *Boasiako*, reveals the critical roles that the family compound house plays in bringing out the film's treatment of conflicts and insecurities in domestic households. As a result, the use of these compound houses in films and novels helps one to think about or see different spatial concepts that we might not notice otherwise. For example, with space-time fusing distinctively in these works, the two components become responsible for shaping the narrative at different historical levels and significantly bringing a new form of reading meaning into geographical settings and surroundings (Krogstad, 2). These settings can also go a long way in providing security or posing a threat to a character's existence or mental condition. It is undeniable that the two genres of studies here have

underlying structures that distinguish them from one another; however, this study will focus on some highlighted spatial concepts, examining Compound houses in these texts using Mikhail Bakhtin's literary chronotope theory, Gaston Bachelard's topoanalysis, and Anthony Giddens' theory of ontological security.

The definitive structure of the compound house is a very popular sight that one may come across while exploring various local Ghanaian settlements. The compound house's predominance in both urban and rural Ghanaian settings demonstrates how this housing has become a symbol of communal living and a family's heritage. In contrast to modern villas, it is often a one-story construction with a sequence of rooms encircling a square courtyard (Korboe). A typical Ghanaian compound house, which can be found in most urban and rural locations, may encompass an area of over 100m2 and have about 10-15 rooms occupied by various people. The idea of communal for the tenants extends beyond the shared courtyard to include the shared bathing space, kitchen, and latrine (Willis and Tipple, 1706). These homes are typically rented out to outsiders or occupied by descendants of the same family. When the original house owner dies, the house becomes freely available to close relatives and descendants, who then opt to live in it themselves or rent out the rooms to tenants at a very low price. This is, nonetheless, one of Ghana's most affordable housings. People prefer compound dwellings to the traditional lifestyle of sharing living quarters with relatives. It is typically rent-free or very affordable for family members (Sinai, 100).

In Ghanaian tradition, the compound house is more than just a common style of shelter. For some Ghanaians, this form of dwelling may be the only kind of "home" they ever know. This house is responsible for forming their memories, upbringing, and instilling a sense of belonging in them. The inquiry "whose family are you from?" is frequently answered by pointing to a compound house

in popular Ghanaian sayings. This means that this type of home is in charge of establishing identities and representing the face and name of a family.

1.2 Why Film and Fiction?

"By staging personal life dramas, novels may be the major arena in which places can take on a symbolic resonance for a larger group," Bertram claims, adding that "novels are carriers of memories" and a mirror that reflects the broader world (171). They can transpose imaginaries to realities by developing stories around realistic elements, even though they are fictitious. In novels, the house is a significant setting that gives spaces for the creation, imagination, and development of characters, as well as the shaping of a story's plot. This unique genre of fiction explores the influence of culture on the psyche of the youngster Florian in Pater's *Child in the House* (Sackey). Pater represents an aspect of this culture through the house, its spaces, colors, and patterns. Furthermore, in Great Expectations, Dickens' Satis House is used to match Miss Havisham's character and reputation (98). Miss Havisham's life is represented by the mansion, which is dusty, moldy, and tattered. The metaphorical meaning of "Satis" as enough is that the owner of the residence will have all he or she desires. Despite its dreadful state, it appeared to be "adequate" for Miss Havisham's indefinite imprisonment. In these novels, the house is not just a refuge or a backdrop where the authors purposefully place their characters; rather, the spaces of these houses are purposefully chosen to fit into the plot, to form a very essential aspect of the characters' lives that is equally important to the story. In *Faceless*, Darko provides the readers with a mental picture of possible events that could happen in the house.

Due to its status as the most frequent type of domestic family in most Ghanaian communities, the compound house is a favorite setting in most Kumawood video films. In addition, the stories in

these movies focus on scenarios or tragedies driven by the compound house's erratic roles and traits. Kumawood is known for portraying a typical Ghanaian community's lifestyle; hence the utilization of compound dwellings helps to express the type of communal living prevalent in these homes.

As a result, the films provide an audiovisual depiction of the house's activities. Kumawood has come to embody what is mediocre, vulgar, and obscene in the Ghanaian film industry, according to scholars like Adjei (63). This argument supports Tsitsi Dangaremba's assessment of African video films as "brazenly incompetent and profit-driven," as stated in Garritano's introduction to "African video films and Global Desires, a Ghanaian history". She claims they promoted stereotypical and highly negative images of Africa, influenced by Hollywood (4). However, in recent years, the distinctions between African popular videos and African films have faded, and video films are receiving equal scholarly attention (Garritano, 6). As a result, the locally produced films effectively explain important concerns to their audiences as well as become an academic field of study. Examining the depictions and usage of the compound house in these films an excellent place to start.

The uses and representations of houses in films and cinema are equally as important as the presence of the characters. A good example is the house in classic Hollywood horror movies that usually presents a haunted house or a home invasion concept which involves a breached domestic setting by spiritual or physical forces. Usually, characters are put in these houses to experience psychological and spiritual torment, or to violently defend it against intruders. During this time, the human strengths and weaknesses are exposed as they deal with unexpected elements that threaten their security. With the house as a symbol and icon of a haven, these kinds of film however lay down the numerous factors that can make a home dangerous to its inhabitants. The two films

chosen for the study individually tackle compound house issues. Whilst *Asoreba*, deals with the insecurities caused by domestic violence in the house, *Boasiako* reveals the insecurities caused by uncanny elements in the family home. The two films allow the study to touch on the dynamics of insecurities in the home.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

The Ghanaian compound house is well-known as a research element in the fields of sociology, housing, and planning. Though it is seen in films and some texts in Ghanaian literature, it is rarely capitalized on in the context of literary discourse. As a result, because it is not often employed in literary texts, and Kumawood pop culture focuses on theme and characters, thus, the depiction of situations as they occur in society, there is a hazy focus on its literariness. It is most prevalent in Kumawood than any literary genre in Ghana. However, Kumawood itself is sidelined as pop culture and invites more criticism on its aesthetics than its concern with space.

It is not merely the presence of it in these texts and films that necessitates academic investigation, but also its significant contribution to the narrative and its ability to exhibit similar spatial properties that can be addressed in these two distinct genres. Beyond its functions as a shelter, it is a Bakhtinian chronotope that takes center stage in narratives while being responsible for the security and memories of its inhabitants.

1.4 How the Compound House will be studied

A lived-in house goes beyond the stereotypes of a lifeless box (Stilgoe). It becomes a part of humanity and, as such, cannot just be a geographical location or a geometric plane. The house's worth extends beyond architecture. The study will look at the abstract aspects of the compound house.

Thus, it will include a psychological and psychosocial examination of it. The compound house will be thoroughly examined utilizing ideas such as the chronotope, topoanalysis, and ontological security. This method is consistent with how recent literary spatial studies have prioritized the intriguing roles that the house performs in modern literature. While some scholars saw it as a self-representation, others saw it as a new type of Bakhtinian chronotope. Krogstad and Kneale have portrayed the family residence as a chronotope on its own, drawing influence from the castle and threshold chronotopes.

Without a topoanalysis, the study will be incomplete. Bachelard's interest in domestic and intimate places gives sufficient material for a philosophical vision of the house. He describes the house in an extraordinary approach that exposes the impact of human living on a geometrical form and vice versa. The research will take place in the compound house's corners, rooms, and open areas, locations where memories are born, and fears are conceived. The third chapter will discuss how domestic violence affects both the compound house chronotopes in *Faceless* and *Asoreba*. The final chapter of the study will take into consideration the subject of the uncanny home in the film, *Boasiako*, identifying other causes of insecurity in the home.

1.5 Theoretical Framework

Bakhtin adopted the term chronotope as a metaphor for literary criticism after borrowing it from the worlds of science and mathematics (84). Although scholars such as Holquist have noted that the chronotope idea "remains a Gordian knot of ambiguities" and may not provide a definite definition (19), Bakhtin describes it as the fundamental connectivity of temporal and geographical relationships that are artistically conveyed in literature (85). Bakhtin's main goal was to define the spatiotemporal links in literature, and he sees the chronotope as a process of introducing real historical time into literature (84). Thus, he says that what matters is that it conveys the inseparability of space and time (85).

He applies this term to literary text locations and settings where space and time intersect in a unique and meaningful way (Krogstad,3). As a result, a chronotope is a spatial element of the text that encompasses time and temporality (Quayson). According to Quayson, all the novel's abstract elements-philosophical and sociological generalizations, concepts, and studies of cause and effect-migrate towards the chronotope, and via it, take on flesh and blood, allowing the imaging power of artwork. According to Bakhtin, time takes on flesh, becomes artistically apparent; similarly, space becomes charged and responsive to the motions of time, plot, and history (84). To create imaginary locations, fictional tales always converse with real time-spaces (Macapagal,13). The chronotope, according to Johnston, "focuses on how we live in space and time and the kinds of modes of existence we choose: either passive and closed or open to change, growth, and learning‖. As a result, the chronotope serves as "the primary means of materializing time in space" and "emerges as a center for concretizing representation" (140). The chronotope, to some extent, determines the picture of a man and creates genres and generic distinctions in literature (85).

Several scholars have extended and developed the meaning of the idea over the years. Bakhtin had previously studied certain chronotopes or time and space situations that he deemed chronotopes. For example, he discusses adventure time in Greek and chivalric romance. He investigates chronotopes such as the encounter, the road, and the public square. He argued that the representation of time and place in the early novels contributed to their concurrent existence in the literature of phenomena taken from widely disparate periods, which substantially complicates the historico-literary process (86). While he focuses on time and space in literature, which may not be applicable or relatable in modern times and may lack tangible references, modern literature appears to focus on chronotopes, which were not identified as "major" (244) in his essay. In literature, the chronotopes of the castle, the salon, and the threshold have been used in many ways. These tiny chronotopes appear to thrive in contemporary literature. This could be because Bakhtin's study was simply a window into the world of endless possibilities for discovering new chronotopes. He concedes that the definition of the notion is incomplete and imprecise (85). Macapagal also states that because the chronotope has not been given a precise definition, it has been used as a theoretical tool beyond literature (14). Because of Bakhtin's essays' lack of analytic clarity, Bemong and Borghart claim that there has been a profusion of varied chronotopic approaches to literature and culture (5). In his analysis of the threshold chronotope, he states that:

> it can be combined with the motif of encounter, but its most fundamental instance is as the chronotope of crisis and break in a life. The word "threshold" itself already has a metaphorical meaning in everyday usage (together with its literal meaning), and is connected with the breaking point of a life, the moment of crisis, the decision that changes a life (or the indecisiveness that fails to change a life, the fear to step over the threshold). In literature, the chronotope of the threshold is

> always metaphorical and symbolic, sometimes openly but more often implicitly) In Dostoevsky, for example, the threshold and related chronotopes-those of the staircase, the front hall and corridor, as well as the chronotopes of the street and square that extend those spaces into the open air are the main places of action in his works, places where crisis events occur, the falls, resurrections, renewals, epiphanies, decisions that determine the whole life of a man (248).

The threshold can also be a metaphor for the house. It is charged with the same emotions and values as the house. These breaks and crises, epiphanies, and decisions are crucial moments encapsulated within the confines of homes or houses in literature. It is of no surprise that the house has recently popped up as another form of literary chronotope.

In some works, the family home is a new form or modification of the gothic castle identified as a chronotope by Bakhtin. He refers to it as a location drenched with a historical time in the past (Bakhtin, 246). Because of its affinity to domestic areas at home, American writers began to substitute the medieval European castle with the domestic spaces of the house (Kneale, 5). According to Renolds, the quintessential Gothic plot can be traced back to the fate of a house (92). The research will give birth to yet another new chronotope intimately related to the basic concept of the house, the threshold chronotope, and the castle chronotope from these chronotope conceptions. Bakhtin's description of how the threshold chronotope is crucial in a man's life corresponds to the importance of the compound house in both film and novel. In this light, the research will employ such theory to analyze social and cultural spaces such as the Ghanaian compound house. The discussed chronotope qualities would serve as general characteristics of both compound houses in fiction and film.

Bachelard's topoanalysis is a theory for critically assessing spaces in the house or home. In his book, *The Poetics of Space*, he refers to the house and discusses the functions it plays in memory and daydreams. He calls the house "a privileged entity for a phenomenological exploration of the intimate values of interior space" (3). He provides a psychological reading of the house and defines topoanalysis as "the systematic psychological examinations of our personal life's places" (8). He is accurate with the meaning of domestic spaces (Stilgoe, vii).

The house, according to Bachelard, is not only a religiously designed geometrical plane structure, but it also has aspects that embrace human complexities, eccentricities and adapt to residents. Thus, “the house is the first universe for its young children and its space shapes all subsequent knowledge of other spaces” (4). He claims that a home guarantee dreams and that where you grow up captures your imagination (daydream). Those different areas of the house may allow daydreaming (Quayson). It is a haven for fantasies and fancies. The home is also considered a "felicitous space" (xxv). In other words, there are specific memories associated with the services that each space serves, and they are typically happy ones that one would like to revisit. In his work, we learn about the psychological intricacies of a house, particularly one filled with memories. A unique house, such as the one in which we were born, makes an unforgettable impact on our life. *Faceless* will investigate such a house and its impact on various generations of residents. According to Bachelard:

> The house we were born in is an inhabited house. In it the values of intimacy are scattered, they are not easily stabilized, they are subjected to dialectics. In how many tales of childhood-if tales of childhood were sincere-we should be told of a child that, lacking a room, went and sulked in his corner (14).

Quayson's thesis argues that different portions of the house may likewise hold horror. In the case of *Faceless*, we observe how one room gradually transforms from a site of birth to a place of abuse and then to a place of refuge for the traumatized. Using Bachelard's notion, the research will expand its investigation of the house and such spaces.

The ontological security concept, which originated in psychoanalysis and sociology, is concerned with how environments affect people's existence, identity, and mental state. We are dealing with the concept of "the home" once we begin to address the psychological side of the house. In most cases, the home connotes a haven and is viewed as a safe. According to Dupius and Thorns, the house provides a sense of ontological security. Ontological security, according to Giddens, is "the confidence that most human beings have in the continuity of their self-identity and in the consistency of their social and material circumstances." A sense of the reliability of people and things is fundamental to having ontological security (27). They apply the idea to examine the various meanings of home. Thus, the home as a location of stability in the environment, as a spatial context in which daily routines are performed, as a site free of inference, and as a secure premise where identities are established (24). Hiscock et al. investigate the extent to which homeowners benefit from their homes in terms of psychosocial well-being. They also claim that the ontological security concept implies that, in addition to adequate sustenance and shelter where people can live happily and fulfill, a secure base is required to return to in the event of trouble or fatigue (50). In Giddens' essay, he specifies that the idea is an emotive one anchored in the unconscious, and in phenomenology has to do with "being in the world" (92).

As a result, the ontological security concept will be applied in studying how the compound house spaces affect, provide, and threaten the characters' psychological well-being. We can explain the cause of any ontological security or insecurity by delving into characters' past lives to extract

terrible and noteworthy experiences from their home. Because of the compound house's complicated nature and its number of occupants, security concerns may differ from one occupant to the next. For example, Hiscock et al. mention Saunders and claim that "house owners would derive more ontological security than renters, and this has been contested in the housing studies literature since the early 1980s. Some have claimed that "owner-occupation is related with greater ontological security" (51). According to Rosenberg et al., ontological insecurity is one of the health issues confronting previously imprisoned people (2). This concept will delve deeper into the characters' existential concerns, classified as mental health or psychological issues. These challenges may be in the form of anxieties and fear bedeviling characters after a history of traumatic experience in the home. The question of whether the home has failed to provide any sort of security will be answered.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Home, Space, and Identity

Merzei and Briganti's literary analysis on the house and the novel sets the pace for the views of the house as a mirrored version of the novel. Referring to Bachelard and Bordieu, they state how the two "invoke literary practices to interpret the significance of houses" (837). The analysis examines the relationship between houses and novels, and how it has evolved in the literary world over time. The house has been used in analogs and metaphors in literature as a nouvelle form of representation for the novel on different levels. Thus, in critical discourse, the novel has been equated to the architecture of the house, "Ellen Eve Frank outlines how this habit of comparison between architecture and literature extends from Plato to Samuel Beckett and discovers particular expression in the late nineteenth and onto the twentieth century" (838). They argued that as society saw a rise in aspiring bourgeoisie in the eighteenth century, it coincided with the new genre of the novel. The themes in the novel reflected the bourgeoisie's principal achievements that were domesticity, privacy, and comfort (838).

Most English novelists used the house as the center stage for issues bedeviling domesticity, privacy, and gender. According to Merzei and Briganti, "The comparatively recent notion of privacy resonates in this new literary form that explores intimate, private spaces of the mind and society often set within a middle-classed and home" (839). The literature that deals with houses as a principal set usually delves into the private lives of characters that are closed off to the world. Once a reader enters the house, it ensures an automatic entry into a character's mind, thoughts, and psyche. The house itself provides a room and space for these thoughts to belong:

> Our imagination, our consciousness, needs to locate itself in a particular space, to find a home, to articulate its homelessness, its longing for home, its sickness for home (nostalgia). Thus, novels and houses furnish a dwelling place—a spatial construct—that invites the exploration and expression of private and intimate relations and thoughts (Merzei and Briganti, 839).

Also, Merzei and Briganti claim that the house goes beyond its duties as a geographical set in canonical and popular literature. In quoting Chandler, they assert that the house "constitute a unifying symbolic structure that represents and defines the relationship of the central characters to one another, to themselves, to the world" (839). It is inside the house that relationships between characters are defined. It also serves as the space for conflicts, both internal and external, and a space for resolutions. As seen in Darko's *Beyond the Horizon*, the novel commences with the protagonist in a room in a Brothel (a house). The thoughts that come through her mind send readers on a journey to discover her identity.

The physical appearance of a house is also known to serve as a "semiotic system" that shows status and class to convey meanings to people or observers (840). The House is a more obvious way of determining a person's class or status in society. Homemakers and owners can be obsessed with leaving their imprints on the spaces they occupy. Thus, personality can affect the appearance of a house. In the same way, "the spaces of domesticity and fiction shape the people who inhabit them" (840).

From various feminist works, the house has been criticized for oppressing its female members. Despite the maternal presence in homes, the structure and systems have been associated with patriarchy and masculinity. Merzei and Briganti re-define domestic spaces as "the everyday, the

rituals of domesticity in their cyclical, repetitive ordinariness" and call on feminists to "rethink" the place of the woman in the domestic space (842).

In Bertram's treatment of the "Turkish House", she posits that the memory of the "Turkish house" has become a carrier of group meaning and the carrier of specific emotions that needed a place to reside during a tumultuous period of Turkish history (165). Here, she puts the traditional Turkish/ ottoman type of housing in a situation where a simple house metamorphoses into an immortalized and abstract symbol shared by a group of people. She further posits that "the Turkish House", both in text and in the way that it was depicted visually, emerged as a sign that encoded what was felt to be at risk in this changing universe. Thus, it became a memory-image charged with carrying old, outdated, or even forbidden ideas into the present, and even into the future (166). Likewise, the compound house leaves a remarkable imprint in the lives of people who grow up there. They also regarded it as a sort of "family totem". In comparison, the compound house and Turkish House are both contributors to autobiographical, shared, and collective memories. Because these houses are memorable, they register as a relatable reference to people who may have or may not have experienced them. In referring to Davidson and Leung, Stock stipulates:

> Memories, both personal and collective, form the frame of reference we all use to meaningfully interpret our past and present experiences to orient ourselves towards the future. This means that Migrants' perception and dreams of Home and belonging are fueled by memories of prior homes by notions of where we came from (Davidson 2008: 26, Leung: 2008: 164). Memory however cannot be seen as direct, if partial, knowledge of past experiences. The act of remembering is always contextual, a continuous process of recalling, interpreting and reconstructing the past in terms of the present and in the light anticipated future. (Stock)

Stock is looking at the house as a powerful generator or propeller of collective memory, dreams, and giver of identity. These memories come within a particular context. This phenomenon of shared memories is like how the compound house and Turkish house may have functioned in the past life of an individual. Memories of these houses may be recalled at different times and mean different things in the remembering. The compound house may represent different things to its past and present inhabitants. Due to their place in culture and history, their presence, images, and essences are evocative. However, even though the Compound house is rooted in the Ghanaian culture and is significantly a cultural artifact, it is not tied to a specific religious or spiritual memory like the Turkish house. The compound house evolution relieves any meanings of fixation that may have been associated with it in the past.

