Ca' Foscari University of Venice

Master's Degree

in Economics and Administration of Arts and Culture

Final Thesis

Screendwellings

Home, Place, and the Screen

Supervisor

Ch. Prof. Miriam De Rosa

Assistant Supervisor

Ch. Prof. Maria Lusiani

Graduand

Benedetta Andreasi

Matriculation number 897301

Academic Year

2022 / 2023

Index

Abstract

Every screen provides an extension of space that carries a feeling of place within it. Familiarity, frames, borders, and a sense of closeness make all screens sites of dwelling regardless of the original aim of their design. Screen spaces are built to be dwelt in as they are, to be experienced as panoramas, or to be curated and furnished according to personal choice, they can be navigated actively or passively, and they function like public places, but often include the private sphere.

The system of screens, operators, surroundings, and physical space is oftentimes problematic in its definition. There are elements that belong similarly to the screen and to the space outside it; conversely, there are instances only possible on the screen that make its dwelling characteristics unique. How do physical places inhabit the screen and how do screens interact with physical dwelling? How do we understand screen space in the current media-saturated scenario, and what impact does it have on the rest of our activities? In the following work I draw upon literature from visual studies, media theory, social sciences and philosophy, to define *screendwelling* by suggesting categories to interpret its relationship with context and dwellers, whose role will be analyzed in terms of physical agency, involvement with the space of others, and aesthetics.

Introduction

1. Looking for a place: house, home, and the screendwelling

My family home's living room has four walls, two windows, and one door at all hours except at eight pm, a time when new spaces materialize through the screens that brighten the room. For as long as I can remember the most obsequiously observed tradition in my family has involved turning on the television at dinner time, like I am sure many families do, and entering the fictional homes in which the Italian soap opera *Un Posto Al Sole* (Doyle, 1996 - present) takes place, like I am always surprised to be reminded almost two million spectators do every night.[1] The walls of the characters' apartments feel familiar, and we notice when they paint them or add bookshelves, we are used to the disposition of their furniture and we know who lives where; we even have quite a precise ideal map of the noble palace turned into apartment building. Eight pm is not just the time for television: more windows open in the living room when my sister comes out of her dark room with the guiding light of her phone in her hand, while laptops with overlapping work-related files are moved from the dining table. All the people in my family transform the space around them several times every evening at eight pm, making it wider and deeper, or busier and more suffocating, while the living room itself makes space for other temporary rooms making their appearance on the screens that populate our dwelling unit.

On the edge between acting and spectating, on the inside and the outside of the screen lie the bases for the present research. In the spring of 2023, I was engaged in the production of a short desktop documentary clip, along with the other participants in Professor De Rosa's Visual Cultures class. The work had to feature a surface, gesture, and word. It is then that I started to be preoccupied with the notion of home, then with the condition of dwelling, and then with the condition of dwelling as experienced on screen. In writing about the dweller, I will make use of my own work – that at the time

[1] *''Un Posto al Sole" Supera i Due Milioni Di Telespettatori*. *RAI Ufficio Stampa*, https://www.rai.it/ufficiostampa/articoli/2023/06/Un-Posto-al-Sole-supera-i-due-milioni-di-telespettatori-b503136f-23e5-47c4-bcff-05e6d6da0a57.html. Accessed 30 Dec. 2023.

of presentation I titled *Home*[2] – to study the identity between actor, narrator and spectator and to illustrate the interplay of closeness and isolation created on the screen. These aspects moved me to create *Home* and will be of interest in my attempt to understand the consequences of screendwelling on the current state of visuality, on our use of space, and on the act of dwelling itself on the threshold between on- and off-screen.

Whichever the type of screen or monitor at hand is, there is a closeness that is felt to it, a symbolic bridge that is crossed in its use, and that leads to another space. It was Marc Augé who unveiled the "fake familiarity that the small screen establishes between spectators and actors of the great history, whose profile is as usual as that of the heroes of a telenovela" addressing the resulting spatial perception as one of "spatial overabundance."[4] Recognizing the screen not as mere surface, but as a space with depth, motion, and the possibility of creating feelings of vicinity, is the key to a more complex problematization of said space: it becomes necessary to define our relation with it and its borders, taking into account how they change according to the type of screen and the amount of interactivity involved. By providing a space with three dimensions – or four, counting time – and the option to move between different spaces and to create new content, a screen becomes navigable, and its navigation changes by virtue of our way of relating to it.

2. A technical inquiry on house, home, dwelling, and screen

In line with recent literature across a variety of theoretical perspectives but mainly developed in media studies,[5] I argue that we relate to screens by means of dwelling and that distinctions apply to the ways we inhabit different screens. Through the definition of this "other" type of dwelling, I aim to understand the context and condition of the dweller,

---

[2] The videoessay is available online and can be found by using the QR code in the appendix at the end of the present work.

[4] Augé, Marc. *Nonluoghi*. Elèuthera, Milano 1993. P. 46 (Translated from Italian by me)

[5] Please see at least Cavaletti, Federica, et al. *Immersioni Quotidiane: Vita Ordinaria, Cultura Visuale e Nuovi Media*. Meltemi, Milano 2023; Couldry, Nick and Anna McCarthy. *Media Space: Place, Scale and Culture in a Media Age.* Routledge, London 2003; De Rosa, Miriam. *Cinema e Postmedia. I Territori del filmico nel Contemporaneo. Postmedia books*, Milano 2013.

the social effects, and aesthetic repercussions of inhabiting screens. To this end, clear definitions are needed with regard to what is a house, what is a home, what it means to dwell, and how screens become involved with these questions.

The connections of the screen to the concept of place must first be decided. A brick and lime house is easily identifiable as a place: human activities occur in it, it has a clear and particular function, identifiable limits, and its role in the life of its owner is precisely structured and interconnected with the type of social life they lead. On any given screen all these features are challenged if not completely subverted, in an environment in which human activity is highly mediated and limited by technological constraints we navigate seemingly infinite spaces and places where communities are generated and dissolved in irregular lapses of time, while the social bonds generated feel real but just so different. Screens have been studied in terms of space and linked to the idea of place since the 1960s. The idea that they contain and create spaces is widely accepted, but as far as their acceptance as places is concerned, geographers and sociologists have had trouble finding definitive agreement. Of course, until the widespread use of personal computers only television and cinema could be considered as the nuclei for the theorization of screen space. It seems like at the time the most substantial problem was its identification as geographical place integrating a social context, centre of meaning, and physical process:[6] in 1992 Adams demonstrates that the television screen has purposes similar to those of geographical places and centres of meaning, substituting some places in serving social and symbolic functions like sensory communion, social congregation, and the attribution of value to persons and objects, but with regards to the concept of physical process he specifies that television lacks a definable location, settling on the temporary resolution that television has "place-like characteristics" without reaching the status of place.[7]

Another input on the concept of place – this time studied anthropologically, rather than geographically – was given in a publication of the same year. Admitting that the focus of his work was not on screens in any capacity, in *Nonplaces* Marc Augé offers a fundamental notion that is very well applicable to the issue: spaces that are built and used

[6] Adams, Paul C. "Television as Gathering Place." In *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, vol. 82, no. 1, Mar. 1992, Pp. 117–35. P. 117

[7] Ibidem, pp. 130-131

daily by humans, can be recognized as something other than places. Anthropologic places earn their definition as such when they provide their occupants with identities, host relationality, and history.[8] Screens can never produce all three attributes simultaneously and they mostly struggle to produce them singularly with continuity. In chapter one it will be necessary to discuss the interaction between the screen and the categories of the anthropological place to allow its interpretation as a nonplace and to delineate the type of space that is created in it. Before discussing the issue of dwelling, the nonplace of the screen will be described as a heterotopia, a concept notably proposed by French philosopher Michel Foucault to discuss places in which the emplacements of a culture "are simultaneously represented, contested and inverted."[9] Heterotopias are thus places that feel "other," in which something alters the normal flow of events that regulates the usual places of life.

The question that will then need to be answered in order to move forward with the research on screen habitability is whether a non-place that is understood and felt as "other" can still be called a home: if so, then, it must be clarified in which measure the ideas of house, home and dwelling hold in that context the same meaning that they traditionally have. Satisfying definitions of house and home must be agreed upon moving forward. The first distinction is made between the house as a physical structure and the home as an emotional and social concept. The two ideas will be referenced in this research with different meanings: the term "house" will mainly be used in the architectural sense, whereas "home" will be used – generally – to mention a place that evokes an intimate feeling of shelter and safety. Dwelling will be used in its verbal form to indicate the action of inhabiting, but it can assume a substantive form, in which case its meaning will account for any space – be it a place or a nonplace – that can be inhabited or even just one in which it is possible to move and to which it is possible to come back regularly. Some exceptions will be made in citation: authors who explore a specific subject use some terms as synonyms, for instance to Gaston Bachelard the house and the dwelling are essentially

[8] Augé, Marc. *Nonluoghi*, cit. P. 60

[9] Foucault, Michel. "Of Other Spaces." 1967. In Dehaene, Michiel, et al., editors. *Heterotopia and the City: Public Space in a Postcivil Society ; [the European Association of Architectural Education (EAAE) Colloquium, The Rise of Heterotopia, Held on 26 - 28 May 2005, Leuven, Belgium]*. Transferred to digital print, Routledge, 2009. P. 17

two other ways to call the home;[10] Amos Rapoport, on the other hand, calls home the house to indicate the site's potential to be dwelt in, and specifies that concepts of home depend on different ideas of shelter, dwelling, and need.[11] Further, dwelling is for some a noun indicating a place which is inhabited and then it is a verb Martin Heidegger uses to describe the human condition at large, the very way that humans are on earth, which does not necessarily equate to the condition of feeling at home.[12]

While the topic will be discussed in depth in chapter one, it is useful to come to a preliminary understanding of the space that will be explored and to draw its basic attributes from the cited literature. The house in Rapoport's architectural and anthropological reading is a building of primitive or vernacular design with no aim for monumentality or authorial recognition, often built in accordance with the needs and wants of its final dweller[13]. This idea can be used to interpret the structure of screen environments in a variety of ways, starting with the domestic television screen and how its shape is chosen to fit different spatial needs in the house, to the way the first Internet users build their own sites with elementary instruments and bits of code.

Bachelard's work will be used to identify the concept of home and its more emotional and poetic form. His model of home corresponds to an intimate inside space, which shelters daydreaming and represents an original shell in which the dweller feels protected, the house is the "non-I that protects the I," it hosts memories, and it houses the unconscious, shadow, privacy and depth are found in it.[14] The shape of the house influences the feeling of being at home, its verticality, and the presence of a centre make it a familiar place, in which a sense of primitive refuge is felt. It might seem difficult to find this poetic overtone while dwelling on the topic of screens, but after a careful examination of the use we make of them some correspondences with the Bachelardian approach to the home will become apparent.

---

[10] Bachelard, Gaston. *The Poetics of Space*. Penguin, New York1964.

