

Shifts in the conceptualisation of spatial relations in home-making practice: Suggestions from recent cultural history

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Abstract

Homemaking is a culturally complex activity which involves integrating a range of distinct considerations into a mode of life. Among these considerations are several which, in the public arena, have received considerable elaboration as a knowledge or practice. This paper explores the interplay between the specialist elaboration of discrete orders and their mutual 'grounding' or cross-referencing in the home-making process, with particular reference to the configuration of space. It considers the implication of space-defining decisions in articulating modes of life, and examines householders' selective use of elaborated codes of spatial organisation from this perspective. It argues that the ability of home-makers to work abstractly with complex and multiple configurations of space is intimately bound up with how exemplary referents are embedded in experience. Aspects of the evolution of predominant modes of domestic spatial configuration in the European culture area used to show how characteristic modes of home-making choice can produce generic patterns of cultural change which differ significantly from those produced by specialists, while interacting with them.

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