With Bertram focusing on the Turkish houses in Peyami Safa's novel, *Fatih Habiye*, there is a discourse on the image and representation of the old house to a people who were transposing from the Ottoman traditional values to the new westernized Turkish views. The Turkish house was a structure that represented conservative and traditional systems. It was also an aspect of the past that was in danger and needed protection against the westernized forces. The Turkish house, noted by Bertram, is a "treasury of ideas" (182). She identifies the house as a space for positive associations and influences that, together with the father figure, the protagonist resolved her identity crises. Here, Bertram indirectly addresses the issue of ontological security, as the memories and stories of the house made the protagonist feel a sense of belonging and reconcile with her heritage. She also argued that memory and emotion gave the Turkish house its iconic value, and it represented a spiritual value that was real and resonated emotionally and served as a marker of spirituality (171).

In Dominguez's treatment of *Beloved's* 124, she presents it as not just a haunted house but a character, a house that comes alive, a prominent protagonist whose presence in the novel is essential to the meaning of slavery and freedom. Dominguez writes:

> There is no denying in the protagonism of Sethe's house, 124 Bluestone Road in Morrison's Beloved (1987). Firstly, each of the three sections of the novel opens with a reference to 124, thus recording the evolution of the drama of its inhabitants: at the beginning it's spiteful and full of venom (3) then loud (169) and eventually quiet (239). Secondly, and since the building is the site of ESP phenomena, it exhibits human traits and modes of behavior it could not possibly have otherwise: it commits insults at its owners, it shakes, it looks back at them, etc. (35).

The home itself becomes an essential aspect of the plot, and as time passes, its mood shifts, and more emphasis is placed on how it interacts with its people. The article once again discusses how the house emphasizes slavery and liberation in the lives of African Americans. The house signified different things to different personalities at different eras after being passed down from the Bodwins, a white family, to Sethe, a freed slave. 124 to Edward Bodwin, according to Dominguez, brought back recollections of his childhood and the deaths of the Bodwin women. Once again, the idea of the house as a memory stimulant is evident. In Bodwin's memories, 124 evokes the picture of death and the burying of valuable belongings, foreshadowing Sethe's agony and her attempt to murder her children (35). Thus, Dominguez makes this analogy to draw out some similarities the essence of 124 had on both characters. For Baby Suggs, who was the first free slave to occupy the house, it represented freedom and a newfound self and identity:

> As Baby Suggs moves into the house, it comes to stand for her newly acquired freedom, and the changes she introduces, like boarding up the back door and

> cooking inside instead of outside project her rejection of her previous mode of life as a slave (207). 124 also becomes the embodiment of her generosity and openness, her reputed "big heart;" as such, the house is turned into a sort of community shelter, a safe harbour, a place for comfort, both physical and psychological (87-8). During this period then, the house is the embodiment of Baby Suggs' self, the inner self she did not even know she had while still a slave at Sweet Home (36).

Dominguez, on the other hand, claims that, while the house was a strong representation of freedom, the events in the episode of "Misery" do not rule out the invasion and entrance of white oppressors in the house. In the house, Paul D and Denver also get their fair share of experiences. For Paul D, 124 was a refuge with a brighter future than previous shelters. At one point, it symbolizes liberty. With the arrival of Beloved at the mansion, he was thrown back into slavery (38). Dominguez not only states what the house signifies to the older generation, but he also delves into Denver's sentiments about the house. The mansion represented slavery to her, which was paradoxical given that she was a first-generation free black child. Denver's stay in the house is akin to Baby Sugg's stay at Sweet home. She is completely closed off from the outside world, lives in solitude, and is terrified of her mother. The house forbids her from expressing herself.

She finds privacy, though, in a small room Dominguez refers to as "a symbolic womb into which she crawls again" (40). For her, leaving 124 meant regaining the independence her grandmother had when she originally bought the house.

Dominguez does not just talk about 124 but also about Sweet home and compares the two. Sweet home, ironically, symbolizes slavery and contrasts with 124 for characters such as Baby Suggs and Sethe. Despite Morrison's portrayal of it as a house with "mild slavery treatment," Dominguez

refers to it as "a parody of freedom" (36). Dominguez's emphasis on 124 and Sweet home underscores the critical functions that the house or home plays in developing identity.

In addition, Geoff Hart's piece on the house is likely a significant forerunner. It focuses on issues that are connected to the study's point of view. He divides the house into physical, psychological, and symbolic dimensions, focusing on each and developing a connection in which these elements encroach and build upon each other. He explores the multifaceted status of the house and how it impacts the people and the plot by mentioning popular films such as *Gone with the Wind* and *The Money Pit*. Writers have chosen the physical house as a new stage and "living space" to develop their characters. He underlines that describing the physical look of a house includes describing the people who live in it. Hart addresses the topic of identity, being, and image with the house. In our study of the compound house, we will discover other works that resonate with Hart's assertions. He implies that the character's interests and choices reflect the kind of house they live in in a novel or film. Psychologically, the house goes beyond its concrete four walls. Returning to it often reassures its status as a home and a giver of ontological security:

> It represents a *home*, which is a substantially more subtle and resonant concept. A home is the place you return to, and where you can escape or withdraw from the everyday world, with its myriad stresses, to be master of your own domain - at least until the alarm clock rings and you must return to that outside world again. It's the place where, when you arrive, you are always welcome - or, much more darkly, where they can't (or grudgingly won't) turn you away. That makes the house the source of a very powerful feeling of belonging, whether in the traditional and immediately familiar sense of family, or a more metaphorical expression of belonging to a group (par.10).

He mentions ontological security as a fundamental element of the house or home. As we tour the house, we will encounter issues of security and instability, particularly in a complicated structure such as the compound house. Though Hart's argument reiterates a frequent and well-known element of the home, it may also be claimed that for some people, the house can become a source of horror.

Scholars such as Clare Cooper have also stated how important the house is in symbolism and self-representation. She confesses that her prior research on people's sociological reactions to the house was only "scratching the surface" of the underlying meaning of the house. She proceeds to depict the house from a different perspective after studying the Jungian idea of collective unconsciousness. "Man also frequently selects the house, the basic protector of his internal environment (beyond skin and clothing), to depict and symbolize what is tantalizingly unrepresentable," she claims (169). Cooper compares the enclosed and excluded spaces of the house to the human self. She believes that the house represents both the interior and exterior of the self. The interior of the house reflects the intimate part of the self, while the exterior is visible to the public. This comparison reflects the idea of the house as a person or a character in various literary works. It is not a strange conception for people to bond with their homes. Presenting the house in such a manner makes it inseparable from the self or the individual:

> It seems as though the personal space bubble which we carry with us and which is an almost tangible extension of our self, expands to embrace the house we have designated as ours. As we become accustomed to, and lay claim to, this little niche in the world, we project something of ourselves onto its physical fabric. The furniture we install, the way we arrange it, the pictures we hang, the plants we buy and tend, all are expressions of our image of ourselves. Thus the house might be

> viewed as both an avowal of the self- that is the psychic messages are moving from self to the objective symbol of self- as a revelation of the nature of self; that is the messages are moving from objective symbol back to the self (169).

Cooper, who still pounds on the idea that the house represents the self, cites examples of how modern Californians and San Franciscans chose their residences. For them, the residence must meet or reflect their social standing. The house is deeply ingrained in American culture and values as a symbol of the self. For many, the concept of the house is "a free-standing, square detached, single-family residence and yard" (170). As a result, their ideal house is defined by family, seclusion, and some ownership of land or territorial rights. She contends that for some people, a house is no longer a place of refuge but rather a place for an expression of self and family. As a result, individuals are more concerned with how their homes and rooms may express their identity rather than viewing them as a fortress that must be protected. Her arguments and various examples are evidence of how her research had led her to explore deeper meanings of the house.

Cooper further plunges into Jung's autobiography where he describes a dream of himself as a house:

> Jung describes here the house with many levels seen as the symbol-of-self with its many levels of consciousness; the decent downward into lesser known realms of unconscious is represented by the ground floor, cellar and vault beneath it. A final descent leads to a cave cut into bedrock, a part of the house rooted into the very earth itself. This seems very clearly to be a symbol of the collective conscious, part of the self-house and yet too part of the universal bedrock of humanity (171).

Cooper's main focus was on describing how the house may symbolize the human self, and touching on Jung's personal experiences, highlights her arguments and solidifies her claim. However, the bedrock of most of her argument is from a psychiatrist and psychoanalyst's point of view. What she doesn't mention is how the house, as a symbol of self and family, is strongly represented in fiction.

In Carsten and Hugh-Jones' introduction to *About the house; Levi Strauss and beyond*, they "take a sympathetic but critical look at Levi Strauss's idea of the house as a specific form of social organization in Southeast Asia and Low land South America" (1). The study extended Strauss' concept of "house societies" by drawing on his discussion of houses. One of Carsten and Hugh-Jones' concerns was determining the value of Strauss' theories in terms of holistic anthropology of architecture. They also attempted to create a new language of the house that dealt with unorthodox analysis, as opposed to the limited ones that concentrated on the supposed priority of kinship and economy (2). Their work differs from the mainstream image and ignores the social meaning of the house as defined by anthropologists. In their piece, they highlight some of these indications. To them, the house is inextricably linked to the human body. There is a continuous interwoven relationship between the house and the body:

> The house and the body are intimately linked. The house is an extension of the person; like an extra skin, carapace or second layer of clothes, it serves as much to reveal and display as it does to hide and to protect. House, body and mind are in continuous interaction, the physical structure, furnishing, social constructions and mental images of the house, at once, enabling, molding, informing and constraining the activities and ideas which unfolds with its bounds (Carsten and Hug-Jones, 2).

Here, there is an extension of its significance beyond architecture that transcends the physical. Once again, the house emerges as a character, a synonym to the self and an extension of a personality. The environment, the atmosphere, the lived-in experiences, the components and elements, and its being as loci of interactions between humans and other things, renders it a prime agent of socialization. By quoting Bordieu's description of the house as "the principal locus for the objectification of generative schemes" and equating it to a book of the vision and structure of society, they draw out the relationship between the body and the house as a reader and his/her mnemonic.

Carsten and Hugh-Jones reiterate Cooper's arguments of how the house is linked to the self:

> If people construct houses and make them in their own image, so also do they use these houses and house-images to construct themselves as individuals and as groups. At some level or other, the notion that houses are people is one of the universals of architecture. If the house is an extension of a person, it is also an extension of the self (3).

Further, the work tackles how the house is taken for granted and neglected in the study of anthropology. As a commonplace, the house has escaped any in-depth analysis linked to Anthropology. Another reason given for this neglect is attributed to institutional divisions and specialization. Thus, studies of demography and Economic anthropology focuses on the house, family, and consumption causing some fragmentations when it comes to the ideal discipline for the subject of the house. In the domain of architecture, emphasis is given to the material aspect of dwellings, whiles the social organization of the people who live in these dwellings is neglected. Carsten and Hugh Jones, in the premier part of the introduction, talk about the loopholes in how anthropology and Architecture have neglected the deeper essence of the house.

Quilling takes on the analysis of the homes of three Filipino films. He views the house as space for the character's consciousness and considers it a familiar image in Filipino films (85). According to him, the houses in these films enhance the movements of characters and narratives. His work analyses the influence of domestic spaces and characteristics of home and how it has thrived in Filipino cinema. In his definition of home, he sticks to Ozaki and Bachelard's concept and defines it as a place of refuge and residence (88). Thus, he posits that Ozaki claims the design of a house reflects its inhabitants.

As he outlines the evolution of Filipino cinema, he maintains his stands on how the Filipino types of housing and the lifestyle of the people across the years have become major influencers for the cinema. He argues that the homes in the films represent the different social classes and ideologies.

He also talks about time, place, space, and memory as elements in the films that intersect. The space, which is a place that gives value, is the characters' home. As time passes and characters go through experiences, they begin to form memories they can revisit,

> In this study, the sense of place is directed to domestic spaces, wherein houses or any inhabited space has an essence of home (Bachelard 5). While permanence is relative in time and space, memory-making takes place within the two elements (89).

The films he discussed mirrored three different decades under the Marcos rule, illustrating actual historical times. In *Oro, Plata, Mata*, he discusses the movement of a family's Mansion lifestyle to the derogatory hut living. Thus, the film begins in a mansion and depicts the house's ability to provide security and for all the needs of its inhabitants. However, when members of the household were hit by the war, they quickly moved from the mansion to the hut. Quilling describes this

situation as a spatial dislocation. This situation alters their lives because the hut becomes a place of torture where the families become vulnerable to home invasions and violence. The families' experiences in the hut which was in the forest caused some changes in the lives of its members:

> For Miguel, the family's relocation is a relevant period where a significant change in his character takes place. From being a docile son in the mansion, he becomes more assertive during their stay in the forest lodge (94).

By the end, though the characters return to a mini-mansion, the hut experience leaves an indelible impact. Quilling discusses how their living experiences in both settlements made them a part of the two.

The second film he discussed, *Hellow, Soldier*, was set in post-war Manilla and brings to light the slum and the shanties of the city. The protagonist, a young slum dweller, dreams of escaping the hard life to the luxurious life of the State. Here, Quilling argues that the Tondo slums represent an ideal setting for the never-ending struggle to rise from poverty. The shanty in which she lived with her mother was where she kept various posters and American paraphernalia that indicated her dreams to escape her current situation. These reflected her past and prospects, and the Shanty became a structure that embodied her dreams (96). Also, Quilling pays attention to the movements in the small Shanty:

> Their movement throughout the house is unobstructed by doors, and there are only curtains to serve as a partition between the rooms. This indicates the lack of privacy in cramped spaces. In the nature of slums, everything seems to be out in the open, because living quarters are either stacked upon each other or situated extremely close, sometimes, even sharing a piece of wall (96).

This description gives a clear picture of the shanty. Despite the nature of the house, the protagonist and her mother build a strong bond and attachment. The attachment and the fear of loneliness hinders her from leaving with her father to States. She eventually settles in, still holding on to the hopes of escaping the house.

In the film, *Kisapmata*, he analyses the family Bungalow. He gives insight into a home with "corroded steel gates, cement walls" and strict rules. He claims that the overprotective and dismal nature of the house reflects the unspoken terror of the domestic lives of its people (98). The father, who is the cause of all the conflict in the film, has claimed all other extra spaces in the house to indulge in his own personal activities that serve no purpose to the home. It is revealed later that he indulges in incest with his daughter. His strict rules become uncomfortable for his daughter and her husband, who eventually plans on escaping from the house. The father's attachment to the house as a place that shields his abominations and protects his dubious interests leads him to murder his family when they plan to escape and commit suicide. Thus, he could not envision losing the things that made the home mattered to him. In these three films Quilling has shown how spaces like the home, whether Mansion, hut, shanty or bungalow, can influence one's attachment, being it conscious or unconscious.

2.1.2 The House as a Chronotope

Krogstad explores the fantasy, idyll, and threshold experience in three Scandinavian picture books by Gro Dahle and Svein Nyhus. The family home is a key theme in these picture books. Krogstad addresses some of the fears that a child may experience in the home by evaluating the three books. He illustrates how the family house chronotope played a crucial role in the lives of the children in

the early years of the twenty-first century by using Bakhtin's chronotope to determine the "conceptions of time and space" within and outside the house. He aimed to investigate the existential problems that influenced the psychological health of children in the Norwegian community (2). He argues that:

> The inner struggles of the child protagonist take place in the geographic and psychological sphere of the family house. The child has to break through physical and psychological borders to get free and conquer a significant place for her/his own. The family house, as a psychological space, is broken down and reconstructed as a recurrent narrative, and the selected picture books explore what type of being in the world is possible for the child living in the house (1).

Krogstad dwells on the chronotope theory by Bakhtin to serve as a framework for his spatial analysis of the family homes. He quotes Bakhtin and other scholars who apply the concept and provides substantial evidence on why the family house can be classified as one of Bakhtin's chronotopes. Thus, he also uses Falconer's explanation of the chronotopes as "representations of time and space, which frame and enable their characters to live and act in a certain way" (3). He regards the picture book narratives as threshold narratives, in which the threshold symbolizes decisions, crises, and breaks in life. The family house chronotope, therefore, becomes the type of chronotope that co-exists with other chronotopes. The reference of the threshold recalls the threshold chronotope, which was originally one of Bakhtin's chronotopes. When analyzing the family house, it is appropriate to consider the threshold chronotope because the house functions as a threshold for its members. Life-changing decisions and choices are made within this threshold chronotope. Every house has a threshold, and while it physically ushers people in and out of houses and rooms, it also represents a new era in life. These are the places where existential crises are

encountered and experienced. In Krogstad's perspective, he confines these issues to children and childhood.

In addition to the family house and threshold chronotopes, Krogstad mentions other chronotopes like the childhood and Idyllic chronotopes. He describes the childhood space in the three picture books as not always a safe and protective place for children, but often a place of alienation and psychological crises because of insecurity and loss of contact with parents (3). In other words, an unsafe childhood denotes a problematic family home. Often, children are found in a shell of their worlds outside that of their own physical and familiar environments. According to Krogstad, the post-war era saw the family home becoming a place where children are transformed from "inhuman" to human, preparing them for responsibilities in society. Though they are yet to be considered adults, they were still active consumers. This renders the childhood state ambiguous. The Idyllic chronotope in the picture book contrasts the modern and materialistic nature of the house that offers less attention to the psychological development of the child. He writes:

> The times pace outside the house has elements of what Bakhtin defines as the idyllic chronotope, including a life close to nature, animals, flowers, trees, and a cyclical time following the seasons of nature. Being outside, in the idyllic time space, seems to give strength and bodily empowerment to the child protagonists in the books (3).

This contrasting chronotope, the idyllic chronotope, seems to provide a utopic atmosphere where the child's psychological needs are met. However, he argues that with the Family house still in the picture, it renders the idyllic family scene "a frozen moment" and the family house may still be in the future to threaten the child's ontological security (5). The psychological atmosphere in the family house is characterized by modern preoccupied parents who have little or no time for the children. The inside may be chaotic, and the only place that offers stability and peace for the child

is the idyllic chronotope outside the house. His analysis of The Greedy Child touches on these aspects. Here the child is dissatisfied with all the house offers and faces existential challenges. Ase, the child protagonist, is in search of more from her parents and her home. The feeling of loneliness and the craving for attention drives her to behave awkwardly. The other child protagonists also suffer existential issues of identity and loneliness that are automatically connected to the family home. According to Krogstad, the family-house chronotope represents a crucial part of the child's world in all three picture books (9). Characters like Ase in the *Greedy Child*, Mumme in *Behind Mumme lives Moni*, and Lussi in *What a Girl* are victims of a home that could not meet their emotional needs. However, their stories end on a promising note after self-made efforts resolve their conflicted selves. Thus, the family house chronotope in the picture books was not a place of refuge for the protagonists, and their quest for finding any refuge laid in their abilities:

> Nevertheless, the picture books of Dahle and Nyhus show the possibility of finding a refuge from insecurity, but this sanctuary has to be found in the child itself. The three picture books express a strong confidence in the strength and ideals of modern Scandinavian childhood. These ideals include the construction of the vital, imaginative, and autonomous child and the possibility for this both vulnerable and strong child to, in a decisive moment, gather the courage to find its own way (10).