[11] Rapoport, Amos. *House, Form and Culture*. Prentice-Hall, Inc., Hoboken 1969. P. 61

[12] Heidegger, Martin. *Building, Dwelling, Thinking*. In *Poetry, Language, Thought*. Harper & Row Publishers, New York 2009. Pp. 143-147

[13] Rapoport, Amos. *House, Form and Culture, cit.* Pp. 2-8

[14] Bachelard, Gaston. *The Poetics of Space, cit.* Pp. 25-57

As heterotopic nonplaces that share some common traits with the physical house and emotional home, screens also participate – in their own way – in the categories of dwelling. In Heidegger's *Building, Dwelling, Thinking* dwelling is presented as intrinsic to the act of building, in itself perceived by humankind – the philosopher demonstrates through philological analysis – as integral to life.[15] The nature of dwelling, as explained by the philosopher, features four main figures: the earth, saved and set free by mortals, the sky, which is received and regulates time, divinities, awaited and respected in their decisions, and mortals themselves, who accept their own nature to die and practice their capacity to die in that they live[16]. Screens do not meet this definition comprehensively, and there is no land to be spared because space feels infinite inside of them. The sun and the moon in the sky no longer have a ruling power over the way time is spent, because screens produce their own light; divinities as such are replaced by all kinds of idols, and the concept of waiting for something is largely wiped away by the quick response to user interaction of the screen image. As for the concept of mortality, it seems to be kept away from the screen's many entertainments, only to be inserted when useful to the ends of information or spectacle. The literal description of dwelling provided by Heidegger is hardly applicable in its entirety to contemporary life, but it provides a useful structure to approach the way screens are used and thought of: we build them and on them, in some occurrences we have to free space, we can be impotent in determining what the screen will show and in some ways we submit ourselves to the will of who has that power, we are capable of ending something, be it the end of a film we just watched in its entirety, but also turning off the TV, deleting an account or emptying the desktop's bin, our dwelling ends any time our presence on a particular screen space ends.

Taking these matters into consideration, it is the very screen that needs further specification. Until now, anything that is perceived as "screen" in the technological sense of the word has been generally referred to as such. The use of the word is correct and will not be subject to variation,[17] but it is worth taking notice of some important details that give nuance to the word and change the modality in which the screen in question is dwelt

---

[15] Heidegger, Martin. *Building, Dwelling, Thinking*, cit. Pp. 144-146

[16] Heidegger, Martin. *Building, Dwelling, Thinking*, cit. Pp. 147-149

[17] For an etymology of the word 'screen' and its genealogies, please see Strauven, Wanda. *Touch Screen Archaeology: Tracing Histories of Hands-On Media Practices*. Meson Press Eg, Lüneburg 2021.

in by the user. The first and most tangible discrimination must be the one between hardware and software, which – although almost always flattened in our everyday experience – is a decisive factor in the monitor's usage. The hardware is the component that is properly called the "screen," its size and material of composition influence the practicality of its usage: it provides the physical element of dwelling in a way akin to the house's capacity to host a dweller, it constitutes the site of dwelling, and it is one of the factors that make a screen interpretable as home.

The main environment of what I will call the screendwelling – which will be defined in detail in chapter one – materializes in the software; without images appearing on the machine, in fact, monitors could never be perceived as homes. The device in use naturally affects the way the screen is dwelt in on a spectrum that goes from passive watching to active interaction. The silver screen can never be interacted with, and must be silently stared at; in it the only movement possible is the one of the actors, on which our experience of place depends. The nearer and the smaller the screen is, the bigger the potential for action becomes: the television admits some moderate choice in where to go and how to do so, the computer's space can only work in relation to commands given by the user, the smartphone reacts to commands that are immediate, as in unmediated by components other than the screen, and the smartwatch does not even require voluntary action for its most basic user interaction: heartbeat and blood pressure are measured in the very instant they happen, automatically, granting a sort of perennial activity. A further divide in the way of seeing screens, Heidi Rae Cooley points out, can be summed up with the difference between looking through a window, as we do in our experience of the cinematic screen, and looking at the screen, which is the way we see mobile devices.[18] This difference in tangibility and involvement is what determines one's relationship to the screen that is in front of them, it changes the extent of one's dwelling and the means through which it is verified.

The description of the screen as an area of dwelling, its reasons, and its changing character will be exhaustively illustrated in chapter one. Before moving on to further clarifications on chapters two and three, which will be introduced later, however, some

[18] Cooley, Heidi Rae. "It's All about the Fit: The Hand, the Mobile Device and Tactile Vision." In *Journal of Visual Culture*, vol. 3, no. 2, Aug. 2004, Pp. 133–55, P. 143

observations have to be made on the kind of perception we have of screens and their contents.

3. Semantics

It has been anticipated, in previous paragraphs, that by means of philological analysis Heidegger demonstrates that dwelling is a fundamental characteristic of human life: he states that the word *building* shares its etymology with the verbs *to dwell* and *to be*, *buan* means *to remain* in Old English and High German. From *buan* derives *bauen*, German for *building*, and *gebur*, Old English for *dweller*. Other verbs coming from *bauen* – *buri*, *büren*, and *beuren* – all relate to *dwelling* in their meaning. He declares shortly after that we think of dwelling as an activity performed alongside other activities: dwelling is simply the way we are, and talking about being, he notices how the verb *to be* in English, the German first person *ich bin* and the second person *du bist* also stem from *buan*.[19]

The connection between dwelling, building, and screens is less remote: the *screen* in itself is a word for *shelter*, and it is through the screen that we watch and interact with realities far from us without physically confronting them, being effectively sheltered. Moreover, a film is shown with the aid of a *projector*, from the Latin *proicio* – formed by *pro*, meaning *forth*, and *iacio*, meaning *to throw* – which means to extend or throw forward, a *project* is what one does when planning ahead, in particular in the construction of a building. Even more plainly, we say that a web*site* is *built*, we up*load* and down*load* contents as if we were piling objects that weight on an imaginary base, ideally and practically with the goal of constructing something. One thing in particular that seems to suggest that screens are perceived as dwelling spaces is the recurrent use of home-related semantics in the description of screen environments. The spatial tradition of the screen is rooted in physical places such as the *camera obscura*, easily legible as a room not only because of its name (camera, as in "room") but by virtue of its architecture. The camera obscura constituted a place one had to concretely step in and occupy the space for a while to observe the projected image. In the nineteenth century vision changed its location, the experience that was once felt outside the observer's body became something that at a certain point in time acknowledged the importance of the observer's body and place it

[19] Heidegger, Martin. *Building, Dwelling, Thinking*, cit. Pp. 144-145

within the machinery of vision.[20] After the physical component of the camera obscura's room became obsolete the terminology remained the same, we still carry portable devices called *cameras*, we still use a device – most often equipped with a screen – that is semantically linked with the idea of room. Other analogies to rooms and buildings verified in film production include the *barn doors* used to direct the light and the *film gate* in the camera, whereby both mechanisms have names that allude to openings and work in association with light just like a common door does. The habit of using terms with spatial connotations transfers to the screen in all its forms: when a character does something to acknowledge their context as fictional, we talk about *breaking the fourth wall*, because we consider what happens on screen emplaced in a sort of special room. All these metaphorical labels might already create a bizarre landscape if read in their concrete denotation: the three-walled room that is the set stands in front of a *film gate* that opens on the inside of a *camera*, that is, another room in itself, and an array of barns with open doors surround the scene. The picture becomes more entangled on those screens on which images can be produced without the existence of an external set. When turning on a computer, after typing a *password* – which is a *key* in some devices stored in a *keychain* – what is called a *desktop* is accessed. On the desk, appearing on screen, *windows* are opened; this creates the first dissonance in term of spatial perception: is the screen a room's table or a home's wall?[21] We might find an answer by observing other spaces. Pretty soon fire*walls* of protection are discovered, it seems like we should think of our computer as a house, but where is its location? There is one address that identifies the internet connection – the *IP address*, and one where a user can be reached by others – the *email address*, a space to receive immaterial mail.

The same happens on phone screens, where the main page is the *home*, a collection of walls on which through widgets we can hang a calendar and pictures. The icons on the metaphorical walls can open on the photo *gallery*, a space that resembles the walls of an

[20] Crary, Jonathan. *Techniques of the Observer*. Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge MA 1990. P. 24

[21] On the issue of the orientation of the screen please see De Rosa, Miriam and Strauven, Wanda. "Screenic (Re)orientations: Desktop, Tabletop, Tablet, Booklet, Touchscreen, Etc.." in *Screen Space Reconfigured*, Amsterdam University Press, Amsterdam 2020.

imaginary hall crowded with images. A tap on the icons readily shows other homes, the main page of almost all apps is distinguishable by its little house-shaped label and is the most familiar and frequently visited page in them, a checkpoint to come back to. In some of these other homes *chatrooms* can be accessed, and although their name recalls a room inside of the house, they are public and shared between users, they make the user feel like they are inviting someone in their private home, but in some cases, they act as busy cafés. The idea of being in someone's home extends to the building of websites at large, to create a site a *web host* is needed, an entity which grants the builder hospitality. Occasionally, screens – even when not showing images of inhabited houses – can be thought of as the place of dwelling of someone or something other than us: computers and phones have *memories*, are they to be perceived as extensions of our own memory or to be otherwise regarded as separate entities? Regardless they dwell in the screen. Even the more strictly Heideggerian conception of dwelling is represented in screen vocabulary, *screensavers* were created: hinting at a sense of sheltering ("savers"), these are employed to let monitors go on stand-by, avoiding phosphor burn-in and subsequent discoloration, this was a way to concretely avoid ruining the space, effectively "saving the earth."[22]

There is another way of conceiving screen spaces in commonly used lexicon, one that does not evoke feelings of home, but remains akin to the all-pervading sense of space and location felt on screens. There are terms that allude to a less defined space, one that belongs to the relatively new visual regime of navigation. With mobility as the key component of contemporary visuality, a common approach to space is to pass through it, to flow, both on and off the screen. Nanna Verhoeff theorizes a navigational turn,[23] a concept that conjures Foucault's disquisition on heterotopias, of which the boat is considered an extreme case, in that it is a "floating piece of space" without geographical bounds that travels from port to port.[24] This kind of motion is reflected in the vocabulary that describes the environment of the screen. As if the *World Wide Web* – a heterotopic setting in itself, an intricate and universal lattice – were a sort of shapeshifting universe –

[22] Heidegger, Martin. *Building, Dwelling, Thinking*, cit. P. 148

[23] Verhoeff, Nanna. *Mobile Screens: The Visual Regime of Navigation*. Amsterdam University Press, Amsterdam 2012. P. 13

[24] Foucault, Michel. "Of Other Spaces." Cit. P. 22

sometimes water, sometimes earth – we have called it *cyberspace* and decided that moving across it – or rather *navigating* it – would be called *surfing* the web. Moments of web surfing are identified as *streaming*, and files are stored in *clouds*, moving upwards in the water cycle. Television programs air on *channels*, on some computers readily accessible apps are stored on a *dock*. But then the metaphor of water falters in both common and technical language, we are relocated to earth as soon as we use a site's *marketplace* or enter a *forum*. Many of the words used belong to the semantic field of areas of transit: some people own a *PlayStation*, data can be entered and visualized in the computer's *terminal*. Once again it is not transparent who or what the environment is for: the people who move across the network of *information highways* scattered with *posts* were – for a time – called the *netizens*, the *sites* built once had names such as *MySpace*[25], or *GeoCities*[26] to indicate human sites of residence, but it is the data that finds its *data path*, departing from the *terminal*, finding its place in data*bases*.

It can be intuitively concluded that in our language and thus in the way we make sense of screen processes, it does not matter what exact type of construction or natural place screen spaces resemble, but rather that we can codify them as existing human-built structures and areas connected to dwelling. Whether the dwellers are implied to be us or some immaterial digital entity, the space inside of and around the screen can be conceptualized as that of a home inside of a heterotopia. These spaces are approached as places are, that is, they tend to be inhabited, thus they must be thought of in terms of dwelling.

4. Plan of the present work

The new kind of space we inhabit will hereby be explained and mapped proceeding from its relation to the idea of place, adding to the brief comments already made; the screen will then be discussed as an area of dwelling in its distinct architecture and classifications: dwellings by identification, virtual dwellings, and flow dwellings. Screendwellings will be studied concretely by means of comparison, using examples from popular culture and social media. Content formats with diverse characteristics will

[25] Bohnett, David, and John Rezner. *GeoCities*, 2009 1994.

[26] Anderson T., DeWolfe C., 2003 – present, *Myspace*, TI Gotham Inc., Time Inc., accessed: 30/10/2023

be analysed to demonstrate the potential of the model's applications. Dwelling by identification will be illustrated through a television show and a film, respectively *Un Posto Al Sole*[27] and *Twin Peaks;*[28] the comparison will serve the purpose of delineating the differences between dwelling as it happens in contents that portray mostly home environments or fixed sets and contents that feature a wide variety of non-fixed environments. Virtual dwellings will be studied in their social media form, Instagram[29] and TikTok[30] profiles will be studied as an incredibly diffused personal space, working as an online domicile; both cases feature the potential to curate a personal environment, but the possibilities offered by the two platforms change in the modalities to do so. Nonetheless both screens were designed to be inhabited. Flow dwelling will be exemplified by the TikTok "for you" page and by the Instagram feed. Although flow dwellings occur in other forms too, for example in certain shapes of narration in cinema[31], the most recent and overt example of its functioning and consequences is to be found in social media. The three types of dwelling of course have some intersections, and flow dwelling itself always features either some identification, or a virtual space, or a mixture of both.

Once habitability has been described it will eventually be possible to discuss the environment in more specific terms, examining the connection between spaces perceived as home, spaces perceived as other, and how these interact with each other and with the dweller. This context will be read through Oldenburg and Brissett's model of third places in chapter two:[32] not only are screens sites of dwelling, which makes them first places, but they are for many a location of work, thus becoming second places, and they can be spots for socialising, incarnating the concept of third place. As previously mentioned, I

---

[27] *Un Posto Al Sole*. Directed by Wayne Doyle et al., present 1996.

[28] *Twin Peaks*. Directed by David Lynch and Mark Frost, serial drama, ABC Network, 1991 1990. | *Twin Peaks: The Return*. Directed by David Lynch and Mark Frost, serial drama, Showtime, 2017.

[29] Krieger, Mike and Systrom, Kevin. *Instagram*. https://www.instagram.com/. Accessed 30 Dec. 2023.

[30] Zhang, Yiming. *TikTok*. https://www.tiktok.com/it-IT/. Accessed 15 Nov. 2023.

[31] A notable example in cinema would be *1917* (2019, Mendes), in which the camera follows the main characters in a seemingly continuous way, giving the viewer the impression of only two takes throughout the entire film. In situations such as this both the visuals and the narrative are developed in a flow structure.

[32] Oldenburg, Ramon and Brissett, Dennis. "The Third Place*." In* in *Qualitative Sociology, 1982*

would like to argue that the spaces on screen can never be fully defined as places, they are made of a mixture of real and imagined spaces, real enough to offer the possibility of practical orientation, but so new and imaginary as to work in still evolving forms, whose resulting sociality is regulated by contracts yet to be fully developed. One of the issues that present themselves in light of this social uncertainty is the one of privacy. On monitors that flatten the spatial elements of life – where work, home, and community tend to be one ad the same – private and public spheres entangle, letting the viewer into the home of the viewed, and making every private interaction potentially open for anyone to see.

The dynamics that stem from the fusion of intimate and communal life will be at the centre of Chapter Three, focused on delineating a model of dweller, and inquiring about the experience of inhabiting the screen. The dwelling experience will be sketched starting from Heidegger's considerations on dwelling and using Husserl's phenomenological theories. The study will describe the mode of interaction with the device and the other subjects that appear through it, which determine the degree of mobility and the possibility of being active rather than passive towards the screen. As previously mentioned, the spectator has a minor margin of power when sitting in front of a classic television screen, and is almost completely passive in their activity, but as soon as the interface considered is the one on the computer, or the one of the phone, the regime of visuality becomes navigational,[33] and the dweller becomes an active participant in forming the screen image. In this respect, Giuliana Bruno recalls Siegfried Kracauer's interpretation of surfaces as the most relevant aspect of modern visuality, the urban dweller is said to inhabit a map of modern surfaces such as the movie theatre.[34] Kracauer's essays revolve around the architecture of the modern city as it appeared at the time of writing, in the early Sixties, when it could not be imagined just how predominant dynamic surfaces would become in the experience of dwelling in our time. The element of absorption is central to the cinematic experience, in which the spectator is subjected to and takes part in a magnified encounter with consumption,[35] but its magnitude grows exponentially with the level of

[33] Verhoeff, Nanna. *Mobile Screens: The Visual Regime of Navigation*, cit. P. 24

[34] Bruno, Giuliana. *Surface: Matters of Aesthetics, Materiality, and Media*. University of Chicago Press, Chicago 2014. P. 56

[35] Ibidem, p. 58

involvement, and the concept can be applied to television and phone screens. Being able to touch and carry the monitor at all times creates a new relationship between dweller and dwelling, in which the conception of the outside environment is modified as well. Cooley illustrates in detail the compatibility between mobile device and hand, she defines the "fit's effect" on visuality: the monitor is so predisposed to the absorption of attention that the hand operating it is effectively overshadowed.[36]

What follows is a new consequence of the repositioning of the observer as discussed by Crary in dealing with the end of the regime of visuality characteristic of the camera obscura, which represents – in his view – the first technology of vision requiring the viewer to enter the viewed/viewing situation, differently from earlier modes based on a utopic standpoint for the observer, as it is the case in the perspectival model. If in the nineteenth century vision becomes immediate and involves the viewer's body, and already in the earliest manifestations of screen media the use of sight is autonomous and detached from touch,[37] it is the reintegration of touch that triggers the most recent transformation of vision, one where its site is both in the body and in the screen, and the relations between interior and exterior are once again disrupted.

[36] Cooley, Heidi Rae. "It's All about the Fit: The Hand, the Mobile Device and Tactile Vision." Cit. Pp. 137-139

[37] Crary, Jonathan. *Techniques of the Observer*, cit. P. 19

Chapter One: The Home

5. Place and surface: before the screen

Screens as we know them have slowly insinuated themselves into our daily spatial practices during the last couple of centuries and have become a site of human activity, but other less technologically complex surfaces have been incorporated in our representations of homes and used in relation to the function of dwelling long before then. Wanda Strauven discusses the history of screens – in particular that of the touchscreen – including all types of hands-on material surfaces. In her book *Touchscreen Archaeology* she talks about screens that are not closely related to the visual arts nor traditionally flat, such as the Victorian fire screen with its protective function, and then she mentions the theatrical display of the magical fan, an object of spectacle. She writes about the hand-screens, objects of fashion and entertainment used by Victorian women to circulate air and hide their faces, but also to observe the panoramas painted on them. She mentions cabinets and shop windows, which protect items and allow them to be shown.[38] The history of screens thus appears rich and connected to objects distant from what is commonly defined as a technological screen. Limiting the discussion to flat surfaces and to the visual also brings to mind some notable examples. Murals are painted in Pompeii (fig. 1) to give the illusion of wider interiors and as a symbol of the activities to be carried out in the rooms; the depictions of space that appear on the walls are general representations and they certainly cannot be walked into, but the figures populating them are involved in some sort of interaction with the actual population of the room, either by participation in the same kind of activities or by seemingly looking at them. In seventeenth century Kurdistan, Persian carpets are weaved in the shape of gardens (fig. 2), flowers, plants and water streams are stylized to produce decorative maps. The potential of walking on the carpets means that it is ideally possible to tour the garden; still, many garden carpets are used as wall hangings, and even while walking on them the sense of absorption is limited because when the carpet lies on the ground, its surroundings are still in most cases what interests the individual on it. The first notable occurrence of

[38] Strauven, Wanda. *Touch Screen Archaeology: Tracing Histories of Hands-On Media Practices*, cit. Pp. 155-166

someone approximating surface-dwelling as we know it is in the years between 1799 and 1805, when Jacques-Louis David exhibits a notorious scene from Roman history he has painted while imprisoned. *Les Sabines* (fig. 3) hangs on a wall by itself, the opposite wall is occupied by a mirror that fits the refection of the painting and the figures of the visitors, who find themselves living and breathing inside of a civil war, happening as much in ancient Rome as in contemporary France. The Bastille palace on the background and the lack of historically accurate garments on the bodies of people remind the visitors of it. Furthermore, David knows how to draw the observer inside: a child in the centre of the canvas gazes forward and out of the picture, crossing the gaze of anyone looking at it. Absorption, movement, identification, and history are planned and realized on the canvas in what has never happened in art history before that time. David perhaps unknowingly approaches the feeling of place in his work, creating a condition that becomes much more common in later visuality.

Figure 1. *Banquet scene with inscribed words* (1st century CE), Fresco, House of the Triclinium, Pompeii.

Figure 2. *Garden Carpet*, 18th century, made in Iran, Cotton and wool, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

Figure 3. *The Sabines*, 1794, Jaques-Louis David, oil on canvas, Musée du Louvre, Paris

6. Place and surface: what of the screen?

To describe the condition of dwelling and of being home it is not enough to simply state that something evokes its typical sensations; if something is a home, it might be implied that it is a house, and as such it could be mistakenly assumed that it is a place too. To reiterate Augé's definition of anthropological place: to be described as such a site should host identity, relations, and history.[39]

The matter of identities is inseparable from screens as it is from mirrors: in them we see something or someone to relate to, characters to identify with, inspirations or antitheses; through them we connect with communities. Identity is a fundamental part of screen activity, just as it is a fundamental part of off-screen reality. As one zooms in and explores their parts, though, identities built on-screen can appear fragmented, made up of all the images collected on the surface in discontinuous points in time, they are nebulous and difficult to recognize in their entirety; identities are built in particular ways in these contexts. While the single parts of identity that manifest on screen represent only some sides of the user, the impact they have on our self-perception and on the perception we hold of others is not to be underestimated. When identifying in a character or choosing how to present oneself on social media the process of identity building is taking place, but the quality of it is quite different from that of the identity built in those that are irrevocably considered places. Screen identity tends to waver and expand incorporating new traits while simultaneously leaving behind obsolete ones. That is not to say that anyone's off-screen persona is monolithic and unchanging, but identities built through screens must bleed out into reality to be concretized and cannot persist as much without the support of in-person relations held in physical places. Zizi Papacharissi writes that "the anonymous and textual nature of cyberspace allows one to overcome identity fixes," and that users can thus explore certain sides of their personalities more extensively, but she also concludes that the way identity is expressed is mediated by the structure of the medium.[40]

---

[39] Augé, Marc. *Nonluoghi, cit.* P. 60

[40] Papacharissi, Zizi. 2002. "The Presentation of Self in Virtual Life: Characteristics of Personal Homepages." In *J&MC Quarterly*, vol. 79, no. 3, 2002. P. 645 and 657

Identities are expressed more than formed on screen, they are mediated by the individual decision to show some traits – where possible – and by the possibilities offered by the platform.