While Krosgstad tackles the issue of space or the home and infancy, Kneale looks at the home as a gender-specific space. She explores the relationship between women and spatiality in New England Gothic literature from the 19th century to the mid-20th. The Gothic castle in the center of the Gothic narrative is described as the "arena for family horror and domestic terror" (5). She focuses her essay on the diachronic development or change of the Gothic castle to a more privatized space or home and explores how feminine heroines of the narrative are connected to the spaces. The chronotope

of the Gothic home, therefore, is viewed as the "organizing device for heroine-centered Gothic literature" (1) and defines it as "a more private and intimate reimagining of the chronotope of the castle" (23). Quoting Reynolds, she posits that the Gothic castle has the house as its origins (5). The house is seen again as a domestic space that has been attached to the feminine figure. This type of chronotope provides insight into the private lives of people who inhabit it. Thus, the chronotope of the Gothic home opens a window into a whole new world of deplorable private lives (24). The Gothic narrative of the home revolves around the horrors of a house and a female protagonist who struggles to deal with the spaces of terror. According to Kneale, the Gothic narrative has its heroine as "a persecuted heroine who is figuratively or imprisoned in her own home by a male villain" (5). She selects three Gothic works; Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The House of the Seven Gables*, Charlotte Perkins Gilman's *The Yellow Wallpaper*, and Shirley Jackson's *The Haunting of Hill House* and makes a case that space, and time can be subversive elements or device for the women in these works of literature:

> It becomes the task of the Gothic heroines in all of these works to navigate the domestic space of the home, which is typically gendered as a female sphere, when it is not idyllic, but dysfunctional and threatening. In doing so, they reveal the underbelly of normative constructions of domesticity and homeliness and show that the Gothic home can be seen not only as a negative space of terror and imprisonment for women, but also as a site of resistance where patriarchal discourses and domestic ideologies are exposed, confronted and subverted (6).

For a long time, women in fiction have been subjected to domesticity. Fictitious women were frequently installed in the home's confined spaces. Kneale confirms Gilbert and Gubar's findings that dwellings in nineteenth-century women's fiction signified female confinement in a male

dominated society (11). Women are not only domesticated in Gothic literature, but they also play the role of helpless prey. She refutes the claim that the Gothic heroine's vulnerability stems from her gender. Thus, even though the woman's gender has subjected her to socio-cultural conventions of domesticity, the home does not determine her strengths and limitations, as found in some Gothic novels. She closes by alluding to Young's phenomenological theory, "Young shows that the gendering of space does not only result in women being excluded from certain social activities and their associated places, but also in differences between the very way in which men and women perceive spatiality and comport themselves in relation to the world" (14).

Kneale draws out some similarities and differences between Bachelard's oneiric home and the Gothic home. From his book *Poetics of Space*, topoanalysis is introduced by Bachelard and linked to the house as an oneiric space. The house is a location of dreams and a place to create memories. Similar to the Gothic home, Bachelard offers the house as an archetypal representation of the home. They are both burdened with memories and drenched with prior events, particularly childhood memories (16). Like the oneiric house, the Gothic home can create and recreate events experienced on different levels by the people who inhabit them. Memory is bestowed upon the Gothic home basements, walls, and chambers. While Bachelard describes his oneiric home as a sanctuary of serenity, tranquility, independence, and security that one would always want to return to, a Gothic home is a realm of the female characters' nightmares (16). As other scholars have noted, the house is a place of oppression for women, and in Krogstad's case, children, Bachelard's concept seems to rule out how the home can infringe on rights to freedom. His view of home stands in contrast with the feminist one. Here, the Gothic home tackles that aspect. The Gothic home turns homely into unhomely (17) so that dreams are frightening nightmares, freedom is entrapment, and beauty is horror.

By equating the oneiric house to the woman's body, Bachelard proposes the concept of identifying the felicitous space with the female maternal body (19). Kneale, however, points out that this concept only objectifies the woman's body. She claims that "while being embodied is simply a fact of life, becoming a house roots the body in a passive existence and depersonalizes it by making it an object to be owned and inhabited by someone else" (19).

Kneale's take on Hawthorne's *The House of the Seven Gables* falls in place on the dominancy of the Gothic homes in the lives of the feminine characters. Based on history, the house is presented as a masculine dominating edifice that ties in with aristocratic privileges over space, place, and time (37). With its history of greed and injustice, thus the land as stolen property from Mathew Maule by Colonel Pyncheon, the house becomes a "repository of ancestral guilt" for the Pyncheon descendants. Furthermore, Mathew Maule's cures and the horrible events surrounding Colonel Pyncheon's death contribute to the Gothic state of the mansion. After Maule's death, the land that had previously had an idyllic ambiance transforms into a gloomy and sinister environment. As the centuries pass, the lingering effects of shame and gloom persist, as descendants struggle with feeling out of place in their own homes. The house is characterized as the "desolate, rotting, windy, rusty, old house of the Pyncheon family" (45). Kneale claims that the status of the mansion depicts the ancient disintegrating Aristocratic system. Hephzibah, the present inhabitant of the house, is a lady whose life has been influenced by the dismal and antiquated system of the places in which she has found herself:

> Unlike the prototypical Gothic heroine, exemplified by Wood's Julia Vallace, Hephzibah has not been confined to the House of the Seven Gables by any individual male villain. Instead, she is anchored to the house by out-dated patriarchal conceptions of femininity which have caused her to fuse with her

> ancestral home to the point where she is nearly dehumanised: the "creaking joints of her stiffened knees" echo the creaking of the floorboards; the "rigid and rusty frame" of her body resembles the frame of the house; her "forbidding scowl" is akin to the "impending brow of the second story"; and "her very brain was impregnated with the dry-rot of its timbers" (Hawthorne 30, 34, 27, 59) Essentially, her identification as a lady has reduced Hepzibah to an object in the patriarchal household (46).

Once again, we fall back to Cooper's theory of the house as a representation of the self. Hephzibah's image reflected her home. Isolated and cut off from the town, she becomes another image of the old house of seven gables.

Phoebe, on the other hand, is depicted in a different light. She contrasts Hephzibah and the Gothic household chronotope as someone familiar with the idyllic chronotope (52). Her arrival at the Gothic mansion changes everything for Hephzibah and adds an exciting twist to the story. Simple things like her smile were "reflected on the faces of those she bestows it upon, she fills the House of Seven Gables with her light instead of being absorbed into its darkness" (53). Phoebe's image and presence are so strong that she begins to leave impressions on her new Gothic home. According to Kneale, Phoebe "is not frightened or alienated by her new surroundings, however. Instead, her presence at the house is naturalized by her association with the sun" (52). She brings a touch of domesticity and the idyllic atmosphere to the contrasting Gothic home. She considers her the Angel and heroine of the novel as she is the one who dispels Maule's curse (52).

In analyzing Gilman's *The Yellow Wall Paper*, Kneale continues to read architecture with a gender approach. By addressing the issue of the woman's mental health in domestic spaces, she adopts a short story that is also based on Gilman's real-life experience. As she recounts Gilman's personal

experience with mental illness and the rest cure of living a domestic life (61), she points out that masculine figures in health sectors tie in simultaneously with the oppressive masculine figure of the home. This experience impacted the development of the chronotope of the Gothic home (62). In making an analogy to Hawthorne's Hephzibah whose oppression was the old patriarchal norms that kept her confined in an old home (63), Gilman's character is "confined to the home by sexual politics". Her chronotope of the Gothic home intensifies the situation found in Hawthorne's Chronotope. Kneale argues that "Gilman's feminist criticism is primarily directed at the contemporary sexual politics in the home, but as Lockwood suggests, her choice of setting indicates that those politics are inseparable from the historical oppression of women in the home" (67).

The 19th-century text deals directly with issues of women's mental health in the home that were not being tackled. Gilman's prescriptive cure of remaining in the domestic space and not involving in anything creative rendered her in a more deplorable state than the disease itself. Her character in the short story experiences a similar ordeal. This approach to domesticity reveals the ugly side of the effect domestic spaces can have on women.

In the unnamed character's case, her husband, who is also her psychiatrist and doctor at home, makes her experience a domestic environment "doubly powerless by the husband". Thus, Gilman is interested in "showing how the medical establishment is another aspect of the patriarchal system, how the two intertwines in the domestic ideology of the late 19th century, and how this directly impacts women's way of being in the home by transforming it into an uncanny insane asylum where male authorities – doctors who may also be husbands and brothers "rule supreme" (63). According to Kneale, the unnamed character who was later given the generic name "Jane" represents all women (64). She represents all women who are automatically marginalized as

domestic beings. Unlike Hawthorne's concentration on the history and background of his Gothic home, Gilman focuses on the small things that make up the interior like the wallpaper and how uncanny they could be.

Kneale asserts that by describing the house as "ancestral halls", "colonial mansion", and "a hereditary estate", the narrator creates the image of the house as a patriarchal edifice (66). This same image was present in Hawthorne's *The House of the Seven Gables*, a different era from Gilman's *The Yellow Wallpaper* yet, the impact of masculinity on architecture and place is still felt. In both cases, there is a history of imprisoning women in the chronotope of the gothic home:

> To put the same point in chronotopic terms; the mansion can be seen as a physical manifestation of a historical time and its inherent power structures, and as a chronotope it therefore shapes the plot into an uncanny repetition of that time in the present. Unlike Hawthorne who suggests that only women who cling to the past, like Hepzibah, suffer from stagnating confinement in the home, Gilman shows that the history of imprisoning women in houses is still very much alive in the present (67).

Kneale also addresses spaces related to the chronotope of the gothic home by addressing the rooms in the novel. She quotes Virginia Woolf that Gilman's protagonist desired her room (69). Her favorite room, as indicated in the story, was the downstairs room that mirrored Bachelard's felicitous room. She wanted a smaller but more lively, old-fashioned, healthier environment. She may connect with nature, be comfortable, and possibly look forward to recovering in that room. Her husband, on the other hand, chooses a different room for her. A room she has no connection to. Thus, in her quest for comfort and relaxation, she is given a room that makes her more depressed. Kneale calls it an "extension of the spatiotemporal control over the house to her body"

(70). Gilman's yellow wallpapered room becomes a gothic version of Woolf's room, which signifies freedom. By choosing a room that does not please the narrator, she is robbed of autonomy, freedom, and independence (71).

As a creative person, Gilman's protagonist is more inclined to poetry, nature, and art. This puts her in contrast with Jennie, her sister-in-law. Jennie's relationship with the spaces of the house makes her a representation of the traditional woman as a homemaker. The narrator is different from this kind of woman. She wants to be close to nature and art, elements that validate freedom and independence.

The yellow wallpapered room is many things, especially its strangeness and connection to the home. Kneale speculates on the likelihood that the room was originally used as an asylum or nursery. They were both regarded uncannily in any circumstance. The prior usage of the chamber as an asylum enhances the narrator's sense of being cut off from the things she loves and forced into a regimented way of life. It is also a representation of the masculine figures in her life who condemned her to insanity. The fact that the space was once a nursery makes no difference. The room transports her back to her childhood or an earlier developmental stage (73). While the wallpaper emits pictures of "saturated urine," she is infantilized and reduced to the state of a child (73). The contribution of the yellow wallpapered room to the chronotope of the Gothic home justifies "spaces as a physical representation of insanity" (77)

Finally, in *The Haunting of the Hill House*, Kneale associates the mother image to the house. She posits that just like Bachelard's depiction of the maternal house, the house as a womb, the image of the mother, and the house are united (78). This house, however, is not the same as Bachelard's motherly home filled with love and dreams. The Hill House is an image of tyrannical motherhood.

Though it has a “motherly” figure and image, it is still linked to a phallocratic culture due to certain features like the tower.

According to Kneale, the story was written at a time when there was a strong emphasis on family and homemaking. Thus, after the Second World War, the return of the GIs increased childbirth, and domestic life was prioritized (80). As a result, motherhood and housewife chores became a woman's primary aim. These responsibilities, while putting women on the radar, did not guarantee or allow for a matriarchal hold on society. They were nonetheless carried out with a "patriarchal mentality" (81).

During that era, the home once again became a prison for women. This produced domineering, tyrannical, overprotective super mothers whose personal lives were filled with “anxiety, emptiness and disparation” (81). Kneale argues that “Super mother’s dark double, the domineering mother, is not the initiator of a new, liberating matriarchy, but a monster bred by the patriarchy” (81). One of the house's most notable aspects is its potential to reflect a specific period in history and socio-cultural ideas. The house as a chronotope focuses on every aspect of the house, including its history, socio-cultural backdrop, architecture, and people's lived-in experience. It has literal as well as symbolic connotations. In this scenario, lifestyle in the 1950s provides a solid framework with documented evidence for Jackson to establish her characters and reproduce the entire 1950s housing situation. Jackson's story emphasizes the importance of tackling the issue of postmodern women's confinement to the home. There has not been much improvement since the modern woman’s time in Gilman’s *The Yellow Wallpaper*, and Hawthorne’s *The House of the Seven Gables.*

The chronotope of the Hill house, which is an image of maternal dominance, is a response to socio-cultural systems. The house, just like Colonel Pyncheon’s, was meant to display wealth and

a patriarchal dynasty (41). However, Kneale states that it is “a physical manifestation of an oppressive, dehumanizing and alienating aspect of motherhood” (82). Also, the house was a manifestation of the feelings of emptiness and disillusion. It was a place where people and dreams were crushed, an unhomely place with “unmothering” mothers (84) and a place “saturated with a vile diseased energy” (93). Physically, the house is given anthropomorphic features. Aside from the fact that Kneale claims its appearance is alive, the poltergeist nature (87) of the house only makes it another character in the novel.

For people like Eleanor, staying in a house like the Hill House was reminiscent of her prior residence. Eleanor is portrayed and analyzed as a victim of the houses she lived in from childhood till her death. She is overshadowed as a young lady by her mother and sister's oppressive representation of parenting. She is bound to domesticity, like Hephzibah in *The House of Seven Gables*. She has no friends, no love, and low self-esteem. Her departure from her old house to the road chronotope is viewed as the only limited time and space for her freedom.
Entering the hill house begins yet another journey of confinement.

Kneale's claims on how the home has treated Eleanor corroborate that it is inseparable from the individual. Eleanor feels strangely attached to her new Hill house, and despite its paranormal occurrences, she is unable to leave. Eleanora is so influenced by the mansion that she would choose to commit suicide than leave it. Kneale's study brings readers to a fresh perspective on the Gothic homes in these three novels.

While the houses exemplified antiquated patriarchal dominance, there were women in these houses who suffered greatly. These houses were also given attributes, which harmed the mental health of some of the heroines.

Balaa proposes that the chronotope of the house plays a role in matrilineage in her treatment of Nada Awar Jarrar's Somewhere Home (70). Her analysis shifts to a new angle of spatial analysis in the novel. She claims that despite its popularity, the novel has not been subjected to several literary critiques. As a result, she investigates other areas, such as the chronotope of the house. This area is associated with the matrilineal concept in the story. In terms of literary criticism, she intends to go beyond the scope of the book's limitations. She claims that the image of the house is "a helpful spatial tool to combine the synchronic and diachronic planes of matrilineal" by using Cosslett's two-time frames of feminist matrilineal and Bakhtin's theory of the chronotope (73). She reiterates Cosslett's explanation of her theory as while the synchronic plane refers to the relationship between women of different generations, the diachronic plane "goes back and forward in time" (72). She believes that the house enacts and enforces these relationships and connections.

Balaa mentions the chronotope of the threshold as another manifestation in the novel. Bakhtin defines the chronotope of the threshold as a place of a break in life, crises, and decision making. According to Balaa, places like the garden and Maysa's grandmother's room were threshold chronotopes:

> this is where most epiphanies, transformations and births occur, as Bakhtin suggests, such as the birth of her daughter and that of the renovated garden. This representation of time–space shapes Maysa's actions and thoughts. The stories do not follow the normal course of biographical time, but the female protagonist undergoes growth and development. Maysa is at a threshold, between the past and the present, the place where she has her epiphanies. It is at the house/her grandmother's bedroom where she reaches her turning point. Being able to cope

> with her present and future, she is able to cross the threshold and become a new, stronger person than before (75).

The house chronotope in the novel is a place of crises and at the same time, a comfortable place where relationships like the mother-daughter one is generated. The house was where Maysa, who belonged to a different generation, experienced a synchronic relationship with other women (73). The fact that one house is mentioned throughout the novel demonstrates some permanency in the ever-changing lives of its inhabitants (75). She asserts that because Maysa goes back into her grandmother's house to recover memories of her foremothers, recovery becomes a theme in the novel. Even though Balaa agrees with Kneale that houses and castles are symbols of the "Patrilinear dynasty", she also makes the case that the house in the novel is maternal and symbolizes nurturing (76). The house of Maysa's foremothers, described as old, dilapidated, and a former castle, is a place where she goes back to find herself and explain her present circumstances. Her ability to feel their presence in the home is a valuable sentiment for Maysa. Balaa argues that:

> The protagonist feels that they are with her and she can draw on their power anytime she wants. Their past lives are very much alive in this house, not just through their stories and memories but also through their objects and belongings in the house, such as a Persian carpet which belonged to her mother and her grandmother's oak dressing table (81).

Balaa concludes that, by returning to the ancestral home to recover memories and write about her foremothers and making synchronized relationships with people like her daughter, Maysa continues a tradition that enforces the theme of matrilinealism.

2.2 The Compound House on Screen

The history of Kumawood dates to the late 1990s, and as a cultural artifact, it reflects and mirrors the society or community as popular entertainment and may function as a powerful tool for ridiculing certain behaviors in the community. As part of its unsung accomplishments, Kumawood brings on-screen imaginaries of diverse narratives focusing on the general and common cultural background of its major consumers. Before its emergence, the early local industry had laid foundations to serve as a palimpsest for the new video film wave. Tamakleo mentions that with the birth of the video film format came a paradigm shift in Ghanaian cinema that led to new genres like the Kumawood. According to Adjei, Kumawood came into existence due to the popularity of the staged theater called the concert party, and "Kumawood" originated from the name Kumasi, an Akan city in the Ashanti region (62). Not only did it become an extension of an already known cultural entertainment, but it also took flight with some of the biggest names on the screens. They were the main characters in the Akan dramas, Concert parties, *Obra* and *Cantata*, the then game changers of the industry.

This paper is not concerned with the general aesthetics and quality of films produced by the industry. However, it is important to mention how the industry has been received by consumers. Kumawood, despite its efforts to be considered a salutary genre, and an improvement of the previous pop cultures, has still received enormous criticisms on the quality of their films. These films are usually produced in low quality with a low budget, choosing Twi as their means of communication. Over the years, there have been arguments over the performances of characters by Ghanaians. Put side by side with other functional film industries like Hollywood and Nollywood, Kumawood seems not to appeal to the taste and pleasure of some Ghanaians.

However, for most people in Kumasi and its surroundings, Kumawood has won their hearts. And this could be because of their medium of communication. The presentations on what is real are relatable and precise to its main consumers. Thus, using a more convenient language, their films seem to have gained a sonorous effect on their consumers, gradually winning their way into homes and almost obliterating the thirst for its competitions, Ghallywood and Nollywood. Ghallywood, the other Ghanaian film industry designed for the consumption of the elites, is unable to reach out to the people because the English language creates borders and does not bring out the Ghanaian attitude as the local language does.

English, since it is not a native language, may sometimes restrict the expressions of the Ghallywood actors. Kumawood is not the first Ghanaian popular culture to adopt Twi as its medium of communication. In the past years, there have been other TV shows that appealed to the masses through the Twi language.

But Kumawood does more than use language successfully. Their narratives are framed through the lenses of a perceived Akan culture and practices, syncretized with contemporary imaginary concepts that dialogue with emerging research fields. According to Asare, "although there are varying genres such as melodrama, comedy, satire, musical, adventure and horror employed by the film producers, they all draw attention to topical vices bedeviling the society. Some of these problems highlighted in the films discuss privacy and confidentiality that would have been extremely difficult if not impossible to reveal off-screen or in real life" (70). Meyer also states her views on these video films as:

> It would be inadequate to approach video-films as artistic products to be viewed in their own right, from the perspective of the distant spectator. Rather it has to be taken as a point of departure that these films impinge on everyday life as much as they claim to represent it. In the video-film industry... the cinema and TV screens

> do not function as window through which spectators look at the world from distance. In the same way, those who make the film perceive what happens in front of the camera as to be fully entangled with real life, rather than occurring in a virtual space, within the safe confines of artistic production. Ghana popular cinema, with regard to production as well as consumption, blurs the boundary between everyday life and its representation (213).

When observed closely, the issues of homes and spaces take center stage in their narratives. These films ground themselves firmly in the already existing concepts of family and home. Responsible for demonstrating domestic cultures, Kumawood draws their inspirations from family-based events, creating spaces already in existence as places of bonds and relationships. A popular set where their stories assume reality is the family home. After exhausting all types and possibilities of family homes, the compound house is revisited, rendering it a landmark feature in these films. Even though the presence of the compound house accurately reflects the ones in the communities, it also brings to screen the cached dramas, experiences, and realities that may be individually unique. Thus, the compound house has been used so rampantly that it may have touched on relatable experiences as many as possible. It cuts across both the urban and rural experiences. While we may not still be developing new ways of presenting these practices on paper, prose or fiction does not do much justice to the representations of compound houses in general. Even though less attention is given to space in their narratives, Kumawood has successfully represented these houses. This chapter will explore how the compound house in Kumawood films has been assigned a chronotopic significance that adds value to its already existing importance.

2.2.1 The House of Many Stories

The compound house may seem like a simple building enclosed and characterized by mini rooms and shared facilities or as defined by Ibukun as "mini complexes of houses group around shaded courtyards, set back from the streets". However, In Kumawood, it goes beyond a simple structure or mini-complexes. Its significance transcends its physical make-up. It impersonates a character playing different roles in different cinematic sketches. Lynley correctly puts it as "an outworking of the characters who live inside. Sometimes in fiction, the house seems to come alive in its own right". It has ownership over a particular space in these films, and its presence emits a multi-faceted phenomenon. Thus, it displays undisputed versatility on screen. When transposed into the Kumawood world, the space-time confederations of the house are so profound that it obliterates the simple notion of a set of a structure and takes on the complex role of a chronotope. It becomes a place we have lived before, a place we may live, and a place we have known to produce most of our human relations and associations.

The representation of the spatial properties of the house is intertwined with temporalities. At different times and different historical levels, the compound house may be used to represent numerous things. As mentioned before, Kumawood has represented the compound house well and may translate to us bringing on-screen the true nature and realities of that space, something that has not well been represented by the individual compound houses of the screen. They do not tell stories familiar to the experiences of one home but usher the audience into a realm of countless experiences creating a limitless perception of the house.

To understand the notion of the versatility of the compound house chronotope, I will put it side by side the castle chronotope (from which the chronotope of the gothic house is developed) that is also

represented as a domestic space. Unlike the compound house, certain chronotopes in western literature like the chronotope of the castle are mostly associated with the gothic. The gothic gives a foreboding feeling of uncanny, weird, and horror. Such chronotopes tell preconceived stories. The castle's qualities are not only in its grandeur physique and intriguing architecture but also in its ability to hold and tell stories of the past. They are historical monuments. Within its thick walls and high roofing lie the history of centuries. Bakhtin identifies it as "the castle has its origins in the distant past; its orientation is towards the past.

The traces of time in the castle do bear a somewhat antiquated museum-like character" (246). Though it served as homes and fortresses for rulers and servants, its representation over time in literature connotes something different. Thus, it became a domestic space with gloominess and obscurities where characters and readers equally imagined uncanny activities. According to Kneale:

> Despite the sublime grandeur of the imposing, crumbling castles that abound in early Gothic romances, literary Gothic buildings have always been connected to the domestic space of the home: Horace Walpole, author of the first Gothic novel, The Castle of Otranto (1764), not only started a fad among the English aristocracy for turning their own homes into Gothic castles during the late 18th century revival of Gothic architecture, but also established a literary tradition for depicting the Gothic castle as an arena for family horror and domestic terror (5).

In Poe's *The Cask of Amontillado*, readers are approached with a typical gothic castle or Italian Palazzo. The mansion served both domestic purposes and housed the horrors of the catacombs. On one level, the catacombs are the family's past and history on another, a claustrophobic hub filled with skeletons and human remains. For someone like Montressor, burring someone beneath his

home in the family's vault seemed laudable and practical since it was a space designed for such purposes. Before he had lured Fortunato into the vaults, he had first called the Palazzo a "home". Paired with Poe's description of the vault, thus details of the architecture, the absence of light and presence of the dead, and Montressor's obscured intents and gothic ambiance is created:

> Its walls had been lined with human remains, piled to the vault overhead like the great catacombs of Paris. Three sides of this interior crypt were still ornamented in this manner. From the fourth side the bones had been thrown down, and lay promiscuously upon the earth, forming at one point a mound of some size. Within the walls thus exposed by the displacing of the bones, we perceived a still interior crypt or recess, in depth about four feet, in width three, in height six or seven (Poe).

Home and horrors are not necessarily contrasting phenomenon in this gothic space. Poe captures this in some of his works by bringing the gothic castle to life and making it a place for his "twisted" characters and narratives.

The compound house on screen does not tell a single story like the Gothic house (castle) does. In the first scene of the 2002 classic Kumawood film, *Kumasi Yonko*, we encounter most of the characters as they are seated side by side to each other as tenants of one compound household.

They had come together to contribute some amount of money for a bereaved co-tenant. It is not a strange scene or practice, it is a common occurrence in a typical compound house, but as the film progresses, and we encounter other sides of this habitat. The events lead to drama, tension, and friction between groups of people made to share the squeezed, manageable spaces of a compound house. The film delved into the dynamics of friendship and betrayal of city life. It exposes how the people in the city are bedeviled by anxieties caused by associations that influence the culture of

competition and living up to city life standards. The compound house in the center of the narration assumes a central stage (centripetal force) that attracts and emits the characters' behaviors, events, and information that shape the storyline. The story tackles existential challenges amongst members of a household who are not family members. This type of compound house is more of a conglomerate of smaller families who live together as tenants. It is different from the typical extended family house where members are either close relations or distant family members. Here association or personal relationships between tenants are by choice. Nonetheless, it equally serves as a family home to the individual tenants, forming and revealing identities. These houses, like any other, are specifically built to suit the environment and societies in which they are found and serves as a home away from a family home for the tenants. According to Ward:

> While buildings shape human behavior, human decisions shape buildings. Houses reflect a builder's ideas about what people wish for in a home. A builder might plan to occupy the building herself and so design it with her particular needs in mind. Or he might build for the market place in the hope of anticipating what consumers want (4).

The stories of these compound houses in Kumawood are enormous, and it is impossible to limit the house or relate it to a single storyline.

Chapter 3: House of Many Faces.

3.1 The Compound House in Ama Darko's *Faceless*

There are community sets in Darko's *Faceless* that portray Ghanaian lifestyles. Darko employs this method in both *Faceless* and *Beyond the Horizon*. In these two works, the physical environments become a crucial component of the narrative. Space is revered and held in high regard. It was necessary for Darko, for example, to create contrasting and vivid images of the geographical places where the story unfolds in *Beyond the Horizon*. She moves the story from Mara's village to Accra's slums and Germany's brothels, exposing the "so-called good life in the city" and "the tragic illusions about the pleasures of life beyond the horizon in the white man's land" (Anyidoho).

In *Faceless*, the focus shifts back to the home. She employs house and societal agents to address critical social concerns. As Okyeso puts it, Darko employs "conflicts that bedevil mother-daughter bonds to address larger issues such as streetism, patriarchy, government indifference, irresponsible parenting, and police inefficiency" (121). Tayole has also noted that, in *Faceless*, Amma Darko sets for herself the social duty of depicting with empathy how some mothers let themselves to be burdened by discriminating cultural, social, and even religious systems" (158).

The family compound house is at the heart and center of events in addressing these concerns, representing more than a mere structure and accentuating the flaws of a mother. Darko brings a typical Accra compound house to life, providing the reader with the existential issues that the residents face. She builds time and physical environment ideas that represent the existential conditions of living in a compound house.

The ability of the compound house to develop and maintain social interactions, and its deeper connection with people and the environment, are key factors in its transformation into a home. The home is the crucible of society and has sparked so much political and ideological debate. It is at the heart of our society and has become the focal point of political debates (Saunders,178). The psychological, economic, and behavioral qualities of the individuals who dwell in a home are influenced by its characteristics and ambiance. Krogstad identifies the family house as a psychological space (1), vehemently making it responsible for shaping the internal thoughts and beliefs of the people who share that space. The home is not just a physical structure containing bedrooms and luxury halls of abode but also has some factors or features that come together to make it alive and meaningful. These features could be related to attitudes, beliefs, and values. Also, the physical, social, and economic background of the group of people or family living together is considered. In the case of *Faceless*, these houses represent the tangible aspect of the homes of the characters.

Darko's notion of home depicts how space combines with time to construct the narrative at various historical phases (Krogstad,2). The compound house and its impact on its inhabitant are prominent as the story is portrayed through the eyes of many persons and views at different eras. The tale is loaded with both past and present occurrences. Most of the events in the past took place in Maa Tsuru's compound house, while the present leads the reader back and forth between Agbobloshie's slum, the compound house, Kabria's home, and the Office of MUTE. The novel is an attempt to comprehend what influences in the past and present drove Fofo to wind up on the streets, as well as the terrible death of Baby T. Consequently, the compound house and all the other circumstances that contribute to it being a family home are held accountable for

Baby T and Fofo's fate. The compound house in *Faceless* is an old family home in Accra, Ghana's capital city. This fictitious but ostensibly real house depicts a typical old Ga family home. The reader learns this because the novel's older character, Naa Yomo, who allegedly survived the 1939 earthquake in the same house, recounts her narrative of the house's history:

> From the time I could bath myself, I have lived in this house. Part of this house was leveled to the ground, but we stayed on. When they were resettling others at Korle-Gonno and Kaneshie and Abossey-Okai, we refused to move. We rebuilt this house with our sweat and toil. This house was built on a foundation of honour. Now see what some of them have done to this honour (88).

By this time, we realize that the house in the spotlight is full of memories. Naa Yomo's extended residence in the traditional family home has made her a living witness to the succession of events that have defined what her home has become. Many of the characters in the book are found at this house. Thus, there are characters such as Maa Tsuru, Fofo, Baby T, Onko, and the children always present in the courtyard. Because of her lived experiences in the compound household, Naa Yomo is a credible narrator who takes the reader to the backstory of the happenings in her family home. She informs Kabria:

> I have seen the making of babies here, their deliveries, their growth. I have observed transactions, good and bad. I can recite to you the causes of many fights and quarrels in this house. I can attest to marriages, the proper ones and the cohabitations. This house was built by an honorable man, for his twelve sons. I am the only direct grandchild of the great man still alive in this house. Everyone else here is either a great or great-great or great-great-great or great-great-great-great grandchild or grandniece and grandnephew of the honorable man. I have lived

> through the making and painful breaking up of families in this house. I have born witness to mothers who cane their children into the classroom and mothers who cane their children out of the classroom and onto the streets. Thirty-eight years ago, she was born in the very room inside which she has now locked herself (Darko,89).

Darko refers to the Compound as "a house of many faces" (Darko, 17). The 'faces' here acts as a synecdoche, representing the people and various scenes from the house. These expressions represent the collective meaning of the house's physical, social, and economic standing. Because of its numerous elements, the compound house may exhibit a variety of scenes. The structure depicts not just the different types of rooms, but also the varied activities that happen in the compound house. These activities provide information on the co-tenants existing social relationships and socioeconomic status. Every segment of the house's spaces functions as morphemes in phrases, bringing to light the notion of Spatial Morphology (Quayson). The idea of sentence structures is translated to spaces in Spatial Morphology, which investigates how spatial elements encourage or obstruct social relations (Quayson). Dassah also refers to Peponis while describing Spatial Morphology as the interrelated patterns in space that are distinguished by physical and social limits.

In this chapter, spatial morphology will be examined as components of a specific space and how they interact with one another. It will discuss how spaces impact the physical and social relationships of the novel's characters. Even though the objective of this essay is to examine how a home can have a significant and psychological effect on narration and characters, it is necessary to understand the compound house's nature, physical makeup, and relationships.

Darko brings the reader through the scenes of Maa Tsuru's (Naa Yomo's, Fofo's, Baby T's) home via the eyes of Odarley, Fofo's best friend, in the spatial morphology of Maa Tsuru's (Naa Yomo's,

Fofo's, Baby T's) home. Odarley's tour around the house reveals the state and social relationships of its inhabitants. The reader is first greeted with the cacophony of children and livestock. This scenario sheds light on Fofo's probable/possible childhood. Not only does the small space in which both children and animals are housed symbolize the terrible economic situation of the household, but so does the description of the children as wearing ragged clothes and having ill bodies:

> Just a few years back, Fofo could have been one of the numerous screaming children, scrambling with the sheep and goats and chicken for space to play and exist in the common compound. Fofo could have been the girl in the tattered brown underpants with the diseased red hair and a protruding stomach, carried on legs that were as thing as two dried sticks or the other in the flour-sac underpants with a body ravaged by rashes and whose nose seemed to never stop running (Darko,17).

This is one of the novel's most lively scenes, depicting the unconscious daily struggle over the house's limited areas. The reader is made to experience the delineated places of the house from the moment Odarley encounters the crying children until she approaches the 'charred door' of Maa Tsuru. There are twelve rooms for the members of the household, and each is given a brief description as she passes. As she walks past the rooms with closed doors, the reader gets the feeling that the occupants are working people who have probably left home early to get to work. One woman who appeared to be at odds with Maa Tsuru fills the spaces in front of her room with domestic activities such as cooking and washing while avoiding contact with Maa Tsuru. This may appear to be a common habit among members of a shared household. The other two ladies in front of the fourth room, on the other hand, were braiding their hair. Maa Tsuru is seen standing peacefully in front of her room, oblivious to the goings-on around her and devoid of human connection. The proximity of the rooms may restrict movement and invade personal space. One

example is how Naa Yomo and the rest of the house know of Maa Tsuru's ordeal but have made no attempt to contact her. Maa Tsuru describes herself as a "leper in her own home" in her musings (Darko, 19).

When Kabria and Vickie arrive for the first time, we go over another description of the house. This time, one could identify the economic class of the people simply by glancing at their curtains; the excellent and long ones, the old ones that were faded and ripped, and the ones in between (Darko, 86). The Spatial Morphology of this particular home demonstrates that the conditions and state of its occupants, particularly the children, translates poverty and class divisions, and while it may foster interpersonal relationships for the children, the adults appear to be at odds with each other for knowing too much of each other's business. FoFo's ability to adjust to street life and struggle for space may be attributed to a similar experience she had in her first home.

3.2 The Compound House as a Threshold Chronotope

As an author, Darko is tasked with "showing" and "expressing" the area in which she wishes to place her characters using the aesthetics of language. Even while a compound house in the neighborhood can exist in real life, the one in *Faceless* comes to life through language, and her descriptions and portrayals become the quintessential example of a real-world compound house. She raises awareness of temporal and spatial realities. She deals with the individual's agency within the portrayed space and time (Johnston, 140). Space takes on a concrete form and is responsible for human relationships (Quayson). Stavrides claims that:

> It is important however to think of space not as a container of society but as a formative element of social practices. Imagining a different future, means,

> therefore, trying to experience and conceptualize spatialities that may help create different social relations (13).

The compound house's geographical situation becomes filled with emotions and value (Bakhtin). These real-life chronotopes are classified as aggregation and disaggregation chronotopes by Quayson. People are urged to stay within the bounds of the chronotope of aggregation, whereas disaggregation disperses and redistributes people. These two characteristics can be found in the compound house. As a result, it has the power to both keep and disperses people, forming structural and temporal relationships between inhabitants or household members. The ability of the compound house to hold some elements of the threshold is what distinguishes it as one. It serves as the principal site of action as a family home, where time and space collide in a unique way (Krogstad). A threshold is a place or point of beginning, as defined by the Mariam Webster dictionary. The beginning point of the threshold is symbolic of the birth of life, ideas, renewals and decision making. Passing or walking through a threshold may also symbolize important steps one makes in life. Stavrides sees the threshold as a place where "Social struggles and movements are exposed to its formative potentialities‖ and fragments of a different life, experienced during the struggle, take form in spaces and times with threshold characteristics" (13). Bakhtin himself, in the conception of the threshold chronotopes had written:

> The word "threshold" itself already has a metaphorical meaning in everyday usage (together with its literal meaning) and is connected with the breaking point of a life, the moment of crisis, the decision that changes a life (or the indecisiveness that fails to change a life, the fear to step over the threshold) (248).

The threshold chronotope is basically characterized by beginnings, crisis, break in life, decisions and indecisiveness, actions, trials, emotions, resurrections, epiphanies and renewals. According to

Johston, "linked with the notion of *limen* in Latin, a threshold is a liminal space that refers to a transitory, in-between state or space, characterized by indeterminacy, ambiguity, hybridity, and the potential for subversion and change" (140). Johston also quotes Rachel Falconer's contribution to the meaning threshold chronotope from her, *Young adult fiction and the Crossover Phenomenom* as:

> Readers evince a heightened appetite for fictions that focus on the edges of identity, the points of transition and rupture, and the places where we might, like microcosms of the greater world, break down and potentially assume new and hybrid identities. . .. Bakhtin identifies the "chronotope of the threshold" as being associated with *crisis* and *break* in life; the moment of decision that changes a life, where time is felt as instantaneous . . . as if it had no duration (14).

In the story, the threshold chronotope is in charge of creating identities. Readers rely on events, situations, and incidents in the threshold to draft out characterization and plot. The threshold's reality may differ based on the writer's desired theme or plot. While certain thresholds may have pleasant memories and are typically regarded as good places, others, Maa Tsuru's compound house, may be marked with horrors, fears, and sorrow. These features do not make the compound house any less of a home; as previously noted, it is a typical example of a home. Darko, ironically, has demonstrated that not all homes are "sweet." Several characters in the novel are strongly connected to and through the compound house. The house served as a network connecting characters to events and events to events. It is in this space that the tragic aspect of the story begins, and the concept of social responsibility is put on the radar. Through the oldest member of the house, we learn how the house plays the role as a symbol and a hub of beginnings. Darko marries time and the physical environment in the shape of a compound house, an enclosed home with an entrance, pregnant with

different people, temporal events, spaces and rooms. As the house accommodates various characters and events, we come to understand its chronotopic role as a threshold. She sticks to the same compound house in both times in the novel, thus present and past. This practice of keeping the compound house and using it to reveal plot and characters ensure some unity in the use of setting.