There is a lot to be said about screens' capability of hosting social relations: the television supplanted fireplaces as the warm centre of gathering in the home from the beginning of its mass diffusion. In 1956 Richard Hamilton famously inaugurated Pop-Art pasting a small screen in the place of a chimney and the title of his work – *Just What Is It That Makes Today's Home So Different, So Appealing?* – manifested the start of a new age of dwelling (fig. 4), one in which television and its smiling advertisements were as much part of the house as its inhabitants.[42] Whilst cinema and tv also facilitate an experience through the screen, the distance between what and whom stands on the two sides of this threshold is seemingly shortened on computer and phone screens, where the possibility of communication between users is real and conjugated in all sorts of ways, at first glance the interactions look more palpable than the ones happening in person where no exchange is written down or recorded. It is in the permanence of these exchanges that for the first time the issue of synchronicity is encountered, a long-abandoned interaction can be revived by anyone at any point in time, thus bringing back its actors to the position they once occupied. When observing the relationship between the two sides of bigger screens the roles are easily defined: those who occupy the places on the other side of the screen are providing the entertainment and those who watch are consuming it, there often is overlap on the part of the entertainers, who can occupy both sides, but the system of exchanges – however distant from a relationship – remains definite. The same cannot be said of computers and mobile devices, which democratically grant everyone the right to create contents placing every user both in the position of entertainment provider and spectator. This matter will be discussed later in further detail, for now it is only necessary to point out that computers and phones either have non-relational private spaces, spaces in which communications take place between parties that also have off screen relationships, or public spaces in which the option to monetize interactions exists, making them a viable measure of labour in many instances. There are relations, but they can take impersonal forms and be finalized to economic gain, meaning that the relational function

[42] Stonard, John-Paul. "Pop in the Age of Boom: Richard Hamilton's "Just What Is It That Makes Today's Homes so Different, so Appealing?"*"* In *The Burlington Magazine*, vol. 149, no. 1254, 2007, pp. 607–20. P. 116

exists only in part of the interactions on screen. Stine Gotved observes the spatial dimensions of communities formed online, proving that first and foremost a spatial dimension exists in online communities,[43] but asserting that this is not enough to talk about a place per se. In her work, she coins the concept of "metaphorical space," describing the perceived spatiality and the imagined geography that make an online space feel like "a special place with certain spatial qualities."[44] If the social dimension does not grant screens the privilege of being acknowledged as places, it is still accepted that they have what it takes to arouse the *feeling* of place: looking at a screen, no matter the size of it, generally obliges the eye to focus on the light source and on its moving images, allowing the mind to alienate from the material surroundings and to only focus on the movement and perceived depth.

Figure 4. *Just What is It that Makes Today's Homes so Different, So Appealing*?, 1956 Richard Hamilton, John McHale, Kunsthalle Tübingen, Tübingen

The last issue to be discussed in order to rule out the definition of screens as places is their connection to history, and it might be the most intricate one. As it happens with identity and relations, we face a complex system in which screens and history are involved in many ways without this satisfyingly allowing for history to be made and retained on screen. There is undoubtedly such a thing as the history of cinema, or

[43] Gotved, Stine. "Spatial Dimensions in Online Communities." In *Space and Culture*, vol. 5, no. 4, Nov. 2002. Pp. 405–14. Pp. 406-408

[44] Ibidem, P. 412

television history. Film is studied largely in relation to the history of its technological and artistic development and it is true that, on many occasions, television has contributed to the making of history: the broadcasting of exceptional historical events inevitably changed the process of living the present as well as the past for the masses. The historical dimension cannot be fully wiped from the realm of screens: as previously discussed they are – in some form – a space of social connection, and as such they host the beginning and propagation of tendencies and the transmission of ideas, they support the creation of movements and help news circulate. But history happens differently than in the physical reality: most new notions are introduced and made obsolete too quickly to gain the status of history itself. There is a memory of things that have disappeared, and maybe the one characteristic of screens that most participates to history is the permanence to which all contents are destined, almost nothing is ever fully lost; as the practice of lost sites archival shows,[45] there are ways to restore damaged finds from which a coherent story can be constructed. Stories on the screen can be recovered at any time and yet they are impermanent in our memory: the news systematically illustrate the precedents to which they refer; shows most often start with a supercut of the previous episodes guiding our attention to the relevant facts; computers keep track of the progress on documents and even allow the user to retrieve deleted items; search histories can remind one of their internet whereabouts on any earlier date. Whilst men are forgetful creatures, screens seem to lend their own memory to human lacks. Screen histories feel synchronous for the same reasons screen relations are asynchronous, in both cases everything can be revived, things that have happened in the past can be experienced again thus flattening time to the present moment, but in the case of relations this resolves in asynchronous interactions on the other side of which people cannot always be retrieved, while contents can almost always be activated again. The feeling of history – whether through its retelling, the mention of past events, or manifestation in current events – is thus omnipresent in screen spaces, but history itself struggles to crystallize: the documentation of screen contents, which would ultimately contribute to confer them the status of history, rarely happens systematically and cannot produce the picture of a single, mainstream, well-readable history.

[45] Bril, Marijn Josephien. "Performatively Archiving the Early Web: One Terabyte of Kilobyte Age." In *VIEW Journal of European Television History and Culture*, vol. 12, no. 23, Sept. 2023, Pp. 69–85.

Documentation happens each time a screenshot is taken, but historians' approach to the recording of testimonies is still being explored in its procedures and purpose. Digital archives exist for a multitude of reasons, they work as any other archive to provide access to books and movies, or to store other sites in case of consultation needs. A historical profile of the Web is delineated on archival sites such as *One Terabyte of Kilobyte Age*,[46] built with the archaeological purpose of creating an inventory of the pages rescued from the demise of *GeoCities*,[47] one of the first Web hosting sites to exist on the internet. The collective who took care of this matter is the Archive Team, and its mission statement openly declares "saving our digital heritage" to be the main purpose of the work the group does. What's more remarkable is that the opening line in their wiki cites history as their field of action: they state that "History is our future. And we've been trashing our history,"[48] presenting the reader with a clear admission of the possibility of operating historical research in digital environments similarly to how it is done outside of them. Documentation is also the core of the investigation on screencast documentaries conducted by scholar Richard Rogers: the phenomenon of websites recording through video collection of their past versions is studied in a framework of "Web historiography."[49] Concluding the study Rogers illuminates the complications of talking about digital history and of the historian use of the Web, which lie in their limitation and relative scarcity of studies on them.[50] What stems from the work is that the history of a website may be studied, but the outcome of documentary analysis of the Web will always be a series of Web histories. Web histories can hence be a part of history, screen identities, relations, and history still happen, but they do so unlike they would in any place, they are dislocated and decentralized, the history of one Web "place" does not exist, sites change and migrate. Identity, relations, and history of the anthropological place still interact with

[46] Lialina, Olia, and Dragan Espenschied. *One Terabyte of Kilobyte Age | Digging through the Geocities Torrent*. https://blog.geocities.institute/. Accessed 1 Nov. 2023.

[47] Bohnett, David, and John Rezner. *GeoCities* 2009 1994.

[48] Scott J., 2023, *Archive Team*. https://wiki.archiveteam.org/. Accessed 25/09/2023

[49] Rogers, Richard. "Doing Web History with the Internet Archive: Screencast Documentaries." In *Internet Histories*, vol. 1, no. 1–2, Jan. 2017, Pp. 160–72. P. 160

[50] Ibidem, p. 170

all screens in different capacities, in a way that lacks cohesion, not making it possible to determine with certainty that they belong to the screen as a place.

Augé also reports the definition of place provided by De Certeau as an "ordered distribution of elements in relationships of coexistence."[51] It is a place which is stable and static, within which space is created through movement and practice;[52] the definition is antithetical to Heidegger's place: a location that is built and that allows for a space made of peculiar positions and intervals.[53] De Certeau's idea of fixed place, which can only be true of screens in some measure: there are cardinal points and solid elements, but these are mere features, that can be shifted at will and are perpetually crossed by moving, unstable images that change every second, instability becomes a feature of the screen just as much as its fixed icons. Screens can be – and are – populated by the majority of their users just like places are, but in a way that resembles a highway more than it does a church, they are crowded with signs of action and direction, but they pertain more to the interface than they do to the content. The contents might be in the form of places, but their container is a nonplace. Additional proof of the consistency between the nonplace denomination and the screen is the postulation that the nonplace is always coexistent with the place:[54] they coexist in the contradictions discussed earlier, the elements of history, relations and identity exist, within bounds, on all screens.

Augé's nonplaces find their occupiers in spectators who only see their image in the passing landscape, have text-based relations, and confine history to limited sites dedicated to memory.[55] There is one feature of the contemporary screens, however, that is not completely reflected in his description of supermodern nonplaces: it is its intimate nature. In many cases screens occupy the places of our everyday activities, including our domesticity, and they are so integral to the spatial practice of our time that they sometimes adhere to our bodies acting as their expansion rather than an exterior device. Besides, the nonplace of Supermodernity theorized by Augé has its prime example in a highway busy

[51] Ibidem, p.60

[52] De Certeau, Michel. *The Practice of Everyday Life*. University of California Press, Los Angeles 1984. P. 117.

[53] Heidegger, Martin. *Building, Dwelling, Thinking*, cit. P. 152

[54] Augé, Marc, *Nonluoghi*, cit. P. 77

[55] Ibidem, pp. 77-88

with means of transportation that are inhabited,[56] and while screens do act as a means of transportation that allow us to travel between contents, I would argue that cinematographic sets, television channels, websites, social media feeds, desktops, and any screen space, are not only able to evoke the feeling of dwelling, but also offer the opportunity to be actually dwelt in. A screen is now as dwelt in in terms of hardware, as it is in its software parts: the contents can look like a highway or like a mall, yet – as nonplaces – they can be dwelt in, that is, they are inhabitable heterotopias.

In Foucault's model of heterotopia, the main representation of this concept is found in the mirror: a surface in which a place opposite to the one it faces is revealed. The mirror is absolutely other than the things it reflects, thus it can be called a heterotopia, however it is also a utopia in that the place we see in it does not exist.[57] The screen shares this ambiguity with the mirror, it also resembles it in its most basic attributes of surface and apparent depth, they both exhibit moving objects that can be manoeuvred by the spectator itself or by a third party. The mirror can, much like a camera, be moved to frame t otherwise unseen. The screen, however, eludes the label of utopia – an unquestionably unreal space – by virtue of our faculty to act on it and interact through it. A utopia is an imaginary place, but everything that is seen on screen needs some degree of concreteness for it to exist.