3.3 The Threshold Curse

Not only did the compound house serve literary as the birthplace for characters like Maa Tsuru, but it also served as the mini community that ushered her into womanhood and motherhood. It had the capabilities of forming and shaping her identity. Since her entrance into the world, Tsuru had to bear the weight of the so-called curse. Burdened by it, she cannot detach herself from the concept of associating every life crisis to the nurtured superstitious belief of the curse. The curse became a "seed" that found "fertile ground‖ in Maa Tsuru's mind, spreading with the destructive speed of a creeping plant" (Darko,91). The Ghanaian concept of a curse is rooted in the belief that an expressed misfortune, through word of mouth towards someone is the guaranteed form of justice, especially for someone who feels he/ she has been wronged (Hammond, Graphic online). Thus, it is a means of seeking justice from the gods by wishing a misfortune for people and sometimes anyone associated with them. What made the curse so intriguing was the person who invoked it, the time and conditions under which it was invoked, the location where it was invoked, and the person who stood to suffer its repercussions. Here, time and space (place) become crucial in understanding the severity of the curse and why it may have played a controlling role in Maa Tsuru's life. Naa Yomo explains her version of the curse story as follows:

> In that room, even as she saw from afar, death fast approaching to claim her in exchange for the new life she had brought into the world, she didn't soften in her loathing of her lover. A dying woman clutching onto the last vestiges of life through hate, she cursed when the time came, and cursed and cursed as she pushed the little life out of her. A piece of cloth was shoved inside her mouth… (92).

The room here could become another linked chronotope of the compound house that is valuable and worth researching. In that contrasting and vital period of Maa Tsuru's and her mother's lives, where both the presence of life and death is felt in the same room, the one in labor does not send out a positive parting message. The situation is far from the stereotypical "joys of motherhood". The family home is transformed into space or venue of birth and death. Thus, the threshold serves two functions: it marks a new beginning for the infant and, if death is viewed as a journey, it marks a new beginning for Baby Tsuru's mother. The curse's time and place are as essential as the person who invokes it and its message. The two aspects, time and place, will always be linked in any retelling of the story. It is also the place where a mother left a painful legacy that may have harmed her daughter for life:

> when the baby's shoulder burst through her and tore to shreds the lining of her womanhood, the curse was on her lips. She was fading away but wasn't going to go without a legacy. The cord was still uncut when she yelled lasting curses on her lover and his descendants after him, to suffer in more ways and in more forms than he had made her suffer. Someone shouted that she was dying. I cried that she should be made to undo the curse first. But it was late. She lay there dead, while they took the child away. A child with no mother and whose father and his lineage had just been cursed. A child cursed by her own mother (93)

Unfortunately for baby Tsuru, the first thing she may have heard upon entering the world were screaming shouts and curses from her mother. On that day, Tsuru was initiated into what she perceived as "a cursed life." Her cursed identity was bestowed on her the day she was born. This sense of being cursed causes several difficulties in establishing identities and making transitions. For example, she has her first pregnancy at 16 and quickly transitions from a naive adolescent to a naive mother. This period was critical in Tsuru's life as a teen. It laid the groundwork for a chain of circumstances that would eventually make her the poster child for unsuccessful parenthood. Darko presents her as passive, worn down by her belief in the curse, and marginalized by everyone around her. As the story progresses, we come to terms with Tsuru's psychological state as influenced by the longstanding belief in a curse. Because of the strain on her mind, she has poor social relations with her neighbors, keeping her in a constant state of paranoia. The people around her or people who know of the curse also contribute to the victimization of Maa Tsuru. For instance, Kwei, Tsuru's estranged lover's misfortunes were blamed on the curse. The curse became an excuse, a getaway factor for Kwei's mother to elude the realities of having an irresponsible son. For the mother, every bad thing that happened to Kwei was because of his lover's curse. Eventually, Kwei himself settled with the belief of the weight of Tsuru's curse. He even blames Tsuru's ability to have more children on the curse.

Darko devotes the entire book two of the work to tell the account of how a growing Maa Tsuru functioned in her environment. She doesn't change much in terms of setting and puts more drama and action into the two homes, thus Maa Tsuru's and Kwei's. Readers are now familiar with linked chronotopes such as the slum, Kabria's home, the bar, the drinking spot, and Kwei's home. Finally, chapters fourteen and fifteen provide answers to some of the questions raised in chapters one and three. Chapters fourteen and fifteen answers what happened to Fofo's home, why her mother is

destitute, and who Baby T is. The emphasis is on Tsuru's home, lifestyle, and decisions, which have contributed to the concerns addressed in the narrative. These two chapters are set aside and dedicated to different characters readers may not have met in the present (in the beginning of the book). These characters are solidly represented by the writer as everything that went wrong in Tsuru's past. For instance, by now in the novel, Onko and Kwei are only mentioned in the past and they represent the horrific past of Maa Tsuru, Baby T, and Fofo. But the house doesn't change, the compound house or home of Maa Tsuru's past, still becomes her present-day home. This house though dynamic, remains a fixed component whose presence resonates in both the past and the present. Despite all the terrors and abuse Tsuru and her children had experienced in their home in the past, the preceding chapter of the book introduces the reader to the compound house as the current abode and home for Maa Tsuru. Ironically, Tsuru never left her family home and in fact, still lived and slept in the same room she was cursed. The circumstances surrounding her birth and the disturbing events she experiences in her home hinders any sense of optimism in her current state as the mother of five. The compound house chronotope here, focuses on how the characters lived in that space and time and their modes of existence, either passive or the ones who choose to progress (Johnston, 140).

The events that transpire in the house highlight some of the book's most essential themes. We can come to terms with the true nature of the novel's fundamental issue in this specific space. The home can reflect both the past and the present, required for the plot's development. It is clear from Naa Yomo's narration that the house has observed and temporarily housed a variety of events and residents in the past. Maa Tsuru's four children and Naa Yomo's six children are great examples of those who left to seek greener pastures. The courtyard acts as a playground for the kids throughout the day, providing an outlet for some social relations, but this may be considered as a passing

phase, as children in the past were fond of moving out to different settlements. In addition, she connects past occurrences and current concerns by relying on the memories she still has of her home. For characters such as Kabria and Vickie, a visit to the house serves as a temporary place or center where they can obtain information about Maa Tsuru's children.

The compound house, as a chronotope, brings to light the interpersonal relationships that existed and still exist among people who share a similar space and sheds further insight on the possible remote reasons of Maa Tsuru's children's current situation. Maa Tsuru's room inside the compound house once provided shelter for her and her four children. It was a place where they would unwind after a long day of hustling. It was this same room that catered for Nii Kpako's accommodation problem and witnessed the molestation of Baby T. In present times, her room has become a hiding place where she seeks refuge from outside forces.

3.4 A place of Choices, Decisions, Indecisiveness and a Break in Life.

Tsuru had to grow up in the same room where her mother had died and where she had been cursed as a newborn. Maa Tsuru's decision could be influenced by a variety of circumstances. Maa Tsuru had stayed in her house from birth to adulthood, unlike her children, who had left the family home at a young age to escape the dreads of their home. Though she had a curse hanging over her shoulders in that family, she also felt the urge to belong to something bigger than herself and something that gave security. It can also be argued that Maa Tsuru's life was only stable because of the compound house. It provided her with shelter and a sense of belonging to a big family.

Despite her unpleasant and horrible experiences, she thought the compound house to be a fitting location to call home for people like her. She bears a passing resemblance to her great aunt, Naa Yomo. Tsuru did not move into her lover's house the first and second times she became pregnant

but stayed in her own home. This decision, however, may have resulted in significant harm to her own small nuclear family. Of course, in her early years, she had family members who took it upon themselves to provide for her and be concerned about her romantic choices. For example, the author stated that "Maa Tsuru never went hungry." She helped her aunt with her kenkey business because as long as she helped, she had enough to eat" (120). Her extended family's female figures played crucial roles, though not always as mothers but as caretakers. They intervened in her relationship with her partners at one time and tried to counsel her not to make mistakes. In the lack of a prominent male or father role in her life, the only encounter she had that was similar to the "father-daughter" relationship was with her uncle. Much is not said about their relationship, and readers only learn about him after Kwei presents the beverages to the family and after he makes false threats at Kwei for torturing his niece.

Tsuru's choice of partners should not be overlooked. The issue isn't only how she chooses them, but also the kind of life she wants to live with them. She finds up in severe and abusive relationships with these men because she takes her self-esteem for granted.

To understand why Tsuru's choices were so bad, one must first consider the absence of any responsible male figure in her life. Tsuru grew up without a father in her family home, and researchers like Marvaso have suggested that:

> Fathers provide their daughters with a masculine example. They teach their children boundaries and help put daughters at ease with other men throughout their lives. So, if she didn't grow up with a proper example, she will have less insight and she will be more likely to go for a man that replicate the abandonment of her father.

The absence of a father in Tsuru's life may have caused her to make some of the choices she made. This situation of fatherlessness turns to have a negative impact on a daughter's self-esteem. She is devoid of any confidence in herself, devalues her abilities, cripples her social and psychological abilities (Mckenna Meyers). Men like Kwei and Kpakpo preyed on Tsuru's vulnerability. Despite the situation surrounding Tsuru and Kwei's relationship, she never hesitated in providing him spousal services. Her aunt had reproached her:

> it is bad enough that he has a son with you, and yet is obstinately avoiding questions about marriage rites and making you his wife properly. But you, providing him with all the services of a wife so free of charge, is really rubbing in the salt (121)

When Tsuru has been subjected to enough violence and humiliation in her own home, she finds it difficult to take a clear stance or make decisions about her boyfriends. Her indecision and unwillingness to drive these men away continually provided the opportunity for them to abuse or take advantage of her. These incidents contribute to the novel's theme of abuse and carelessness. Maa Tsuru's judgments and choices about her children call into doubt her standing as a mother. Allowing her lover, Kpakpo, to dwell in the same room as her children reveal how she put her self-interest over her children's comfort and safety. Even though she tries to divide her single room with curtains for seclusion, she is unconcerned about the influence her actions would have on her children. This irresponsible act resulted into two of her teenage sons who were partial breadwinners leaving home to hustle on the streets:

> Maa Tsuru could have gone to look for her sons. She decided not to. She had noticed them toss and turn on their mats the whole night through. They saw it all. For how long could that go on? Better let them go. They were no longer kids. The streets

> had accelerated their growth. It was time for them to be on their own. There was a price waiting to be paid which Maa Tsuru did not take into consideration (131).

Bringing Kwei into her home and dumping Baby T on the streets were two of the most lethal decisions she made in the novel. Her choices finally led to her current problem, a break in life that makes her stay in her current residence increasingly unpleasant. The house no longer seemed to give her the same level of comfort it once did, forcing her to seek refuge in her modest room. Her current devastation, brought on by an abandoned lover and a dead child, was the result of a failed establishment that society perceives as a haven, identity giver, and protector not only in an abstract sense but also through its physical borders and walls, which function to keep out outside forces.

Maa Tsuru is not the only one who made life changing decisions and choices in the novel. Her two sons and daughter Fofo also made very important decisions that reflected the nature of their living conditions. Her sons, we are told, were already burdened with the task of breadwinners in the family whiles her daughters ran petty errands for neighbors in order to meet their daily needs:

> By the time Fofo's two older brothers each struck ten, they were running errands at the seaside and the fish market. Baby T and Fofo by then were performing petty chores for family members in exchange for food (127).

These children are being introduced to a lifestyle appropriate for adulthood at a very young age. The hard realities of life on the streets force them to grow up. As a result, the children made some life-altering choices. For example, when the two boys realized they couldn't share their small room with their mother's lover, they decided to leave home and never return. The home had lost any sense of protection for them, as well as any sense of belonging. Ironically, these children, who are Accra locals by birth, are forced out of their families and into the slums, where they join other street

children who have migrated to Accra in search of "greener pastures. As previously stated, the home phenomenon connected with the compound house stems from its ability to provide shelter and the sensation of a relationship between people and their surroundings formed within the boundaries of this enclosed dwelling. Tsuru's children appear to be lacking in this regard. They are deprived of basic shelter and any form of meaningful relationships with the household. This goes a long way toward proving that the hustle of the streets appeals to these children more than their own house. Our fourteen-year-old heroine has made her own home amid the slums and streets of Sodom and Gomorrah when the story begins. Fofo, who blamed her mother for her current situation, had also left the compound house with no plans to return. In chapter three, we discover that:

> The entire three hundred and sixty-five days of the previous year, Fofo had visited the house not more than twice, even though her abode at Sodom and Gomorrah was only some few kilometers away. The current year was already into its fifth month, and, but for the nightmare with poison she still would not have been calling (20).

These are hard decisions for fourteen-year-olds to make, but the greater step she took in quitting her home demonstrates how the difficulties of the house have led her to undertake positions as a sole provider and caretaker of herself. This experience influences Fofo's outlook on life and, despite her glaring weakness, gives her the voice of adulthood. As Darko puts it:

> A part of Fofo was and would always be the fourteen years that she was; but the harshness of life on the streets had also made a premature adult of part of her. She was both a child and an adult and could act like both, talk like both, think like both and feel like both.what she wanted to do was to say a whole lot of things to hurt Maa Tsuru, and cause her pain. But she held back (22).

Fofo, fourteen, is trapped and struggling, existing in two stages simultaneously. As a kid, she was girded by ignorance, vulnerability, and innocence but also clothed in the knowledge of adulthood. Her animosity towards her mother stems from her losing safety from her mother and family as a child. This unpleasant truth exposes her vulnerability to the dangers of the streets and predators. Her decision to leave home represents a significant failure of the extended family system, which is mostly fostered by communal settlements such as the compound house. For children like her, being pushed to the point of abandoning her own home exemplifies the misery these institutions may provide. Households like Fofo's, which is defined as poor, may make little or no effort to ensure the well-being of other members of the house. The sense of helplessness that one may feel while sharing space with others may lead to frustration. As a result, members of such households are compelled to adopt radical steps to address existential concerns.

3.5 The Issue of Ontological Security/Insecurity of the Compound House

When we analyze how characters such as Maa Tsuru, Baby T, and Fofo could not rely on their house for any sense of security, the topic of the home's potential to provide ontological security arises. As a "quasi-homeowner", the eldest member of the household, Naa Yomo, appears to have relished and benefited from her home's ontological security to the point where she refused to move to a better settlement given by her children. She maintains that because she survived the Great Earthquake of 1939 in the house, she is unable to relocate to another settlement. As the house's eldest member, she has a stronger sense of security than some younger members. She believes she is entitled to everyone's regard or veneration, as well as their courtesy. This is seen in how she greets Ordarley and Kabria when they first enter the compound house. The first time readers

encounter her in the novel, she had interrupted Odarley and Maa Tsuru's speech just so she will be given some respect:

> "Hey!" an old voice croaked from the direction of the room almost opposite Maa Tsuru's, to the left, "girl, are your manners gone on holidays? Have you heard of something called greeting"? Ordarley turned her head sharply to trade an insult, but mellowed immediately at the sight of the utterer. Naa Yomo, at eighty-seven, was the oldest member of the household, and mother and grandmother and great grandmother to someone and everyone. If the washing woman did not appreciate her courtesy for whatever reason, Naa Yomo, obviously expected it, for whatever reason. Ordarley went over and greeted her politely (19)

Small acts of respect, such as greeting, validate Naa Yomo's authority as a homeowner and privileges. Later in the story, her position in the family is clarified and expanded. She is depicted as someone who "always sat there and summoned, and when you didn't respond fast enough, she dealt with you, "She was known to reproach anyone she felt had to be reproached" (151). This is a total display of confidence, power, and dominance, none of which can be stated of Maa Tsuru. She is very assertive in her confrontations and willing to be interviewed about domestic matters. When Kabria and Vickie approach her, she plays the role of the know-it-all, and Darko describes it as "feeding them a truckload of information." In addition to her grandmother and housekeeping duties, she also serves as an informant, a historian, and a "self-acclaimed ethnographer." She portrays herself as capable of overcoming the problems she encountered in her house, and she boldly speaks of surviving earthquakes and the deaths of five of her children. Her dominance is evident in how she effortlessly perceives the need to remind the people she addresses that she is the house's oldest and most knowledgeable member. She is proud to say things like,

> This very spot here where this stool of mine sits is proper Accra. Did you know that? And somewhere beneath this earth is my umbilical cord. The first two teeth in my mouth grew here. The last will come off here. That was what I told my children (88).

Maa Tsuru and her children, on the other hand, may have a different perspective on their home's ontological security features. Based on the events of the novel, one may claim that the protagonists' house has failed to give them a sense of security. Aside from the fact that Maa Tsuru is intimidated, disregarded, and treated like a "leper" (19) at home, which causes her to coil herself up with her infants and shut herself in her chamber for hours, close relatives like Onko remind her of the failure and terrors of entrusting a family member with your child. She has lost faith in whatever potential security system her family house may have installed for her as a child.

When readers first meet her, she is estranged from her family and "submerged in sadness" (19). She is crippled by the fear of Poison and suspects he may harm her any time. This devastating feeling results in shutting herself out from the world. The fear she experiences is so great that she advices Fofo to leave Accra,

> - "Go away, Fofo", She managed between tears. "Go! Fofo's face clouded fiercely. "Is history repeating itself here? Are you sacking me mother because of him?"
>
> - "No! no! I am not sacking you from here. Not from this room. Not from this house. I mean to say go away. From Accra, if possible, Fofo. Go somewhere far away from here where he can never find you"
>
> - "what are you talking about, mother? Is it Poison? What does he want with me?"

- “oh child, go away!” Maa Tsuru sobbed, “Go…because they are animals. They know no mercy and my hands are tied. Please. Go!” (22)

She sounds like a mother who has given up hope of protecting the safety of herself and her children. Tsuru's sense of insecurity stems not only from Poison's threats but also from the trauma of being abandoned and beaten by her children's father. Also, this inborn sense of insecurity evolved, from the insecurities of being a cursed child to being a pregnant teenager with an irresponsible lover. When you consider her cursed identity, it's easy to see how her home could become dangerous for her in the future. Baby T's tragic end began in the same house she had called home. Her home failed to provide her with any sense of security and finally contributed to her death since she was abused by her stepfather and raped by her distant uncle, Onko. As Tsuru's first daughter, she is initially preyed on by her mother's lover in her mother's absence, showing the frailties and weaknesses of the system her mother may have set in place to protect her (if there were any). Kpakpo causes significant harm to the youngster, and Darko takes readers through the harrowing process:

Kpakpo took Baby T’s hand and sat on the bed. He placed Baby T before him and signaled her to remove her dress. Baby T obeyed as though in a trance. He savoured Baby T’s maturing body hungrily with his eyes. Then he brushed the back of one hand over Baby T’s breasts and drew down her pants. They fell to the floor. Baby T stepped out of them mechanically. She didn’t wait to be told. Kpakpo held the back of her tiny lower waist with one hand and placed the other hand between Baby T’s thighs. Fofo shook lightly. Then as she watched Baby T being guided onto the bed by their new father, she shook violently (134).