It is essential to acknowledge the principles and applicability of the category to confidently describe the screen as a heterotopia. Foucault postulates six characteristics of the heterotopia, the first of which is its omnipresence within cultures: spaces that are other are produced by every society; a further specification to this point is that heterotopias of crisis are created in every primitive society to delimit special areas reserved for individuals in a state of crisis.[58] Apropos of this, many screen spaces come to mind, such as television channels broadcasting religious functions, online communities, meditation apps and sites, support groups of disparate natures. The second principle concerns the changing function of heterotopias: if they keep existing they change in accordance to the

[56] Ibidem, p. 77

[57] Foucault, Michel. "Of Other Spaces." Cit. P. 17

[58] Ibidem, p. 18

use society grows to make of them.[59] The physical example of the cemetery, once placed inside of the city and now constituting a separate city entity inhabited by the dead could be translated to the archives of webpages that have been saved from being deleted forever at the closing of their original website and transformed into items of internet archaeology; an even better example is provided by the social media homepages of people who have passed away, once their curated spaces, made into online memorial sites where family and friends can pay their respects. If screen spaces align with the first two principles, they are a champion of the third, which claims that heterotopias juxtapose several incompatible spaces. The case of cinema does not escape Foucault's analysis, the two-dimensional screen that presents a three-dimensional space to the viewer[60] is the first instance of contrasting space that is verified on screen. The conversation on heterotopias dates back to 1967, when the kaleidoscope of juxtapositions that are now possible could not have been suspected. The fourth principle of heterotopias also seems perfect to describe time spent on the screen: heterotopias have slices of time that Foucault calls heterochronisms: there are heterotopias in which time accumulates and those in which time is transitory, and the two types frequently overlap.[61] Accumulations of time are manifested on screen as the folders filled with files on our desktops, as the digital libraries we visit, as any website with encyclopedic purposes; temporary heterotopias are those that we frequent leisurely to be entertained, they are lost in the stream of contents and occasional. In the proximity of different contexts in adjacent windows, in the occasional visit to the movie theatre, in the libraries of streaming sites, and in most forms of dwelling on screen, the two conceptions of time are fused together. The fifth principle also has its application in the context: it is presumed that to enter a heterotopia one must participate in rituals that both keep it isolated and make it penetrable,[62] it can be a religious sign or an act of purification, it can consist of typing a password, pressing a button, or it can be the purchase of a ticket. The last principle requires the heterotopia to have a function relatively to the rest of space, it is specified that the function might be to expose all real space as illusory or on the contrary to create a perfect space that is as precise and

[59] Ibidem, p. 18

[60] Ibidem, p. 19

[61] Ibidem, p. 20

[62] Ibidem, p. 21

meticulously arranged as ours is disorderly.[63] The requisite is observed once again, and in both ways it accounts for: the unruliness of online spaces often makes social customs respected in daily life cease to work, revealing some of their artificiality, but concurrently the interactions happen in an orderly environment in which every command can be used in one and only one way, if cinema is taken into consideration then it can be as revealing of real space as it can be controlled and compensate it.

One last attribute of the space produced on screen must be expounded before discussing its habitability: when Foucault formulates the concept of heterotopia he is strictly considering what he calls "outer space," the space that contains us rather than the perceived one that our mind contains, the space he refers to is also public – although possibly closed – and dedicated to a specific practice, be it work or leisure, family or society. This way, Foucault's space has not yet been – in his words – desacralized,[64] a practical change in the order of space had not happened. The border between private and public is completely eroded on screen in innumerable instances, in a cinema the audience is publicly made part of private events taking place in private fictional homes, the insides of houses – real or imagined – are on display in public areas of the Web, spying the family life of made-for-television characters is the entire purpose of some comedy shows; the places on the other side of the screen are at once a work environment and a recreational setting, in some situations the line is also blurred between the roles of employer, employee, and consumer. The issue is complicated and will be better explored in chapters Two and Three, for now it is enough to take notice of a change in the function of commonly frequented areas that corresponds to a change in the roles played in society. Henri Lefebvre wrote:

> A revolution that does not produce space has not realized its full potential […]. A social transformation, to be truly revolutionary in character, must manifest a creative capacity in its effects on daily life, on language and on space – though its impact need not occur at the same rate, or with equal force, in each of these areas.[65]

---

[63] Ibidem, p. 21

[64] Ibidem, p. 16

[65] Lefebvre, Henri. *The Production of Space*. Blackwell Publishers, Inc., Hoboken 1991. P. 54

If a desacralization of space, in Foucault's terms, has occurred, there is indeed a revolutionary character in the types of place it produced. The central problem investigated in this work is far from being the social revolution in itself, or every consequence the latest technological revolution bred, but it is rather to understand the space in it and in particular its capability of being adapted to dwelling.

It might seem perplexing to equate screens to houses. It appears obvious that screens lack some of the basic characteristics of the house, from the ability to be physically penetrated via a door to the faculty of sheltering from the elements, and yet they share with it so many traits. All the factors influencing the way a house is built – listed by Rapoport as: basic needs, family, the position of women, the need for privacy and social intercourse[67] – come into play on screen in many ways.

The basic needs to be satisfied by the site of dwelling depend on the society that builds it, different populations dwell in different ways because of the temperature and light, and they adapt their homes to religious or practical needs;[68] in physical houses some selected basic needs translate to dwelling traditions, and while traditions exist in the way moving images are shot and edited, perhaps one of the most recognised needs on small screens is customizability, every user can tailor their screen to their individual needs, creating their own specific screen habits. Some common needs met by the screen are also shared by physical houses, storage and organization work in similar fashions in the two environments: private documents are gathered and available to be retrieved at any time through the screen's interface like they would be in a home's cupboards, photos are saved and arranged in galleries and on home screens as they are on a living room's walls. The need for entertainment and stories is satisfied by cinema, television, and social media. Other needs are not met directly on the screen but are facilitated through it in innumerable ways: sleep can be monitored and interrupted, the preparation of food can be guided, and its consumption accompanied, social connections are made to a certain degree, partners are met, the list goes on.

[67] Rapoport, Amos. *House, Form and Culture, cit.*. P. 61

[68] Ibidem, p. 62

The shape of the screendwelling is definitely built in a way that complies with the needs of the family that uses it – the size of the television depends on how many people are going to be watching it at once, or on how much of a relevant family activity it represents – and at the same time the interaction with screens surely influences family life. In studying mobility and handheld devices Verhoeff describes the screen space of Nintendo DS consoles and the feeling of connectivity elicited by its wireless functions, as well as the experience of continuity between hands, screen and eyes created; the attribute of the DS screen specifically emphasized is the one to create a connection between spaces that make being and playing together possible,[69] allowing for a moment of gathering between family members or friends. Small screens have an influence on the way we live the family experience: blogs and vlogs give insight into the most private moments of the life of more or less well-known families, and potentially all of them.

The position of women is complexly linked to the use of screens, as is the position of people in minorities and marginalized communities. It is relevant to recognize the relative freedom with which almost anyone – excluding cases in which access to the internet is limited or controlled – can move between the shared spaces of social media, reducing the distance between private and public and thus infringing the barrier which limited the access to the public in earlier common spaces. In reorganizing space, technology subverts the gendered nature of the modern city described by Massey[70] in *Space, Place, Gender*, giving the same space to all, at least declaredly.

The need for privacy is obviously a very notorious issue of life on screen, there are laws regulating it that are constantly updated, endless debates on the risks related to the lack of it, but as far as the connection to a definition of house goes there are spaces that respond to it. Private chats, account settings, galleries and privately archived posts, music libraries, and all those interfaces that require a password to use function as privately as a studio or a bedroom, they have their windows on the outside which make it possible to peek in or out, but they still maintain an exclusive character.

---

[69] Verhoeff, Nanna. *Mobile Screens: The Visual Regime of Navigation*, cit. Pp. 89-90

[70] Massey, Doreen B. *Space, Place, and Gender*. University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis 1994. Pp. 233-234

Lastly, the need for social intercourse is self-evident: a vast number of spaces have social interaction on screen as their aim, and the phenomenon of meeting people online, as opposed to doing so in person is widespread, at time it is the only option available to subjects. The functions and requisites of a house are thus in some way adaptable to life on the screens, but their definition as homes is still contentious since the home is the prime example of place.

To gain a more specific understanding of what is the feeling of home and how its representation is structured, one can turn to its phenomenological studies. In particular, perhaps the most accredited and complete illustration of the intimate feelings of home is *The Poetics of Space* by Gaston Bachelard, later referred to in the works of Foucault (2009) and Lefebvre (1991). The house is first described by Bachelard as an intimate inside space, of which he sets off to find the original essence to justify "the uncommon value of all images of home."[73] The first finding that is relevant to the present work is the claim that home is a shelter, and not only in the way Rapoport's house is a shelter against the climate, but a shelter to the mind too, since the home fosters daydreaming.[74] The screen is a vehicle of creativity, the infinite combinations of its functions allow for any imaginable idea to be replicated and spread, thus it can be a vehicle for sharing the concretization of dreams.

A second question raised by Bachelard is the one on memories and comfort: the home hosts memories and, as the place solitude was once felt in, it acts as a shell for the individual, who finds it heart-warming.[75] Initially the hard exterior of the hardware never feels like an object of much warmth, but it is a shell, and undoubtedly an instrument of our solitude, through the projected image and the familiarity with characters or spaces, a sense of memory is built. Says Bachelard that the unconscious knows how to make itself at home everywhere, the feeling of walking on the streets is recalled as if one were presently moving,[76] in the same way one can move between stacks of apps and folders; on actively lived screens the memory can move even with the eye far from them, when

[73] Bachelard, Gaston. *The Poetics of Space, cit.* Pp. 25-26

[74] Ibidem, p. 28

[75] Ibidem, p. 32

[76] Ibidem, pp. 32-33

one remembers tasks to be completed the path to its completion is imagined as if it was presently being covered. The home, or "the real house of memories," eludes a comprehensive description, because if it were to be wholly illustrated it would be like showing it to visitors,[77] the Bachelardian house maintains a veil of shadow because it contains the owner's past, their most intimate memories. There is a sense of intimacy that is verified on the smallest screens of course, our search histories know our deepest fears, many of our passions find some sort of fruition in our use of social media, but the sense of shadow and indescribability is different than the one felt for example in remembering our childhood home, for the same circumstances that determine the desacralization of space also rob screen space of any suspect of poetry.

A house is imagined as a vertical being, and one that has a centrality.[78] The fundamental mode of space organization on any screen is the grid. The images are pieced together on a weave of pixels in rows and columns, the directions admitted in the screen are any and all of those admitted on a cartesian plane, but the ones prevailing are the horizontal and vertical ones. On the big screen, wider than it is tall, the end titles roll from the bottom up, the channels on television do not have a real physically defined order, but we browse through them in a seemingly vertical order, on computers and phones the prevalence of verticality is even more notable: moving horizontally means changing page, metaphorically exiting the current room, which has as its only mode of exploration the vertical scroll. The centrality Bachelard theorizes is slightly less evident on screen: the cinema screen does not have a centre per se, other than the geometrical one, but in the time the spectator spends inside of the movie theatre the screen itself becomes a centre. The movement inside of the television screen is not organized around a single area, there is a constant flow within and between channels, but in it there are certain points we frequently come back to: certain personal landmarks. Small screens generally have built-in homes where everything can be found, opened, and closed. Lastly, homes are places where the primitiveness of refuge is felt,[79] which can be true of screens in those instances in which we escape to a familiar source of solace where nothing is required of us other

[77] Ibidem, p. 34

[78] Ibidem, pp. 39-50

[79] Ibidem, pp. 50-57

than casually paying attention, when the work tabs are closed and the familiarity of our desktop welcomes us in its tidy emptiness once again, when the screen lights up to show a friendly name on it, the occurrences in which it can happen are countless.

6.1 Screendwelling: architectures

A starting point in thoroughly describing the space that has been discussed in the previous sections of this work can be its architecture. It seems reasonable to draw some principles from the ideas on inhabitation and architecture presented in the literature previously mentioned. The structure must be observed from the outside, the hardware of a computer or the instalment of a cinema screen will inevitably affect the ways of its inhabitation. Once the space is observed from the outside, if shelter is provided, it is important to know how to access it and how many can access it at a time. We follow Rapoport's architectural and sociological examination of the house to understand how basic needs and sociality contribute to shaping living space: it must be understood whether the dwelling in question is of nomadic or sedentary nature, what its environment is, and what kind of shelter is found in them. We notice the organization of the rooms, what movements the space allows for, and which actions are possible; coming in from outside one of the first elements noticed is the relationship with the external world, along with traits that can help with orientation in space and time. The screendwelling might have a clear indicator of time or it might not have it: time lives on the screen in manners that are sometimes opposite (Foucault's heterochronism has been mentioned with regards to it).

A further observation has to be made on the fullness or relative emptiness of the home we are in, if it appears full, is it cluttered? Can it be tidied up? If it appears empty, is it possible to fill it? Juxtaposing images crowd the space, in moving inside of the screen heterotopia there are places and spaces overlapping and replacing each other, we must know where they are to have a complete sense of orientation. What kind of control do we exercise on the contents inside of the screendwelling? There might be other dwellers with us or on the other side of the screen, and there are of course objects that can either be removed or not. Our relationship with these other occupants of the screen must be determined: in a setting in which all objects and people are set and out of our control, we become concerned with who has decided the arrangement and why, the decision on

whether it is to our liking follows, if not we often have the option to leave the screendwelling and look for a new one.

6.2 Home or Homes, plural

Living in the screendwelling presents a further complication that makes the space more complex than that of a physical house, since the spectator is not really *in* the screen, but merely watching or operating it. The spaces that are experienced are both the ones inside the screen and the ones outside of it, which meet on the surface of the monitor. In other words, on and off-screen dimensions meet on the threshold of the screen itself. The way we react to the image on it is quite physical because all images that move inspire the recognition of movement, easily triggering identification. This is to be expected of film and television, but the same logic is just as functional if applied to the movement of the computer's cursor, for example. It results that dwelling happens in three sites on every screen: in the perceived depth of the contents, on the two-dimensional map of the surface, and in the motion that is felt.

The first occurrence of film being exposed to an audience had people witness a scene of large open doors, dozens of people walking fast, between them bikes and dogs, and at last a horse-drawn carriage. *Workers Leaving the Lumiere Factory* (1895)[80] is only forty-five seconds long, it does not feature a main character and it has no speech, text, or sound in it. The film was exhibited to demonstrate the possibility of representing motion through the use of new technologies, which is evident in the exaggerated movements of some knowing workers of the factory. The movement perceived is a site of identification,[82] and it represents one of the most basic ways in which the screen can draw the viewer in. For this reason, in less than one minute, an understanding of the setting and of the emotional state of the workers is gained; most importantly, though, the viewer feels as if they were standing in front of the gates of the factory along with the characters on screen. About the physicality of spectating, Bruno writes:

---

[80] *Workers Leaving The Lumiere Factory - Lumiere Brothers 1895*. 2015. *YouTube*, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yvC_xrDqB3s.

[82] Flaxman, Gregory. *The Brain Is the Screen: Deleuze and the Philosophy of Cinema*. University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis 2001. P. 35

> […] film continues the architectural *habitus*. It makes a custom of constructing sites and building sets of dwelling and motion. […] One lives a film as one lives a space that one inhabits: as an everyday passage, tangibly.[83]

Dwelling and motion are presented by and lived in film. There is motion in which we dwell, we are familiar with actors' gestures and camera movements. Lambert quotes a statement by Eisenstein about orientation and motion:

> Possessing such an excellent instrument of perception as cinema—even on its primitive level—for the sensation of movement, we should soon learn a concrete orientation in this four-dimensional space-time continuum, and feel as much at home in it as our own house-slippers. And soon we'll be posing the question of a fifth dimension.[84]

The depth of the screen with its other places and the movement perceived by the dweller are mediated by the object that makes these juxtaposing realities possible: the two-dimensional surface. An often-quoted passage from *Mass Mediauras*, by Samuel Weber, states that television allows for a *sense-perception* to take place, a perception that happens in more than one place at a time, inside of the television and outside of it. Weber recognizes a unity of places and views that makes the television a *surrogate body*.[85] Similarly, artistic moving images installed in museums offer a way to link fictional world and that of the public visiting the installations by way of screens that become a sort of deictic membrane.[86] A further space can be added to the perspective of insiders and outsiders: the one in between the site of recording and the one of receiving. There is a third site of dwelling, one that is not the place in which the actions happen nor the movement itself. When the identification in a character on the screen takes place, when the user flips through desktop folders or navigates social media, the process through

---

[83] Bruno, Giuliana. *Atlas of Emotion : Journeys in Art, Architecture, and Film*. New York : Verso, 2007. P. 65

[84] Lambert, Gregg. "Cinema and the Outside." In Flaxman, Gregory. T*he Brain Is the Screen: Deleuze and the Philosophy of Cinema*. 2001 P. 254

[85] Weber, Samuel. *Mass Mediauras: Form, Technics, Media*. Stanford University Press, Stanford1996. Pp. 116-117

[86] Butler, Alison. Displacements: Reading Space and Time in Moving Image Installations. Pallgrave Macmillan, London 2019.

which one inserts themselves in the screen environment begins, but even metaphorically entering the screen we still see the image on it in its entirety. Although we feel as if we were taking the character's place, we still see the character itself; although what we see is the familiar face of a friend in their latest post, we cannot ignore the other objects on the screen and our ability to "touch" it, for example by way of the mouse.

Having described in broad terms what elements present themselves in the screendwelling, the three types of dwelling I have identified – dwelling by identification, virtual dwellings, and flow dwelling – can be drawn and compared. It is not infrequent that one kind of screendwelling is experienced in conjunction to another, some areas of flow dwelling host identification, which can also be felt in the setting of virtual dwellings, and so on. The home to be dwelt in is, following the developments of the previous paragraphs, a screendwelling that is lived in depth, surface, and motion, because it exists on the two dimensions of the surface, in three dimensions in the depth of cinematographic frames and juxtaposed planes, and in four dimensions considering the one of time.

7. Dwelling by identification: a home within a home

7.1 The building: fixed and changing sets

On April the 8th, 1990, the pilot episode of Twin Peaks (Lynch and Frost) aired on the ABC Network. The first two minutes of feature the opening titles of the show: a bird on a branch, a sawmill in the process of its activities, and a road with a sign reading "*Welcome to Twin Peaks. Population 51,201*" followed by falls flowing into a river. The titles are peculiarly outlined in bright green, contrasting the dull browns and greys of the images. These sequences introduce the viewer to some areas that are present in the show's episodes, but marginal to the central plot; rather than an effective representation of what the show is what is built is an atmosphere, which draws spectators in with the slow notes of Angelo Badalamenti's soundtrack. The episode per se is not entirely filmed in fixed sets, but it follows the characters around the town of Twin Peaks. Some of the buildings in the pilot episode become frequent features of the first two seasons, such as the sawmill, the Sheriff's Department, the diner, and the bikers' bar. The more the mystery unravels the more the variety of explored spaces grows.

In the second episode of Season One the Red Room makes its appearance, it is a supernatural and seemingly immaterial place in which some characters make their appearance in dreams and hallucinations. Towards the end of Season Two, the magical places and appearances multiply and overlap with reality, always leaving the spectator with doubts on the location of the events that they are witnessing.[89] In *Twin Peaks: The Return,* aired twenty-five years later,[90] entirely new real and supernatural places are the background of Special Agent Dale Cooper's missions. This does not let us to get used to the scenery, like the fixed sets of *Un Posto al Sole* do, for instance. The many episodes of *Un Posto al Sole* bring the spectator in what becomes essentially the home of a friend; the way the characters move and act is predictable, they have their usual facial expressions, their well-known individual stance and attitude which let the viewer identify with– or distance themselves from – them. The characters of Twin Peaks are written to be complex and unpredictable, their dreams introduce new characters and rules regularly, there is no space for habits, but even so Lynch and Frost build a tense atmosphere for us to familiarize with. We sometimes go back to the Sheriff's Department or to the wooden walls of the Great Northern Hotel and recognize the environment, and a feeling of ease develops in those places, but that is never granted to happen. Season Three almost completely eradicates the viewer from the places of Snoqualmie, where the first two seasons where shot.[92] The technical specifics of the filming process are obviously different, producing different aesthetic effects, but the feeling of tension and doubt persists, the characters – however new or changed they might be – speak in the same riddle-like and quiet way. Some of the old sets change from the second season to the third, a testimony to the decades running between the two, but the way the characters interact and occupy their spaces reminds us where we are and what kind of space we had built inside of our imagination when watching the first two seasons (fig. 5 and fig. 6). In that space we can be at home, and we can find new characters to identify with.

---

[89] *Twin Peaks*. Directed by David Lynch and Mark Frost, serial drama, ABC Network, 1991 1990, Season Two.

[90] *Twin Peaks: The Return*. Directed by David Lynch and Mark Frost, serial drama, Showtime, 2017.

[92] *Twin Peaks | Snoqualmie, WA*. https://www.snoqualmiewa.gov/379/Twin-Peaks. Accessed 29 Dec. 2023.

Figure 5. Still from *Twin Peaks*. Directed by David Lynch and Mark Frost, serial drama, ABC Network, 1991 1990.

Figure 6. Still from *Twin Peaks: The Return*. Directed by David Lynch and Mark Frost, serial drama, Showtime, 2017.

Before the image moves, when the television is switched off, the dweller finds themselves inside of a physical place. Dwelling by identification occurs in its most evident forms at the movie theatre and on television, which unlike the places that other types of dwelling mainly occupy – established mostly on mobile or portable screens – are spatially defined in fixed places. The place of cinema is fixed, it has an address, and it can easily be found, billboards announce the time and room associated with every scheduled film. The place for television is fixed too, its place is right where we live: we need no indication to know where to find it and, classically, schedules are also fixed and consultable in the palimpsest. Both screens are not merely technological tools of entertainment. A television can be translucent and reflects the lights and shadows in its environment, which interferes with the images given by the monitor. The surface that separates the outside place in which we dwell physically and the inside space in which we dwell by identification is our television, which we know and operate with ease, even when the events on screen take us from the Twin Peaks falls to the Vesuvio in Naples.

In both *Twin Peaks* and *Un Posto al Sole*, all characters have their own typical attitudes and expressions, even if the acting body of latter has semi-realistic aims and the direction of the first takes reality only as a partial guide. The motion one can dwell in is not only the one of the characters they potentially identify with, but the one of the cameras as well, as typically shows keep the same filming style throughout their production. The camera follows the movements of the actors continuously in *Un Posto al Sole*, never letting them move out of frame, all their smallest gestures prompt a fluctuation of the camera's eye, and the focus shifts from actor to actor to highlight their reactions. Twin Peaks creates a different type of picture, one that is still during dialogue sequences, nothing is ever blurred, the camera's movements agree with the tense and immobile atmosphere (fig. 7 and fig. 8).