The tragedy does not only affect Baby T but also Fofo, who watched her sister's struggle at a young age. The fact that a child has been abused in her home indicates how insecure her environment is and how vulnerable she is too traumatic experiences. She becomes a victim of molestation, which opens the door for more sexual predators like Onko to pursue her. Onko, the trusted one, eventually becomes a rapist, a child rapist. The trauma manifests itself in both mother and daughter. While Baby T suffers from both physical and mental suffering, her mother is crushed by her guilt for not offering enough protection for her girls as she watches the consequences of her mistakes:

> She began to clean Baby T with a warm towel and wept silently as she did. They were tears for herself more than Baby T. When did he do it? Where? Baby T lay there motionless, crying. The pain was distinct in her eyes. The trauma she had suffered had left prints on her very person and her soul. She was in great physical and even greater mental pain. If the good Lord gave her long life it was obvious, she was going to require lots of strength and love to rebuild her dignity, her selflove and trust (136).

There has been a breach of confidence in the system that offered Onko as an uncle. The three, mother and girls, have suffered because of this betrayal. The children were now dealing with issues of self-esteem, mental health, and poverty. The tragic occurrences left indelible traces, and the compound house depicts the collective image of this tragedy. When the house becomes a place of abuse and trauma, the concept of the home as a haven is compromised. The children can no longer trust or depend on the people or family in the compound house. There is no sense of continuity. This stew of pain and experience yields no hopeful identity, especially for a child like Baby T. Because Baby T has been raped, she is vulnerable to the social misunderstanding of labeling girls

like her as "spoiled". This paves way for Onko to continue his obsession with her and eventually murders her.

Similarly, for being the very home that vomited her onto the streets, Fofo is filled with disgust, disdain, and disappointment for her extended family home. Just like her mother and sister, she also has horrific memories of the damages caused by her mother, stepfather, and Onko. She ultimately prefers being on the streets to being home with her mother. She tells her:

> "I don't like coming to see you, mother" she began slowly, "Odarley's mother sacks her like a fowl when she goes to see her. She says Odarley is a thief. You don't sack me when I come to see you. Yet I don't like coming to see you because I don't like what I feel when I come to see you, mother. I don't" (Darko,25).

Fofo may have ended up on the streets because she lost faith and trust in her home's ability to provide her with security and a sense of belonging. Ironically, a house with numerous blood relatives is unable to provide enough security for some of its members. The longer Tsuru stays at home, the more readers notice the dramatic impact of her family's insecurity.

Tsuru's initial appearance in the text is a picture of a lady who lacks any sense of joy or comfort in her surroundings. Because she is hiding in her room, the only person in the home who can face her is Naa Yomo. She informs her:

> I have known you from the moment you were born. Yet today, I did not sit here to shout your name to summon to you. I rose from my seat and ambled to your door. I'll tell you why. You have locked yourself up inside your room. You come out only when you have to. This household regards you as a leper. How you and your

> two little sons survive in there puzzles me. Now I am telling you this, it cannot go on like that. It must stop (152).

The severity of Maa Tsuru's state in the house is seen in the passage. Whiles Naa Yomo feels confident enough to address the issues, she, on the other hand, hides in her room and is alienated by the members of the house, giving her no chance to open or discuss her issues with them. Darko brings out the parallels in the novel by focusing on Naa Yomo and Maa Tsuru's individual experiences. She, therefore, portrays the compound house as a space that can house two or parallel situations in terms of security, thus its security can be unreliable for characters like Maa Tsuru and children, whiles Naa Yomo can confidently rely on its ontological security.

3.6 Opposition and Inclusion of other Chronotopes and Spaces

There are some places in the novel where significant events may have occurred. The presence of these other chronotopes is crucial in understanding the essence and shortcomings of the compound house chronotope. These spaces are unique in the stories they tell and collectively contribute to the novel's success. Though unique, some of these spaces may have certain similarities with Maa Tsuru's compound house in terms of what they offer to the individual inhabitants. The connectedness of the spaces is relevant to the overall themes of the novel.

3.6.1 The Slum

In *Faceless*, Darko focuses on one city which is in contrast with what she does in Beyond the Horizon. In her maiden novel, she moves her characters in and out of Accra, the capital city, to Naka and Germany. This movement seems relevant to the understanding of how the principal character, Mara, navigates through life from a small village to the slums of Accra and the brothels

of Germany. Darko's portrayal of Accra in Beyond the Horizon is limited to the affairs of the slum. She drew a deep contrast between the seemingly utopic village Mara was conversant with and the dystopic nature of her new neighborhood in Accra. The contrast is shocking to Mara as she gives readers a vivid description of the so-called city home Akobi had promised:

> To say I was shocked when Akobi brought me to his home in the city would be an understatement. I was stunned. Our homes in the village were of mud and leaves but no one needed to tell a visitor they were homes. Akobi had to tell me this was his home before I believed it. First, there wasn't the group of huts with large compounds about them and backyard gardens that I was used to in the village, but a cluster of shabbily–constructed corrugated-iron sheet shelters that looked like chicken houses, while all about and between them shallow, open gutters wound their way. In these gutters, due to lack of any drainage system, all the water from dirty washing and bathing, and urine too collected and stayed until it evaporated. And since the rate of evaporation was slower than the rate at which the waste waters collected, the resulting standing water not only stank but also bred nasty shades of algae and generations of large fat mosquitoes that greedily fed on our blood at night. As if that wasn't enough, barely fifty yards away there was an unhygienic public toilet beside which was the area's only public rubbish dump.
>
> (Darko, 8)

As Mara details her descriptions relating them to mostly sight and smell, one quickly settles with the image of a highly uncomfortable, unhygienic, and depressing state any slum could ever be. This image of a deteriorating dirty space is again depicted in *Faceless,* making the slum a significant

part of the urbanization of Accra, as portrayed by Darko. She does not sway far in her descriptions of the slum is *Faceless.*

When the scene opens in *Faceless*, once again, readers encounter the slums of Accra. However, Darko introduces readers to other types of possible settlements in Accra. We come across Kabria's villa home types as a great contrast to the slum and the compound house. Prakash in *Noir Urbanism* calls the slum a space of "miserable tenements", and associates the concept of slumification with dystopia, infant deaths, sinister alleyways, prostitutes, beggars, fear, insecurity, and violence (11). A significant aspect of urbanization is the growth of slums (Macapagal, 9), thus Accra as an urban space is responsible for the production of slums. Slums are the typical example of the social production of space. According to Bolay, "The extension of slums in developing countries is a product of 20th and 21st-century urban growth and represents the very essence of the third world city" (285). Thus, slums expose the poverty and social issues that tag along with developing countries. The misery of Sodom and Gomorrah, a real-life slum in the city of Accra is partly captured in Darko's reproduction of the slum as represented in the novel. Readers' first encounter with Fofo, the fourteen-year-old heroine, is in the laid-out descriptions of how she spends her night at the squatters' enclave in Sodom and Gomorrah. Fofo is away from home starting her hustle as a street girl just like many other young children who had traveled far from home because of financial challenges. The concept of the slum is far away from the supposedly cozy notion of a home. However, to these children, the notion of home is far away from both the slum and their actual houses. To them, a home must be the strong presence of a mother figure whose love and care surpasses materialism. One boy on the streets had said:

> "My dream", began the boy, "is to be able to go home one day to visit my mother and see the look of joy on her face at the sight of me. I want to be able to sleep

> beside her. I wish her to tell me she was happy I came to visit her. Whenever I visit her, she doesn't let me stay long before she asks me politely to leave. She never has a smile for me. She is always in a hurry to see my back. Sometimes I cannot help thinking that maybe she never has a smile for me because the man she made me with, that is my father, probably also never had a smile for her" (2).

Just like Fofo, the problem of these street children is linked with family dysfunctions. The slum has proven to be risky for these vulnerable children and shares some similarities with the discomfort and disorganization of the family homes of the children. For instance, following the events in her home, if Fofo is exposed to rapists and sexual predators in the streets, she is equally at risk in her own family house. There were other sexual predators in the form of uncles and stepfathers hiding behind the pretense of family members while molesting and abusing the children of the household. For a child to choose the harshness of the streets over her home only tells how damaging and destructive her home could be. Ironically, Fofo, a native of Accra and has a family home in the typical Ga community becomes equally homeless as the people who move from distant destinations to settle in the slum.

"Slum life" exposes their fragilities as they force their way into the whole conundrum of surviving in the streets, and the slum chronotope becomes a space where both children and adults with troubling past aggregates. The messiness of the slum is a representation of the personal demons and struggles the people of the slum deal with. The presence of the slum in the novel voices out the themes of survival and desperation. Like the threshold, that ushers the child into a new world, beginning or experienced, the slum chronotope for the child becomes a space that offers the complexities of a child living an adult life. We learn about the lifestyle of Fofo and her peers as Darko describes their typical night as:

> Boys and girls slept together, and did things with each other, many times under the influence of alcohol, wholly unconscious of what they were doing or with whom. Such was the evil life on the streets. She looked to her left. The shoeshine boy who had come so strong on to her the previous night at the video centre was still fast asleep and stark naked. The iced water seller to his left was also completely naked. Odarley put two and two together and it made sense why she still had her pants on. In their drunken stupor, the shoeshine boy mistook the iced water girl for her (5).

These kids do not have the luxury of receiving sex education and precautions about substance abuse. The slum space becomes their little world with no rules and boundaries.

3.6.2 Kabria's Home

Kabria's home stands in great contrast to Maa Tsuru's home in terms of physique, class, space, and relationship. Her home is a modest one situated in a middle-class suburb of Accra (10). Unlike Tsuru's compound house, the villa type of house where Kabria lives is a home for a nuclear family, and it is shielded from any interference from extended family members. Here, privacy between family members is ensured. Kabria's connection to her home may be born from a matrimonial perspective. Even though it isn't her birthplace, she shares an equally deeper connection with her home, like Tsuru. She is a mother who seems content with her life. She is a foil to Maa Tsuru, and though may experience certain shortcomings, appears to be the model wife and mother:

> Married sixteen years to Adade, her architect husband, Kabria passionately loved her job with MUTE, a non–governmental organization that was basically into documentation and information build up. And with equal fevor she loathed the figure that appeared on her monthly salary slip. But topping it all was her

> shamelessness about her special attachment to her old hand-me-down-thank-you-very-much-Adade 1975 VW Beetle nicknamed Creamy (10).

Kabria's world is different from Tsuru's, and her home alone brings out the profound contrast of homes Darko has been hammering on. The compound house certainly plays a prominent role in Tsuru's depressing life, offering her painful memories of a cursed birth and terrible love affairs. This is not the case for Kabria. Her home does not represent any sort of horrors for her. Memories of her husband, children, and daily morning hustles are the only ones registered as her home experience. The most important aspect of the house is its capacity to provide separate rooms for both young and old occupants. Unlike the compound house, every room in the villa household is usually designed for specific purposes. For instance, it may have rooms apportioned for sleeping, eating, wardrobe, cooking, and relaxing. This demonstrates the presence of respect and privacy the luxury of being in a villa house brings along. Unlike Fofo, Kabria's teenage daughter Obea enjoys a secured roof over her head and the comfort of her bed in the private space, which is a luxury for every teenager.

Darko highlights significant spaces of this home. For instance, the kitchen is burdened with several activities. Aside from it being the space for the preparation of food, it is the place where crucial discussions between mother, housemaid, and children occur. The dining table scene seems to be more chaotic than every other space. Here, while setting up breakfast, Kabria must engage her husband and children in different activities. It is at the table that we learn so much of Adade's behavior:

> He never came to the breakfast table without a newspaper in his hand. To Adade, that would be akin to wearing shoes without socks. So that, sometimes, he would rather re-read a newspaper he had already read, than not read at all. His motto was

> that old news was better than no news. And if his head was buried in a newspaper and Kabria asked a question, all she got was a nod or a shake of the head for an answer. Sometimes stubbornness and Frustrations pushed her on to persist till she got him to open his mouth. (14).

This space holds too much activity to become a memorable space for the family. Obea's connection with her bedroom contrasts that of Fofo's. Having enjoyed her privacy, she also enjoys the security her room provides. It served as a place where she could hide things from her mother. These kinds of spaces and experiences are not seen in Tsuru's compound house.

Kabria's home as a threshold chronotope for her and her children is the beam of hope that Tsuru's story is missing. Readers get to read about all the experiences Fofo is missing as a teenager as Kabria demonstrates model motherhood for her teenage daughter. Issues about sex and STDs are discussed between mother-daughter, prepping the latter for responsible adulthood.

Darko proves beyond doubt that not only are the two homes different in size and physique but the people and the kind of relationships they have with each other stand in great contrast. It is necessary to understand that the two mothers have different backgrounds, and as far as the story of Maa Tsuru's childhood goes, she cannot be blamed for some of her conditions. Naturally, a child is not responsible for where or how she is born and to whom she is born. These factors are essential in shaping the future of the child. Thus, Tsuru's background played a role in her upbringing. Nonetheless, one can posit that she cannot be excused for the unhealthy conditions and atmosphere she raised her children. Certainly, she is not expected to have some luxury as Kabria, but Tsuru's long stay in her compound house home seems to have subjected her to providing less for her children.

While social classes and their polarizations can partly be blamed for the status of the welfare of Tsuru's family, one should not overlook the anomalies born out of this system. A poor home does more than affect the finances of its inhabitants. Tsuru's worries are not the same as Kabria's. Even though they both struggle with different existential challenges, Kabria is deemed as better off in life than Tsuru.

3.6.3 The Salon and The Drinking Spot

The chronotope of the parlors and salon is charged with many activities and encounters. According to Bakhtin, the parlors and Salons are "where the intrigues are spun, denouements occur, and finally, this is where dialogues happen, something that acquires extraordinary importance in the novel, revealing the character, ideas, and passion of the heroes" (247). Keunen is also of the view that parlors and salons are settings of "accidental novelties" and "stimulating subjects" which generates encounters (44). Of course, Bakhtin's salons and parlors were nineteenth-century rooms in European novels and may not be physically like a twenty-first century hair salon in African stories. Nonetheless, its essence of being a set of social encounters remains and automatically renders the Hair salon in *Faceless* as a typical example of such chronotopes.

The Ghanaian hair salon has a landmark reputation both in public and private areas, and though it cannot be considered as a home in a general sense (in some rare occasions, salon owners or workers' attachment to it may be considered as a home for them), it can be a place where relationships are established. The salon in *Faceless* served two purposes, thus as a crime scene and a hub of information and gossip. The hair salon in the novel is distinguished from the other proper or n classy salons as Darko takes the readers through the squalor on which it is gracefully located. The salon under the spotlight is first a wooden structure with a very unhealthy and unhygienic surrounding and in a deplorable state:

> A crudely dug gutter by the side of the kiosk, which was infested with algae, stank pungently, betraying the litres of urine fed it each day. It added to the misery of the environment. On impulse, Kabria entered the Kiosk. The inside was painted a lither blue. Portraits of women sporting various styles of braid, decorated parts of the wall. A massive sony casset tape recorder was blasting Kojo Antwi's "Tom and Jerry". And for the heads bopping up and down to the beat, it was business as usual—filth, stench and all (59).

The images created by Darko emit a noticeably miserable place to dump a dead body. Interestingly, not only does the misery of the place correlate with the state of Baby T's body, but her entire life in her family home. Even though she was murdered in cold blood, the intention behind dumping her body behind a kiosk was clear; the body needed to be found in a miserable place. The theme of a miserable society/community resonates strongly in the novel, and Darko uses these chronotopes to bring it out. Posing as a hub of information, and in this case gossip, readers learn more about what may seem irrelevant about Kabria's investigation. We meet the owner of the salon, who is stressed out as she gets irritated by Kabria's questions. There is an impression of unrest exhibited through the reproachful way she addressed Kabria. In a matter of minutes, the owner of the salon had willfully disclosed her private information to Kabria to prove a point of how miserable she is:

> …so don't come and trouble me this Tuesday morning. Don't come and make somebody's palaver my palaver by force. Not one cedi do I get from the man who fathered my little girl. The only thing that man ever gave her was his last name. it cost him not a pesewa. Yet he made sure somehow, I paid for it. He came and quaffed six free bottles of beer at my expense. Six! Bought solely from my sweat and toil. After which he did the disappearing acts from our lives, never to return

> again. So please, don't come and add to my woes. If a street girl's body was found behind my salon, so what? As for me, what should I do? Do I look to you like the one who killed her? (61).

Darko once again communicates the theme of a miserable society here. She portrays the existing relationship between a miserable abode or environment and its inhabitants. Thus, she uses places like the compound house, the slum, and the salon to tell the story of the depressing state of her characters. Ultimately, for Kabria to fit in and be accepted as a member of this group just so she can obtain information about the death of Baby T, she creates a fake situation for herself as she wins the salon owner to her side. She painfully tells the salon owner:

> "Sister, I have two to deal with. Two! Who both depend wholly on me. Two!" The sense of solidarity Kabria was hoping for kindled like a candle flame in the woman. "You too were cursed with a foolish and irresponsible man?" Kabria's heart churned for Adade. The poor man was definitely other things. But foolish and irresponsible! No! That he definitely wasn't. Yet *aluta*, as they say, must *continua*…He married me oh, then after our first child, disappeared and came back four years later…And I have to care four two children all by myself. Ah, sister, you have reminded me of my pain. Ah!" (62).

The salon and its environs make a statement in the story. It reflects a community/society where people must coexist with filth, crime, murder, stress while at the same time struggling to make ends meet. The bar or the drinking spot also appears briefly in book two of the novel. It is called Agboo Ayee, which is loosely translated as "no pain, no gain". Despite all the other conventional roles the drinking spot may play in society, Darko creates a concrete relationship between that space and violence. A drinking spot like the salon is a prominent landmark in some communities.

It is known for its ability to generate social relations as a forum for political, social, and sports discussions. Whiles the salon in the novel is strongly connected to the feminine figure, the bar or the spot in the novel is more inclined towards masculinity. Nonetheless, they share the common feature of being a hub for conversation and information. In the novel, Darko highlights the destructive aspect of the drinking spot but links it to violence. The first time Agboo Ayee is mentioned in the novel, readers get the impression of a very drunk Kwei, preparing an assault on Maa Tsuru for getting pregnant again. Supposedly, the akpeteshie (strong drink) he buys from the spot is to perform as a booster for him to carry out this deed of violence. Thus, the place and the services they provide symbolize as a vehicle for constructing and manipulating cultural systems, values, interpersonal relationships, and behavioral norms (social and cultural aspects of drinking). Kwei's concept of violence is only achievable through gulping down several tots of alcohol. For him Agboo Ayee, is a place of transition where he is transformed from a sober man to a violent man, a place that empowers men like him to carry out difficult task, a place that helps him to prepare for the uncertain. In a conversation with the bartender, he asked; "You want free minced meat to chop?" (123) this officially rendered the act of beating Maa Tsuru as a premeditated one. Ultimately after achieving this act, he returns to the bar to brag about it:

> Then he returned to Agboo Ayee and told all there that, with immediate effect, they had better start calling him Dr.Kwei, because he had single handedly and very cost effectively terminated an unwanted pregnancy. (124)

Without thinking of the consequences of his actions and the nature of the crime he had committed; Kwei is not hesitant to announce himself to his audience at the Agboo Ayee. There is room for judgments for the audience regarding how Kwei saw this act as bravado and needed to

be applauded for. This also portrays the kind of conversations people hold in a space like the drinking spot.

Other male characters like Maa Tsuru's uncle also patronized the idea of going into Agboo Ayee to get a booster for the violence he was to perform against Kwei as an act of revenge for beating her niece. Darko tells this part of the story with some humor:

> Her uncle however decided to be the man that he was and boasted of going to teach that Kwei man a bitter lesson Then he announced pompously, "I am going to get myself battle ready first" and headed to *Agboo Ayee.* He drank a few tots too many, returned to the house and mumbled that he was going to change the blue shorts he was wearing into a red pair because, "my eyes are red!" at his door, he stumbled on the short stairs, threw up as he went face down flat on the floor, landed in his vomit, and slept soundly there for three months (124).