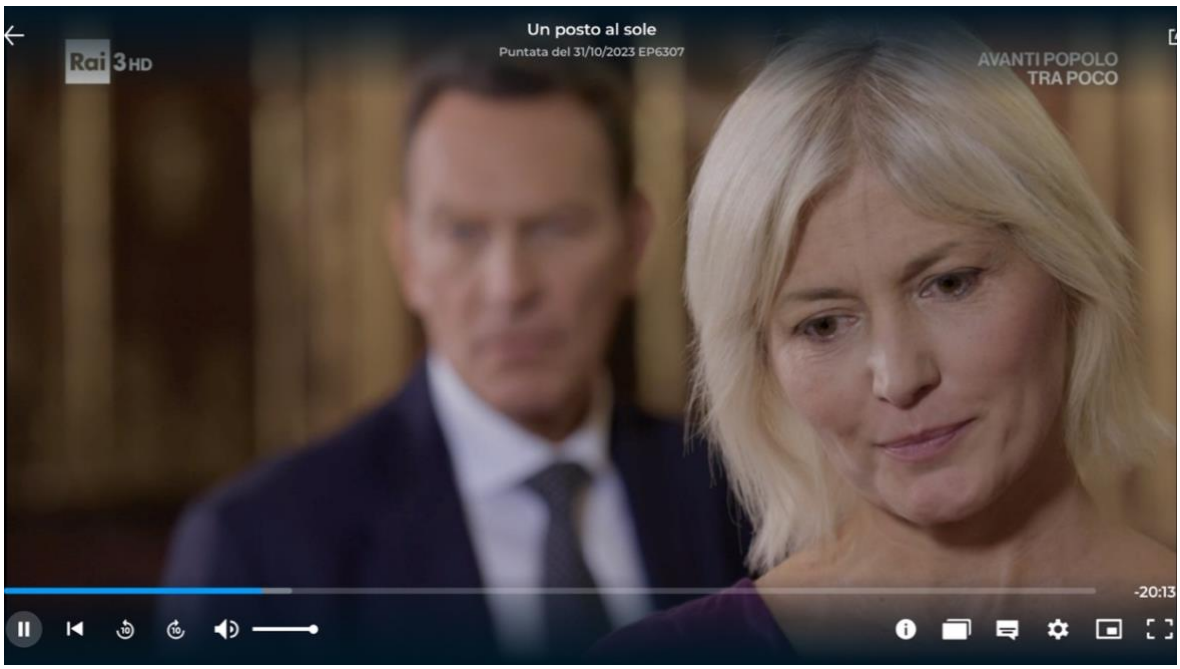


Figure 7. Still from *Un Posto Al Sole*. Directed by Wayne Doyle et al., soap opera, Rai 3, 1996 present.

Figure 8. Still from *Twin Peaks*. Directed by David Lynch and Mark Frost, serial drama, ABC Network, 1991 1990.

7.2 Doors to physical places, doors to screens

Nowadays, given that it is owned by the majority of families, television is rarely watched in the company of strangers; it often occupies a central position in the living room, kitchen, or bedroom, or, again, all of the above. However big the television set might be, it coexists with the rest of the environment and occupies part of it, without completely overshadowing it. In the context of television architecture, Adams states also that when building monuments, humans have often tried to make their walls as thick as possible to signal the importance of their contents. The distance created by the walls separates normal space from space that has a special or sacred nature.[95] In light of this it can be suggested that the thinning of the television set in itself, seen as a separation between the insiders and the outsiders, has the effect of bringing the audience closer to the subjects on the screen by making the perception of the screen disappear in its semi-transparency and behind the clarity and palpability of high definition pictures, thus perfecting the unity of *here* and *somewhere else* described by Weber.[96] *Somewhere else* is the scene, and its place is the set, which we see as a nonplace inside of the screen but is a real place for those who appear on it. We have opened the door to our living room and accessed the surface of the television, we sat on the sofa and turned it on. In a sort of waiting room to the home of the narration, we sit through the advertisement, we perform a variation of what Heidegger wrote about the sky and the divinities:

> Mortals dwell in that they receive the sky as sky. They leave to the sun and the moon their journey, to the stars their courses, to the seasons their blessing and their inclemency; they do not turn night into day nor day into a harassed unrest. Mortals dwell in that they await the divinities as divinities. In hope they hold up to the divinities what is unhoped for. They wait for intimations of their coming and do not mistake the signs of their absence.[97]

We also prepare to await and accept whatever might come our way in the time spent dwelling on the screen, where the fate of our perceived movement is not in our hands but in those of the director and camera operator.

---

[95] Adams, Paul C. “Television as Gathering Place.” Cit. P. 128

[96] Weber, Samuel. *Mass Mediauras: Form, Technics, Media, cit.* P. 118

[97] Heidegger, Martin. *Building, Dwelling, Thinking*, cit. P. 148

After the first contact with the surface and possibly an advertisement, the opening credits start to roll, the already discussed opening of *Twin Peaks* announces an hour of North American towns, with their tall Douglas Firs and cold rivers, whereas the intro to *Un Posto Al Sole* is true to its Mediterranean character, the sea is the background of the daily recap, followed by opening credits that feature smiling actors, sunny skies, and Neapolitan cultural sites. Both match the aesthetic approach of their respective shows, they are our door to the episodes and our keys to immerse in them. With regard to motion, which will later be discussed more extensively we naturally start engaging with it as soon as the screen is on.

7.3 A shelter and a centre: empathy and detachment

While travelling between the landscapes of Naples and Snoqualmie there are centres and shelters that are found and returned to. Once again returning to Bachelard's phenomenology of the home we learn that in his view – although it is also of the utmost importance in the more practical analysis by Rapoport[98] – the chief benefit of the house is to offer daydreaming a shelter, protecting the dreamer and allowing them to dream in peace.[99] After entering the space of *Un Posto Al Sole*, the projection we dwell in revolves around a precise centre, a shelter to the characters, protagonists by virtue of the house in which they live. We are at home because they are at home, their physical shelter is for us a form of emotional shelter, the place we can daydream in; the homes are where most scenes are shot, and in a single episode four or five homes and a couple of other habitual places are visited, in some of them worryingly nefarious things are happening. In one episode we see Roberto and Marina discussing the possible homicide of their sworn enemy while at the office, the scene is of course rich in tension, but we can seek refuge in the next scene, in which the tenor completely shifts and we are welcomed back in a serene atmosphere where Filippo and Serena are sharing a meal and their opinions about cheese and the love life of a relative.[100] In the passage between one scene and the next we

[98] Rapoport, Amos. *House, Form and Culture, cit.* P. 61

[99] Bachelard, Gaston. *The Poetics of Space, cit.* P. 28

[100] 'Un posto al sole - Serie 26 - Stagione 2022-2023'. *RaiPlay*, directed by Wayne Doyle et al., 6310

seek and find emotional shelter, a centre, the peace of knowing that some of the characters we know so well can bring us back to a lighthearted scenario.

The characters from *Twin Peaks*, on the other hand, do not necessarily feel at home; the main character, Dale Cooper, is himself a visiting FBI Agent who has never been to or seen the small town of *Twin Peaks*, he is curious of the place's flora and of its customs. He's a visiting character, and as such by definition he's not at home so we spectators follow him in this lack ok familiar place. When the supernatural places appear in dreams it is clear that we are not in anyone's house, and many magical beings that appear throughout the show seem so ethereal that it is difficult to imagine them having a home at all. The smooth tunes of the soundtrack and the presence of Dale Cooper act as a balancing centre for the narration, we are reassured that someone is taking care of solving things, and we are brought back to the central question – who did kill Laura Palmer? In this case, then, the surface is a shelter in itself, in witnessing the crimes and horrors that sometimes happen, we are granted the mercy of not worrying about them when we catch a glimpse of a reflection on the screen, or when we notice its borders. The surface calls our attention to reality while creating a bridge to the dream on television. Resina theorizes two spaces: one of ocularity and one of intuition, which will be explored in further detail later. For now it is only necessary to note that the first is the space of things shown in the field of action and seen, the second is the space of those things as imagined with all their relations outside of the immediate context in which they are perceived.[101] He writes:

> […] The spectator straddles the roles of sedentary voyeur lodged in the space of intuition and of the traveler who moves in space and time by slipping into the space of ocularity through identification with the eye that once stood corporeally behind the viewfinder.[102]

Through this mechanism, too, the dwelling experience is made safe, what is shown and what is supposed to be present in the scene are detached, the dweller knows that they are not seeing everything, on the other side there are things unseen.

---

[101] Resina, Joan Ramon. "Documentary as a space of intuition: Luis Buñuel's Land Without Bread." In Warf, Barney, and Santa Arias. *The Spatial Turn: Interdisciplinary Perspectives*. Routledge, Abingdon 2008. P. 192

[102] Ibidem, p. 194

The screen's surface works in tandem with the stillness of our body to remind us of our safety, when Marina and Roberto plot their crimes, when the body of Laura Palmer is found in the river, we can empathize with the people on the screen and sense danger, but we are sure of our safety.[103]

7.4 Imaginary maps

An absence of real interaction is produced by the screen, separating outside and inside in two ways: the first one is physical distance, which allows the viewer not to be affected by the movement on screen, and the second one is the surface itself, whose materiality contributes to bring us back to our own reality. This makes our space fragmented in the time spent with screens. Our spatial practice[104] is in a location totally other than the representation of space[105] we are absorbed in, but it contains it. Possibly one of the very first sensations the accustomed viewer has in watching *Un Posto Al Sole* is that of knowing where the apartments are: there is a mental map that consists of an intuitive idea of how the flats might be situated, what disposition the rooms could have, where the other settings could be in relation to them, and so on. The geography in which our orientation takes place – a conceived one, built through scraps of perceived scenarios that remain in our memory – has a holed texture, in which the distance between places is approximated in the viewer's imagination. *Twin Peaks* takes this mechanism even further, moving in its third season between the town, New York City, and Buckhorn, South Dakota. While fans and producers of the show have produced their own maps of the town,[106] it is not immediate for the spectator to place its buildings on a clear mental map, the average viewer has no way of doing it. In both cases, we move in a world of which we know just a few geographical elements, and we cannot avoid organizing them into spatial relations.

---

[103] On the condition of distancing oneself from the troubles of a place perceived as remote please see Blumenberg, Hans. *Shipwreck with Spectator: Paradigm of a Metaphor for Existence Studies in Contemporary German Social Thought*. MIT Press, Cambridge MA 1997.

[104] Lefebvre, Henri. *The Production of Space*, cit. P. 38

[105] Ibidem, p. 38

[106] Dom, Pieter. "Twin Peaks Maps". *Welcome to Twin Peaks*, 10 Aug. 2011, https://welcometotwinpeaks.com/locations/twin-peaks-maps/.

There is a loose conception of the limits within which we move, and of which Resina speaks:

> […] Typically, panoramic shots at the beginning of a movie gird the world with a horizon. Such establishing shots reproduce the kinetic feeling that accompanies the embodied perception of landscape. By tracing the limits of the world, they orient sight and bind it to the possibility of movement toward that limit.[107]

As the camera takes us in foreign new places, we remain anchored to the familiar lines that draw the character's own physicality, they guide us in the visualization of the two dimensions of the screen. This is the first mental map we build, sometimes even before getting acquainted with the geographical attributes of the setting. The coordinates are produced by the bodies on screen, which our eyes can hardly leave, our attention is guided by them near those points on the screen in which we perceive movement. In her introduction to the surface as a material screen Bruno suggests reading the face as a dermal surface of design,[108] citing parts of a passage from *A Thousand Plateaux* in which Deleuze and Guattari write:

> The face is a surface: facial traits, lines, wrinkles; long face, square face, triangular face; the face is a map, even when it is applied to and wraps a volume, even when it surrounds and borders cavities that are now no more than holes. […] The close-up in film treats the face primarily as a landscape; that is the definition of film, black hole and white wall, screen and camera. But the same goes for the earlier arts, architecture, painting, even the novel: close-ups animate and invent all of their correlations.[109]

On the roads made of wrinkles we find adhesion; when the camera moves, we do not lose our grip on the faces that fill the scene. When faces and bodies are not there, though, there still is a surface providing direction, since the screen keeps its coordinates, of course. As we have come to understand it, it is also frequent to find oneself used to certain camera movements and to the way some actors move, thus having an essential sense of

---

[107] Resina, Joan Ramon. "Documentary as a space of intuition: Luis Buñuel's Land Without Bread*." Cit.* P. 194

[108] Bruno, Giuliana. *Matters of Aesthetics, Materiality, and Media, cit.* P. 14

[109] Deleuze, Gilles, and Felix Guattari. *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. University of Minnesota Press ed., vol. 19, Minneapolis 1989. Pp. 170-172

orientation in motion. The speed of the movements has been mentioned in association with emotion, a further observation relates it to time itself: we can submit to the speed of narration imposed by its director and the format, or we can speed-up or slow-down the contents on the screen, however any piece of content in screendwellings by identification has its own internal coherence in terms of time.