Thus, Agboo Ayee's impact on both men is represented differently by Darko. Whiles Kwei becomes a violent man after going into the spot, Tsuru's uncle comes out as "a drunk" who falls asleep in his vomit. Nonetheless, both men had entered the spot with one purpose: in search of a booster for violence.

Kpakpo eventually joins the party when readers also find him going into Agboo Ayee in search of both an appetizer and aphrodisiac to "face" Maa Tsuru. Even though the blue kiosk has been established as a temporal place for socialization, we find Kpakpo seeking refuge from it when he falls out with Maa Tsuru:

> For the past almost three weeks, its first customer of the day had been Kpakpo. He was always the last man to leave. There was even talk that sometimes, for lack

> of a place to go, Kpakpo slept right beside the gutter behind the kiosk. Since he walked out of Maa Tsuru's life, the more he was determined to stay out of it, the more he realized he grown attached to her (192).

Interestingly, not only are these men a significant part of Tsuru's life, but they are also immediately and remotely connected to the compound House. There is a link between Agboo Ayee and the compound house by these men. To solve or tackle issues facing them in their homes, these men resulted to Agboo Ayee first before going home to face situations. It may not have the same conventional roles as the compound house and may be different in terms of structure and space, but there is a strong relationship between Agboo Ayee and the masculine figures of the home in the novel.

3.6.4 Kwei's House and The Brothel

Aside Maa Tsuru and Kabria's houses, two other houses were mentioned, that's Kwei's house and the brothel. Kwei's family home is relevant because it hosted significant events in the novel. Though it was not clearly stated as a compound house, readers get the impression of a home with several occupants. One of the most significant events in the novel was the scene of Kwei's moaning mother. The particular scene, ushers readers into the love history of Maa Tsuru and the father of her older children. Thus, chapter fourteen of the novel opens in Kwei's family home with a wailing mother who is very disturbed by the news of her son getting a curse girl pregnant:

> The mother shook with fury. "Shut your big mouth up. You call yourself a man? You think you understand the world better than I do? Yes. She cursed the baby's father. Your lover's father. But who told you she stops there? Idiot! Let me tell you what she did. She went on and further cursed all of his descendants too. That was

> what she did. All of his descendants…the whole family will have nothing to do with this pregnancy. Nothing!" Then fetching a cup of water, she washed her hands at Kwei's feet and declared, "see? I have washed my hands of you too" (119).

Kwei's mother makes it clear to him that their family will not accept Maa Tsuru. This goes far to prove that in an established family system where the home means so much more than a shelter, the home's identity and reputation are crucial and contribute a lot to how society perceives one. For Kwei, it was a critical and life-changing decision to open to his mother about his interest in Tsuru. However, it is such a decision and choice that made his mother antagonistic towards Tsuru. Tsuru's identity as cursed precedes her and though the act was something of the past, people like Kwei's mother are still very cautious and very aware of the supposed severity of the curse. For mothers like her, protecting a son also means making sure he chooses the right lover, at least one who is not cursed. Her role in the family home has already been established, thus in the novel, she is seen as a strong matriarchal voice and stands in contrast with Maa Tsuru's mother. She is a mother who seems concerned about the life choices of her son and is ready to shield him against external forces. Unlike Kpakpo, Kwei decided not to share Tsuru's home with her but stayed in his own family house, proving the fact that he has made stronger connections with his family home.

Other events like the assault on Maa Tsuru occurred in the same house. Kwei's show of irresponsibility is also demonstrated in how he mauls his pregnant lover, with the attempt of aborting their pregnancy:

> He pounced on her like a cat on an unsuspecting mouse and began a vicious pounding spree. He pounded Maa Tsuru with his fists, landing the blows anywhere and everywhere and on every part of her pregnant body. The daylight went out of

> Maa Tsuru. She began to bleed. Kwei grinned. He pulled her up by one arm, held her by the back of her neck and pushed her out of the house. (124)

This scene is significant in Darko's treatment of domestic violence in the novel. Also, Tsuru's security is clearly not assured in Kwei's home, and one easily sympathizes with her for having to deal with the trauma.

Despite its appeal as a source of identity and good memories, the compound house may also be a source of immense harm. The house registers horror for children like Fofo and her siblings as a result of their tragic experiences. One may argue that the house provided them a family to belong to while also robbing them of their childhood joys. Maa Tsuru, on the other hand, refuses to lose ties with her home despite the problems she has endured there. It offers her both refuge and a sense of belonging. For characters like Naa Yomo, the house is an inheritance from her forefathers that she will not give up. Onko, Kpakpo, and Kwei symbolized the house's unsettling events.

3.7. The Compound House and The Church in *Asoreba*

Asoreba is a Kumawood film that made waves in the early 2000s and has been recognized as a Ghanaian classic. The title, which means "church member" gives a clue or acts as a foreshadowing of the religious motif embedded in the film. Although the film grounds itself firmly in the concept of religion, the church space, known to be the place of worship successfully dialogues with the compound houses present in the film. Thus, it expands the scope of religion and extends it to social and domestic issues. A general observation of many Kumawood films seems to repeat this notion of bringing the controversial theme of religion while addressing social issues in both earlier and later works. These films are concerned about portraying the Christian religion and its values as the

standard way of living. There are collections of Kumawood stories that are foregrounded in exhibiting Christian religion and values as a solution to social and spiritual issues. As a result, the films excite religious passions and criticisms (Asare). Despite the different genres these films touch on, there is an effort by filmmakers to mention the Christian religion casually or to make it take center stage. Asare argues that: Religion and religious themes feature prominently in the Ghanaian/Nigerian video films. Irrespective of the genre, religious content is more likely to appear on screen before the film ends. In most cases one is more likely to see in the epilogue "To God Be the Glory" or a similar phrase. It could also be biblical text indicating the central message in the film. Some of these religious indicators are narrow and tilted to one specific religious tradition-Christianity (83).

Asoreba tells the story of Asabea, a women's fellowship leader. In the first scene, the film addresses the theme of religion. It shows the main character in a congregation with other church women. The scene immediately shifts to Asabea's compound house, where there is the symbolic act of entering into the threshold. The entrance to the compound house is significant to understanding the barrier between the church space and the domestic space.

As a chronotope, the compound house is where behaviors linked to domesticity evolve. In this constellation of time and space, the exposure of human behaviors, thus strengths and weakness, is inevitable. In the specific context of the compound house chronotope, there is the emergence of social organization that tends to form identity and behaviors. Within the walls of the compound house, the main character assumes specific roles and takes on a different identity unknown to the outside world. The threshold thus becomes an important feature of this chronotope. The threshold is a literal and figurative representation of the end of Asabea's religious life and the beginning of her aggressive and abusive personality. The threshold of the house not only ushers viewers into the

physical make-up of it but also the transformation of the principal character. Before entering the threshold of the house, Asabea, still in a religious mood, confronts a church member for missing service and dressing indecently. As a church leader, Asabea deems it a responsibility to carry on the role of a mother to right the members who do not practice the religion well. She tells the church member:

> -Ýou have disappointed me. A married woman dressed like this? A women's fellowship member who is almost naked! Are you happy with your appearance? Imagine the number of men you 've tempted! A fasting man will surely be induced. Are you doing the right thing or not? Tempt not others, as declared the bible. Change your ways before the D-day. You are not regular at church so how do you benefit from the good teachings…do see me later. Just look at your exposed bums! (Scene Two)

Asabea is obsessed with being projected as the perfect religious leader outside her house. Thus, she regards her identity as a women's leader as something that does not belong in the confines of her home. For her, the role in the church needs to be showcased to the outside world and the church. The church's specific environment becomes an opposing chronotope to the compound house. Through Asabea's action, it is understood that the two spaces may form two different opposing characters. In church, she portrays herself as "holy", but at home, she is the evil wife, tenant, and neighbor. Her home shields her away from her weaknesses and multiple personalities. Her initial appearance in the scenes, coupled with her preaching of adherence to Christian values remains the image she desired to be projected outside her home. However, her relationship with her family and immediate neighbors in the closed environment of the compound house has generated the need for the story to be told and addressed as a social problem. Sibley and Lowe have argued that "Families

may attempt to close off the home from the outside world, but problems identified as instances of socio-spatial conflict at the urban, regional and global scales have their counterparts in the domestic sphere" (189).

The compound house is subjected to the clash between privacy and exposure. Although it is closed off to the outside world, the members within the space do not enjoy a private life. By demonstrating two opposing characters, she brings into focus the concept of religion and hypocrisy.

The film's stand on Christian values is intertwined with the traditional gender roles of the man and woman. When Asabea enters her house, she transposes from a good Christian woman into an abusive wife. The scene shows how she stops at the entrance of her room to confront her husband violently over the bananas he was eating. Her attitude is a total transformation from the Christian woman who counseled her members. Thus, her going into the compound house space exposes her behavior. Asabea's familiarity with the spaces of her home grants her the comfortability to express herself in any form without the restraints from the outside world. Here, she is in her own space, and her life as an abusive wife is closed off to the world. Despite the presence of other unrelated members in the house, Asabea's relationship with her home does not show any form of constraint or limits her from exhibiting certain behaviors. However, Scholars like Ward believe that home can be both a place of constraints and opportunities. He argues that:

> The relationship between the house and the lives it enfolds is complex. Now-as in the past- we choose, build, or alter our dwellings in order to meet some of our needs beyond the basic one of shelter. In turn, because our homes are physical spaces, they impose constraints on us just as they create opportunities for us. In a sense the home is a theatre for domestic experience, the stage on which we enact

> much of our long drama of our lives. As a bounded space it sets limits on our actions (3).

Asabea is a tenant in her compound house. Unlike the traditional family compound house where the members are related by blood, the tenants here are not related in any way, and any form of association is by choice. As the film progresses from scene to scene, we come to terms with the structure of the rooms. Due to the positioning of the camera, the viewer is limited to a specific space in the house. That is the courtyard, the corridors, the entrance, three rooms, and the kitchen (which is sometimes not captured). Viewers are introduced to the spatial morphology of Asabea's home through the movements of the camera. The camera as the communicator and the quasi-narrator achieves the act of showing the viewer Asabea's compound house 's physical makeup by following the characters in and out of the house.

Movements are the producers of interaction in the film. Thus, there is a lot of movements amongst tenants or characters. Aside from invectives and dialogues, viewers depend on the characters' movement to understand the relationships between tenants. For instance, Asabea's neighbor moves to Asabea's front door or portion of the house to introduce her boyfriend to her. This act was a sign of reverence at the early stages of the friendship between the young neighbor and old Asabea.

It is impossible to think of the compound house as a private space due to its architecture. The proximity of the rooms makes it easy for people to interfere in others' affairs. A tenant's only confines are mostly just the single rooms. Nonetheless, there is a claim over territories and some spaces. Crossing over from one person's door to another was significant to the development of the story. It is also a way to understanding the individual's privacy and claims to territories.

The crossover to a neighbor's territory was mostly to communicate and deliberate on issues concerning the neighbors and the house, or to spark conflict. In spaces like the compound house, privacy and boundaries are essential. To some scholars who are concerned about the domestic space and privacy:

> The concept of privacy involves boundaries if not barriers, lines separating the personal from the public, mine from yours, ours from theirs. Within these boundaries lies the zone of private matters, beyond them the world of general concern. These boundaries may be tangible- walls and fences. They may also be customary but nonetheless real, the comfy chair always kept for grandma. Still others may simply be implicit in human relationships, as in the respect we pay by not intruding the grief of others. Whatever the situation private matters are inevitably thought to be separate from those of broader interests. We speak of them defensively as being private from other things (Ward, 5).

Interestingly, the courtyard, which is an open area, and not necessarily apportioned for private use, served as a place for both unity and violence. The courtyard is significant in understanding the progressions and dynamics of relationships between tenants. Through acting, the characters demonstrate how the courtyard represents a neutral ground. For instance, characters have shared moments like cooking together, playing games together, having conversations, and engaging in fights. As the film progresses, the space allows for more interactions, being it verbal or bodily.

3.7.1 Domestic Violence, Conflict and Ontological Security in *Asoreba*.

Home may represent a response to ontological security (Dupuis and Thorns). It may provide a secure base for its members while protecting their sense being. However, in some homes, members may not enjoy the security a home supposedly brings. There may not be any security at all. In a home-like compound house in the film, there is a growing tension between members of the same family and tenants. Whiles characters like Asabea may seem to demonstrate confidence in the security of the home, other characters like her husband and Afrakomaa, are threatened by this confidence. Thus, Asabea, throughout the film, antagonizes her husband and other members of the home.

Bobie, her husband, is unemployed and a heavy drinker. His state of being an unemployed husband in the home contributes to most of his insecurity issues. Constantly, he is reminded by his wife's words or actions about how miserable he is. For instance, she keeps calling her marriage a failed one due to her husband's poverty. The use of invectives by characters, especially Asabea is rampant in the film and a cause of insecurity in the home. The constant use of invectives toward the individual creates a problem of insecurity and unrest. According to Dupuis, ontological security is a deep psychological need (27). The use of invectives, however, preys on the psychological well-being of the individual. Ntiakoh's research on the use of invectives in Kumawood films, she sites Agyekum's explanation on invectives as:

> Invectives take the form of "linguistic warfare" between participants in a communicative situation. In this metaphor, the participants are to be perceived as the combatants and the weapon is the language they use to psychologically affront and hurt the feelings of one another. The abusive expressions throw quasi

> psychological bombs at the hearts of the opponent and intend to damage their emotions (31).

Asabea's insults and offensive behaviors are enough to throw her neighbors into an unsecured state of mind. However, her actions may be justified as a defense mechanism against other attacks from the neighbors. Asabea's vileness increased when she was attacked violently by Afrakoma, accusing her of squandering the money to pay the electricity bills of the house. This confrontation triggered a rather dark side of the church women's leader, making her an antagonist to most of the characters in her home. Whiles her husband tries to find friendship in other tenants and members of the household, Asabea keeps creating gaps between herself and the members. She suffers greatly from these actions. When her only child falls ill in her absence, Afrakoma, her neighbor, is unable to tend to the child. Asabea's violent behavior had prevented her neighbor from touching the child. Unfortunately, the child dies.

Her daughter becomes a victim of the insecurity she created in the house. The primary concept of Compound housing is to promote communal living affordably. Despite existing conflicts, members are supposed to be each other's keepers. However, Asabea's actions and consequences flout this concept.

Aside from invectives, she applies other forms of offense like physical attacks. On some occasions, she physically assaulted Afrakoma making her home subject to domestic violence and abuse. Tension grows throughout the film due to Asabea's offensive nature putting the members of her house and the viewers in a constant state of unrest. Due to her actions, there was no guarantee of ontological security in the home for its members.

Chapter 4: The Uncanny Home

4.1.1. **The Compound House in *Boasiako***

Boasiako is a family story and a story of a family. Even though the film tackles the issue of the uncanny house, it also explores the general relationships between extended family members. Unlike *Asoreba,* the members in this household are related by blood. The compound house structures the Extended family narrative. The house had a way of bringing the family together and demonstrating how they relate to each other. Undeniably, at the heart of affairs is the growing tension between the members. The compound house's role is to show and provide the space that accommodates these family issues.

The film is propelled by the characters' anxiousness to fix a home that is haunted by evil spirits. The title, *Boasiako,* is an allusion to an Asante historical figure who sacrificed in his head to save the nation. This notion is again depicted in the film as the family's uncle, Boasiako, is burdened by the thought of sacrificing himself to free his family from evil attacks. In the Akan beliefs and traditional context, haunted houses, or uncanny homes are no new phenomena. Thus, traditional beliefs are rooted deeply in witchcraft and evil spirit. In most Kumawood films, characters' afflictions are mostly blamed on supernatural activities. Supernatural activities in the Akan traditional context are strongly linked to the home. Interestingly, it may not be different from other cultures. In Kneale's essay on the horrors of home, she writes:

> As Hugh Haughton notes in his introduction to Freud's essay, the uncanny always "begins at home" (Freud xlii), for nothing can be more disturbing than the collapse of familiarity in the most familiar of places. The uncanny is also etymologically linked with the space of the home: as Freud explains, the German word "Heimlich"

> is primarily defined as "belonging to the house, to the family, or: regarded as belonging to it" (Freud 126). Maria Tatar notes that "uncanny", a word that originally pertained to special knowledge, was also used to describe domestic comfort, while heimlich, a word that concerns the home, came to signify secret knowledge (32).

Due to the familiarity of the home, any other supernatural activity renders it uncanny. Thus, every culture has its fair share of the Uncanny home.

The film, just like most Kumawood films, applies technical effects to creates horrific images and horrific scenes and present them as reality. For them, the supernatural things that are assumed and imagined in our daily lives are brought on screen as reality. They try to portray that the issue of a haunting spirit is not psychological, but these spirits can also manifest in the physical. Sometimes witchcraft and ritual activities are presented as the cause of a family's afflictions. In this case, they show these supernatural activities which in real life may are not visible. These narratives tie in with the longstanding traditional beliefs of evil spirits and witches in every family. In some cases, the family is just cursed.

It is important to understand that these activities are connected to the home (Freud), and in this case, the compound house serves as the family home. The courtyard serves as the place where the supernatural image appears mostly. The being is in the form of a scary apparition, and anytime it appears, family members demonstrate some fear of it. However, Kumawood has a way of mixing genres where comedy is always inserted in serious matters. Even though the uncanny being's appearance and disappearance may create some uneasiness amongst characters, the viewer may not experience the same effects. Mostly, their fearful reactions translate into comic tantrums to the

viewer. Nonetheless, the message is still communicated, mostly to reaffirm the uncanny in our family or homes.

4.1.2 How the Compound House Chronotope Transposes into A Place of Terror in The Film

In Bachelard's concept of topoanalysis, he talks about the home as a guarantor of dreams, and the familiarity of spaces ensures these daydreams. According to him, where one grows up is captured in their dreams. Thus, he writes:

> All our lives we come back to them in our daydreams. A psychoanalyst should, therefore, turn his attention to this simple localization of our memories. I should like to give the name of topoanalysis to this auxiliary of psychoanalysis. Topoanalysis, then, would be the systematic psychological study of the sites of our intimate lives. In the theater of the past that is constituted by memory, the stage setting maintains the characters in their dominant r6les. At times we think we know ourselves in time, when all we know is a sequence of fixations in the spaces of the being's stability (8).

The spaces in our homes are automatically registered images in the brain's activities. These spaces shape memories and dreams, and they are mostly connected to specific rooms in the house. In Quayson's argument, he posits that not only do these places encourage daydreaming, but they can also be places of horror. The family in *Boasiako* have a unique connection with their family home. It is a place that has certainly guaranteed a lot of memories. The children of the house who are now adults are so attached to the house it makes it impossible not the house registered even in their dreams. The opening scene of the film takes viewers into the dream of one of Boasiako's nephews. Lying on the bench in the courtyard, it seemed like a routine for house members to engage. But

viewers are spooked before they understand that the young man was far deep in his dreams. The dream takes place right in the courtyard where he lay. In the dream, the young man stood in front of his room addressing a family member. To his uttermost dismay, the family member decapitates herself, immediately sending him into a fit of tantrums while she follows him around the courtyard with the decapitated head in her hands.

The open scene with a decapitated woman walking around in the middle of the courtyard foreshadows the horrors about to befall the house. This scene is relevant because not only does it tell of future horrors, but it also shows how domestic spaces can be disturbed by unfamiliar elements. As the young man tries to escape the horrific dream, he accidentally spills his cousin's cocoa drink. In a rage, the cousin attacks him violently. The young man who had just woken up from a midday nightmare engages in another ruckus with his cousin. Thus, the first scene of the film is filled with supernatural activities and violence happening in the same courtyard.

However, as the film progresses, one can understand that horrific dreams and family ruckuses are the least of the family's issues. Because they all shared a family bond and a common heritage, the family whole becomes victims of an ancestral or ancient curse. The compound house stands to represent this family, and even as they individually dealt with their crises, the house had a way of bringing them together to deliberate over issues.

The compound house became their go-to place in times of crisis. For instance, Boasiako's niece Afrakoma had marital issues. In a scene from Afrakoma's home, she is accused by her husband of having incubus syndrome. After seeing his wife moan one night, he concludes that she is having sexual affairs with evil spirits or engaging in extramarital affairs. Further, he accuses her of being the cause of her infertility, poverty, and hardships. He, therefore, decides to end the marriage and

sent her packing to her family home. The family compound house becomes her place of refuge. She packs out and goes to live with her mother, uncle, and other family members. Aside from being a refuge, it served as a place to seek some defense against his husband. Her uncle and other relatives were saddened by her husband's act and decided to confront him in an attempt to send their kindred back to her marital home. This act was futile. However, it demonstrated a strong family bond. She was welcomed back to her family home as they gave her the impression that the homes will always be available to shield her.

Also, Afrakoma's mother is said to have suffered a similar fate of failed marriages and love affairs, the reason she still lives in the family home. Like history repeating itself, Afrakoma and her sister are both victims of the curse of failed marriages and relationships. These women, having suffered enough of a generational curse found solace in their family home. To the family, despite their warm welcomes and solidarity towards each other, returning home from a failure was not something to be proud of. These issues that followed a pattern made the family realize the anomalies that had bedeviled them.

The compound house in the film as a character showcases dual personalities. Thus, it plays the role of a place of refuge and a place of misery. With its ability to draw afflicted family members back home, it automatically becomes a place of refuge. However, belonging to that home has been the principal cause of the family's crises. Aside from social and social-economic issues like poverty, marriage, and childbirth bedeviling the family, there is also restlessness, as the compound house became a place of supernatural and abnormal activities. Often, the house kept hosting grotesque but evil-looking apparitions and supernatural beings. These horrifying beings would usually demand blood and if none is given, proceeded to kill one member of the family.

Because of the grotesqueness and the evil nature of the being, it can be argued that it represents an embodiment of the woes and trials of the family. Thus, metaphorically, the image represents all the crises they had to deal with as a family. Spiritually, it was envisaged by the family as a curse that came upon them. This was later confirmed when the family sought spiritual guidance from a priest. The phenomenon of supernatural beings disturbing the peace of mind besets characters with both spiritual and physical dilemmas. These characters are constantly trapped in their domestic spaces hoping to find means of dealing with these crises. Once again, the nexus between social issues and supernatural forces is evident.

However, the misfortunes, appearances of evil spirits, and the untimely deaths of members of the home do not force them to evict. Instead, they kept going back into their house to face these misfortunes. Thus, house then becomes inseparable from their identity as a family and the individual's identity as a person. Porteous argues that:

> Beyond the individual's private space within the home, the home itself becomes a vehicle for expressing identity through manipulation of its external appearance. Cooper, using a Jungian psychoanalytic approach, sees the house as a symbol of the self.? In poetry, literature, and dreams, houses are invested with human qualities. Jung suggested that the individual's house is a universal, archetypal symbol of the self. The house reflects how the individual sees himself, how he wishes to see himself, or how he wishes others to see him. The house, then, is a means of projecting an image both inwardly and outward. (384)

Although the characters are troubled by the issues of the home, they understand the depth at which these crises shape their identity and personalities. For instance, it was popularly known by

neighbors or the community that the house of Boasiako breeds misfortune. It was a known fact that nothing good came out of that family. Individually, they were called poor, ugly, barren, and useless. Returning home is also evidence of the strong family bond that precedes the horrors of a haunted house. Their acceptance as a cursed family does not come with any prejudices towards the home.

4.1.3 The Security of an Uncanny Home

The shared entrance with the gate in the film gives the impression of assured security and some territorial satisfaction (Porteous). Aside from the rent being affordable, the compound house is reserved for the extended family as seen in *Boasiako*. The structure of the house reflects the traditional and cultural systems of the Ghanaian family motif. In Rapoport's basic hypothesis on how houses are influenced by external forces, he states that,

> …the house form is not simply the result of physical forces or any casual or single factor, but it's the consequence of a whole range of social-cultural factors seen in their broadest term. Form is in turn modified by climatic conditions (the physical environment which makes some things impossible and encourages others) and by methods of construction, materials available, and the technology (the tools for achieving the desired environment). I will call the social-cultural primary and the others secondary (47).

Despite the individual difference, the concept of being each other's keeper is practiced by most of these families, and the structure of the compound house makes it perfect for its execution. The concept creates the awareness of a secured environment. Shared spaces are capable of breeding rivalry and conflict within the confines of the home. It may threaten the security of the people. However, domestic problems are within the house, and family differences are not showcased to the

outside world. Domestic crises are closed off to the world and cannot be made explicit and public (Tuan).

The return home, the feeling of belonging, and defending each other against external forces create ontological security for the individual members. The security also boosts personal identity, and in this case, the identity of a united but afflicted family. Interestingly, areas or spaces of interest within the house also contribute to some easiness of the mind. According to Porteous, "the concept of security includes both psychic security and physical security, or protection. Both forms of security are obtained in the home, and in its individualized cores, usually bedrooms, boudoirs, or studies" (383). He also states that the personalization of space can confer psychic security (383). The courtyard seems to be the space that accommodates and unites them at a particular time. It is the most familiar space that is showcased in the film. Also, the ability to control their spaces generates some confidence in the security the home provides. Afrakoma's return home from a failed marriage is evidence of a subconscious sense of security attached to her original home. In Tuan's submissions on the capabilities of the home, he argues that: Home is given over to the hidden processes of life. It protects life, not only from inclement weather and predators but also from bright sunlight and the glare of the public eye. The Greek and Latin words for the interior of the house, megaron and atrium, both carry a strong connotation of darkness. Home in classical antiquity was a private and hidden place from which one ventured forth into the light of public life, with all its risks and rewards. Privacy and nurturing shelter persist as

> the central qualities of home: at a recent forum on women's liberation, Clara Park characterized home, rather wistfully, as that small focus (Latin: "hearth") of order and coherence, cleanliness and even beauty -a refuge or frame for autonomous living and growth (155).

Afrakoma is not the only one who enjoys the security which is attached to the home. Other family, sisters, cousins, uncles, and aunty are equal recipients of this security. Another way the family demonstrates their dedication to ensuring members are secured in the house is by finding a solution to the horrors that threaten their security. By the end of the film, we see Boasiako, sacrificing his life for the safety of the other family members.

The only elements in the film that threaten the security of Boasiako and his family, are the consciousness of the curse and the appearances of scary apparitions. The apparition believed by the characters in the film to be an evil spirit is most feared by the family. This fear is not only born from its grotesque and dark nature but its ability to appear and disappear as it wishes. Unlike any stranger that seeks permission before invading people's spaces, this being has no regard for privacy and personal space. Also, it does not use the entrances of the house. It mostly appears in the courtyard and randomly on the streets to haunt them. Asking permission or "knocking" when entering homes in Ghanaian traditions is essential in dealing with strangers. Porteous posits that:

> The rituals involved in entering the home of another, such as knocking on the door, ringing the bell, or using the more elaborate apartment-house intercom, have been compared to the recognition ceremonies of nesting birds.3 These generally recognized security measures are vital because the home is used for sleeping, grooming, and reproductive behavior, all of which are activities which divert attention away from outside threats and therefore render the individual more vulnerable to intruders.

On some occasions, the apparition that screamed, "I want blood" appeared in the middle of the night at the courtyard sending the family into chaos and on a running spree. In worse situations, a family member is killed by the apparition. These disturbing events were the principal causes of

the family's physical insecurity. Psychologically, the idea of them being cursed and being perceived as a "disabled" family preys on their psychic security. The lack of confidence in their selves outside the house was a problem these characters faced.

Chapter 5

5.1 Findings and Conclusion

Korboe, Sinai, Willis, and Tipple provide detailed information about the compound house. However, these findings are limited to the field of urban planning and housing, and they are unrelated to literary research. Korboe defines a compound house as a family home that is jointly owned and claims that policymakers have overlooked it despite its communal importance and frequency (1169). He investigates the nature of these structures and exposes the inherent paradoxes in this type of habitation. Sinai discusses how a compound house can function as a household and engage in economic activities. She proposes that residents of the compound house engage in income-generating activities within the residence. She emphasized that the verandas of the rooms of Kumasi's historic compound houses facing the streets are vestiges of the house's business and administrative aspects during colonial times (418). She investigates these homes further and determines that compound houses in Kumasi are used for more income-generating activities than single-family homes (426). In addition, Willis and Tipple identify the compound house as a type of house that promotes multihabitation (1705). According to them, it is frequently occupied by extended family members and ownership changes when the original owner dies. Housing conditions deteriorate because of its low cost and ability to house more than one nuclear family (1718).

5.1.1 Images of the Ghanaian Compound House.

Fig. 1. Schrekenbach, Hannah. "Compound House." 1978. Ghana Glossary: Kofi Amokohene's story. http://www.maestracorpus.com/africa/globalink/ghana_key4.htm. Accessed 15 November 2021.

Fig 2. Nipah, Dennis. "The design History of Ghana's Compound House." 2021. Dyrect Newspaper. https://dyrectnews.com/2021/05/09/the-design-history-of-ghanas-compound-houses.

Accessed 15 November 2021.

Fig 3. Culled. “How to live peacefully in a Compound House.” 2017. Modern Ghana, https://www.modernghana.com/lifestyle/10551/how-to-live-peacefully-in-a-compoundhouse.html. Accessed 15 November 2020.

Fig 4. Crowded House: Accra tries to make Room for Population Boom. Global Communities. https://globalcommunities.org/node/37593. Accessed 15 November 2021.

5.1.2 Bringing Everything Together

The common image of the compound house appears in some Ghanaian films and fiction. Consumers get a second-hand experience of the compound house through these genres, thus popular culture and high literature. They have a strong presence in Kumawood films. It's no surprise that Kumawood is regarded as popular entertainment. Classic Kumawood films made waves in the media in the early 2000s. The compound house served as the principal setting in films like *Kumasi Yonko*, *Asoreb*a, *Obaa Pa*, and *Wo Nyame som mpo ni*. These films, along with novels such as Amma Darko's *Faceless*, Kwei Quartey's *Children of the Streets*, and Benjamin Kwakye's *Clothes of Nakedness*, motivated to focus on the compound house and seek a more scientific reading of it. This study looked at the house in areas other than urban planning, housing, and architecture. It acknowledges the abstract features of the house as a significant literary tool. This is a study of the physical and psychological aspects of the house as depicted in Ghanaian film and fiction. It discusses the effects the houses have on the characters and plots of these literary works.

The objectives of this work were to;

1) Look for enough evidence from scholarly works to classify the compound house in Ghanaian Film and fiction as a chronotope.
2) Examine the important roles the house played in the lives of characters.
3) Look for the reasons for the causes of ontological security and insecurity of the house in the lives of the characters.
4) To read the compound house beyond architecture.

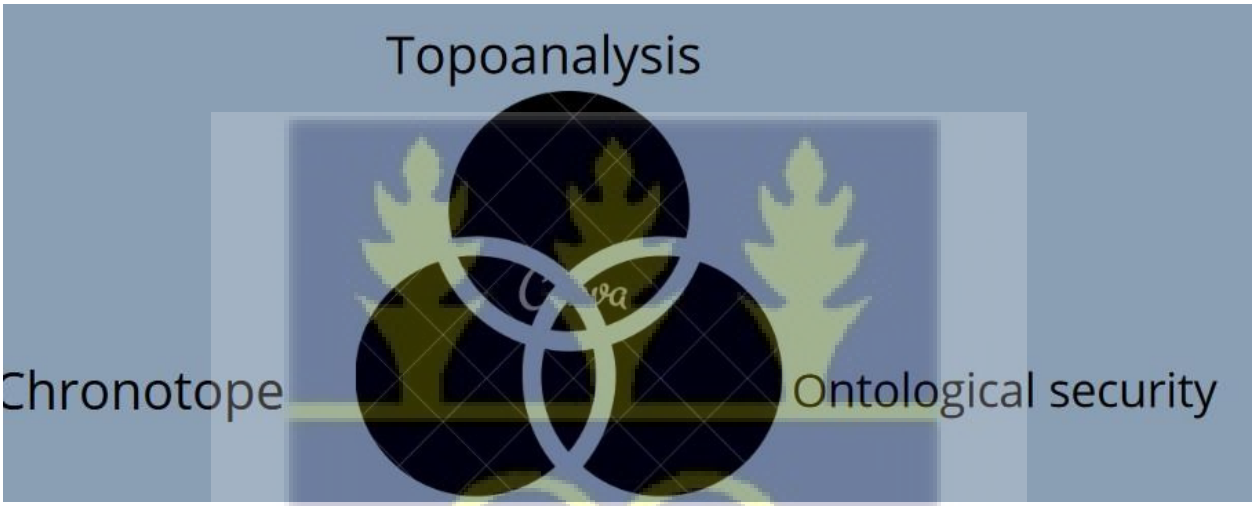
Quayson's lecture on Interdisciplinary Spatial Concepts for African Urban Studies, in which he discussed spatial concepts such as Spatial Morphology, Topoanalysis, and Chronotopes, inspired

the approach to studying the compound house as a space. Even though the compound house presented some difficulties in locating sources that performed literary spatial analysis on it, it was the ideal example of a family home that required a spatial analysis.

Using Bakhtin's literary chronotope theory to read the compound house as a threshold and a chronotope on its own, the houses in the chosen films and novel are evidence of an overlooked chronotope. This method of reading the house as a chronotope is similar to how some scholars have analyzed the Gothic and family homes in western literature. Krogstad considers the family house as a chronotope. He discusses the fantasy, Idyll, and Threshold experience of the child in three Scandinavian picture books by Gro Dahle and Svein Nyhus. His research on the house and reading it as a chronotope exposed how children struggled with insecurities in their family home. Kneale, on the other hand, took a more feminist approach towards reading Gothic homes as a Chronotope. In her work, she cites novels like *The House of Seven Gables*, *The Haunting of Hill House*, and *The Yellow Wallpaper*, where the Gothic houses seemed more hostile for the female protagonists. She calls the chronotope of the Gothic home "the change in Gothic settings across the Atlantic from grandiose castles to domestic households, resulting in a new motivic chronotope" (7).

Bachelard's concept, topoanalysis, also does justice in reading the intimate spaces of the house. He connects memory to the lived-in experiences of the house. Bertram captures this notion in her work on the Turkish house. She explains how a group of people who grew up in the old Turkish houses carry with them their collective memory and emphasized the house as a place that constructs identities. The Turkish household's great resemblance with the Ghanaian compound house. It is a carrier of memories of any kind.

The study approached the house with another concept that is inclined towards psychoanalysis. The ontological security concept by Giddens is closely tied with domestic spaces. It implies how people can feel safe or threatened by the house or a familiar space. It was discovered in the analysis how this concept is automatically connected to the house chronotope. Thus, the research reveals the underlying relationships between the three concepts. Touching on the chronotope of the compound house in some ways discusses its psychological aspect (topoanalysis) and reveals its issues of security. The image below reveals the interconnectedness of the concepts.



5.2 Findings in the Texts.

Darko's method of guiding readers through the compound house experience by locating key characters and events within the house is effective. She achieves time and unity by reusing the same compound house from the past to the present. The house was strongly tied with the construction of the identities of some of the characters. For instance, characters like Naa Yomo and Maa Tsuru owe their identity to their compound house. Exploring the compound house in

Faceless, it was first viewed as a threshold chronotope, symbolizing the beginning of things. While the house was Maa Tsuru's birthplace, it was also her mother's final resting place. Tsuru was cursed by her mother in this same house around the time of her birth. This is where Tsuru made all of her life-altering decisions. The men of the house fueled her children's ordeal despite their struggles with poverty. Tsuru and her daughters suffer many hardships in their home whiles her great aunt, Naa Yomo enjoys her stay in the house as a quasi-homeowner. Whiles rooms like Onko's and Maa Tsuru's registers the terrors of rape and molestation, Naa Yomo remembers the past glories of the house and takes pride in them.

Just as Darko gradually revealed the chronotopic aspect of the house, the makers of both *Asoreba* and *Boasiako* also make it impossible to overlook the transformation of the usual Kumasi compound house into a chronotope. They accomplish this by putting the house in the spotlight and telling stories about ordinary people. The Compound house remains the primary setting in *Asoreba*. The film's use of space is limited to the verandas and courtyard of the characters' houses. It was like a stage where the stories unfolded. We discovered that the main character's behavior toward other tenants was the film's focal point. Because of Asabea's insecurities at home, she becomes violent, allowing the film to address the issue of domestic violence. She becomes the main element that threatens the ontological security of her husband and Afrakoma. The Courtyard of the film played a crucial part in the House chronotope. It was where confrontations occurred, a place that unified the people, and a place of violence. The characters' memory of once a peaceful house is enhanced by the various activities in the courtyard. After suffering several attacks from Asabea, Afrakoma reminisces how once the common courtyard brought them together as friends.

In *Boasiako*, the film takes us close to the image of the Gothic Home. Though presented as a usual compound house, the issues that bedeviled its members transcended natural phenomena. As a

threshold chronotope, the house represents their beginnings. It is also the place that marks the beginning of their crises. Several family meetings were held in the courtyard. Some of these meetings were crucial to the family's survival. For instance, it was during a meeting at the courtyard that Boasiako decided to sacrifice himself to the gods for the family's survival. The courtyard was also the venue for family brawls and quarrels. The compound house reveals the uncanny element that tormented the members of the house. In *Boasiako,* the family's strong connection to their home is felt. Despite the family home's uncanny displays, the extended family members could not part with it. Those whose marriages failed because of the family curse returned to the family house. The events that happened in the home caused great fear and conflict amongst themselves. However, what is striking about the family was their willingness to continue living in the house to overcome their challenges. The family battled with insecurities from a strange being that kept appearing at their and the space registered horrific images for them.

This study has shown that the Ghanaian compound house can be both a threshold chronotope and a chronotope on its own. The compound houses in the novel and films are a crucial aspect of the story. Darko, Samuel Nyamekye, and Paul Gee have proven that it has a deeper and sophisticated meaning that transcends accommodation. As a Chronotope, it makes the narrative events concrete and shows forth its representations. It has been a place of birth and constructing identities, a place of breaks, crises, and epiphanies. It played the role of the central setting that unified all events. It staged major and minor encounters and perpetuated the themes of failed relationships. The house created unforgettable spaces for the characters. Some spaces brought back horrific memories whiles others created the Bachelard-feel-good emotions. There were enough reasons and evidence from these texts to show some of the causes of insecurity and security the compound house could bring.

5.3 Recommendations

Researching on Ghanaian houses and spaces should be considered by Ghanaian scholars of literature to generate more sources for spatial studies and literary criticisms for future dissertations. Applying these theories to study houses and how they affect female characters in African literature is a fertile area to be explored in future research.

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