7.5 Entangled timelines

Discerning time as past or present in cinema is problematic, in Deleuze's view, because the two coexist in the space of narration, in which images become past succumbing to the present, making past and present almost indistinguishable, explains Flaxman.[110] Dwellings by identification need us to step out of the normal flow of time to submit to the speed of narration, months and years go by in a second in the movies, and live television is divided into segments, pre-recorded reports and advertisement cut in. The less the speed of narration is evidently different from our own, the more the surface of the screen disappears between our usual flow of time and the fictional one.

Both *Un Posto al Sole* and *Twin Peaks* are interesting in this regard: the first tries to adhere to real time, there is one episode every day, and there are references to some events of Italian news. The episodes of the second are longer and cover more than one day at a time, there are lots of flashbacks and oneiric projection that make it difficult to understand the events' exact chronologies. But then *Un Posto al Sole* fails to reference real world events such as the COVID-19 pandemic, thus creating a sort of alternative timeline, and *Twin Peaks* closes its second season by announcing a twenty-five year hiatus through the words of Laura to effectively come back twenty-five years later, hinting that fictional time flows the same way it does in our own reality.[111]

Television, as a device, shows no indication of real time, and we are used to the way the contents travel through time, ensuring that we are not taken out of the fictional time flow. Even on computers and phones, on whose upper corners we usually find a small

[110] Flaxman, Gregory, *The Brain is The Screen*, cit. P. 32

[111] *Twin Peaks*. Directed by David Lynch and Mark Frost, serial drama, ABC Network, 1991 1990, Episode Twenty-two, Season Two.

watch, the latter vanishes upon starting to play a video, the only timestamps remaining are the ones relating to the duration of the content itself. The device thus becomes a window between the irregular flow of television time and our own regular time, keeping them separated through the thin glass. The speed of movement of actors and cameras is also relevant to the dwelling experience, it creates and alters pathos, and it modifies the engagement of spectators.

7.6 Furnishing: fullness and emptiness

The relative emptiness or fullness of the surface in front of us has an inevitable consequence in our emotional approach to the contents of it. Depending on the perspective of director and spectator the sensations of emptiness and fullness might elicit totally opposite reactions, not to mention that the presence of the dweller is in and of itself the first form of furnishing, as it is that of the screen[112]. . Bachelard writes about the empty shell as a desirable living space for the hermit crab who goes to fill it and as an inspiration for daydreams, emptiness must be inhabited;[113] an empty nest is disappointing, and it is joyous to notice birds in the nest as it is a happy occurrence for Thoreau to hear his neighbours coming back home and filling the air with chatter and laughter, the sky with the smoke from their kitchen.[114] In western society an empty house is usually a sign of a frugal lifestyle, and the association with poverty is inherently pitied, while in the Japanese language – observes Rapoport – the word for "poverty" is not, on the contrary, associated with pity, and an empty dwelling space is desirable.[115] Palazzo Palladini's houses are furnished like most Italian families' houses, they reflect the personality and *status quo* of their inhabitants.

In *Un Posto Al Sole* the homes of the rich are minimalistic in a refined way, they have mid-century armchairs and antique doorframes. Happy families have wedding photos on their shelves. Middle class houses are filled with miscellaneous décor that ranges from

[112] On this perspective, that it is more strictly phenomenological than the one adopted in this research, please see De Rosa, Miriam. *Cinema e Postmedia. I Territori del filmico nel Contemporaneo. Postmedia books*, Milano 2013.

[113] Bachelard, Gaston. *The Poetics of Space, cit.*. P. 144

[114] Ibidem, pp. 113-117

[115] Rapoport, Amos. *House, Form and Culture, cit.* P. 63

visibly cheap to elegant. The homes of the poor have appliances stored in a corner, they have no space for closet rooms. All the sets are complete with some personal touches that are well suited to the apartment's owners, so that it looks plausible that they furnished it.[116] The houses we see in *Twin Peaks* are those typically found in cold climates and near the mountains, with lots of carpeting and wooden walls and pavements, the Palmers' living room is filled with pictures, sofas, and flowers, they are a good family; Leo and Shelly's house is dark, there are a small television and a small sofa with a big open ashtray on its side, it is all that the young couple can afford, but homes are not the centre of the mystery's unravelling, *Twin Peaks* happens in cars, in strange oneiric environments, in our surprise when something grotesquely bizarre becomes part of the investigation.[117] *Twin Peaks*, as a home, has David Lynch as its architect: it is a monumental building, projected for the purpose of making art, with a total of forty-eight episode, each one of which is around one hour long. *Un Posto al Sole*, on the other hand, must adopt a more elementary and regular format because of the regularity of its programs: the standardisation of most narrative and technical devices, is the screen counterpart of the vernacular building.

The environment in which the surface of the television is placed influences the perception of the screen, becoming a further element of juxtaposition and joining the system of images and text on the screen. This applies to all screens in different measures, even though the way a user becomes immersed in the contents they are consuming can make the outside environment less noticeable. The quantity of motion a viewer becomes accustomed to changes on the basis of direction decisions and expressive intentions, just like its quality does. As already mentioned, this concurs to the creation of totally different atmospheres.

---

[116] "Un posto al sole - Serie 26 - Stagione 2022-2023". *RaiPlay*, directed by Wayne Doyle et al., 6306 https://www.raiplay.it/programmi/unpostoalsole.The houses I refer to here are specifically Roberto's (third sequence), Ornella's (second sequence), Giulia's (fifth sequence), and Rosa's (ninth sequence).

[117] *Twin Peaks*. Directed by David Lynch and Mark Frost, serial drama, ABC Network, 1991 1990, Episode One, "Pilot." Season One.

7.7 Furnishing: design and customisation

When watching television we have little choice on the contents of the fictional rooms we dwell in. The set is painted and furnished by the set designer or chosen by the production, costume designers decide on the clothes of presenters and stars; we cannot predict or decide where the subtitles will show, which font the titles are written in, or if an occasional glitch will appear. The shape and size of the screen are fixed at the movie theatre, but there is freedom in the selection of a television set, although the amount of possible significative variations is smaller than the enormous selection of phone screens and computer screens available. On TV and at the cinema, the movements we follow are those of the people we see in the frame and those of the camera, operated by the camera man. Weber's surrogate for the body[118] is submitted to a control that we cannot interfere with. In other words, in classic television and cinema, screendwelling by identification happens on screens that show movements outside of our control, to which we can only surrender.

[118] Weber, Samuel. *Mass Mediauras: Form, Technics, Media, cit.* Pp. 116-117

	as a building	door and key	shelter + centre
contents as depth	Other side of the screen; the set	Opening credits, start of the content	Familiar homes, emotional shelter
surface	Surface between inside and outside; in a physical room	Door to the house, the device is switched on	Surface as shelter from the fictional world
motion	In the camera and in the characters, felt haptically[119]	First movements of the camera/characters	Stillness of the spectator's body vs. incontrollable movements on screen

	map, rooms, spaces to move in	time	fullness/emptiness	furniture and designers/customisation
contents as depth	Representational space for the actors and representation of space for the spectator, orientation depends on familiarity	Difficult to discern	The setting, elements on screen overlapping	The production designs it
surface	The actor as a map, orientation depends on visibility and stillness of the image	Through the surface two different timelines are separated	Juxtaposition with outside environment	The brand of the screen, the place it is in
motion	Adjustment to motion on screen, of the camera and of the actors	Speed of camera, speed of actors	Changes depending on scene, stylistic/narrative choices	Production determined

Table 1. A scheme for dwelling by identification.

8. Virtual dwelling: a home built for the screen

8.1 The Instagram profile building and its TikTok counterpart

If we attain to dwelling by means of building, as suggested by Heidegger's postulate, and if we thus accept that building has dwelling as its goal,[120] then the screens in which we can build something are a perfect site of observation of the act of building. . Most importantly, however, in this perspective they are sites of dwelling. While screendwellings by identification are built for us to inhabit a site that is somewhat given to us, we have a direct hand in constructing some environments in computers and phones,

[119] On the notion of hapticity, indicating the sensation of touch elicited by visual perception, see Strauven, Wanda. *Touch Screen Archaeology: Tracing Histories of Hands-On Media Practices*, cit. and Bruno, Giuliana. *Surface: Matters of Aesthetics, Materiality, and Media*, cit.

[120] Heidegger, Martin. *Building, Dwelling, Thinking*, cit. P. 143

especially considering the infinite configurations of space on the internet. In the initial remarks on semantics (paragraph 3), the idiomatic phrase "*building* a website" was recalled suggesting that the act of building is radically interweaved in our interactions with the computer screen. After all, computers and phones are tools of productivity, they are used to work and communicate, so it is not misleading to state that a one of their core characteristics is to host building. The act of building can then result in a conversation, a spreadsheet, or a social media profile, the variety of spaces that result from the places built is vast.

The fourth most used social media platforms as of October 2023 is Instagram, which with its two billion monthly users follows Facebook, YouTube, and WhatsApp.[121] It is also the second most used app for video entertainment, after YouTube, and the second app with the most active users, after WhatsApp,[122] which makes its pictures-based environment a perfect ground to study the contemporary state of virtual dwellings. While in earlier forms of social media the homes that were built were true examples of vernacular house building, put together by users with bits and pieces of HTML code, in present day Internet, especially in the most commonly used platforms, the virtual dwelling's design has evolved and recalls the middle-class single-family apartment.[123] All profiles are originally the same: a white base is the background of a username, a profile picture, a name, a bio and maybe some links. Some buttons underneath call for actions, such as following and messaging, then we find the optional highlighted stories, and three sections of very similar posts, the ones the user posted, the ones the user was tagged in, and the reels section, in which short videos are posted. Regardless of the profile, all personal spaces share the same standardised configuration (fig. 9 and fig. 10).[124]

---

[121] "Biggest Social Media Platforms 2023." *Statista*, https://www.statista.com/statistics/272014/global-social-networks-ranked-by-number-of-users/. Accessed 26 Dec. 2023.

[122] "Digital 2023 October Global Statshot Report." *DataReportal – Global Digital Insights*, 19 Oct. 2023, https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2023-october-global-statshot.

[123] Rapoport, Amos. *House, Form and Culture*, cit. P. 131

[124] The profiles are different, have different followings and different uses, but the structure remains the same.

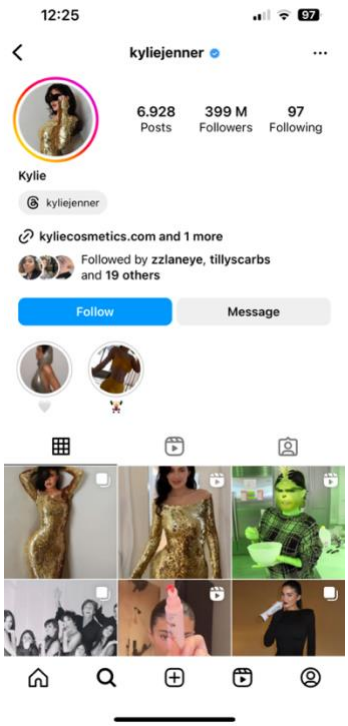


Figure 9. One of the most widely followed Instagram influencer accounts, *@kyliejenner*, https://www.instagram.com/kyliejenner/?hl=en. Accessed 26 Dec. 2023.

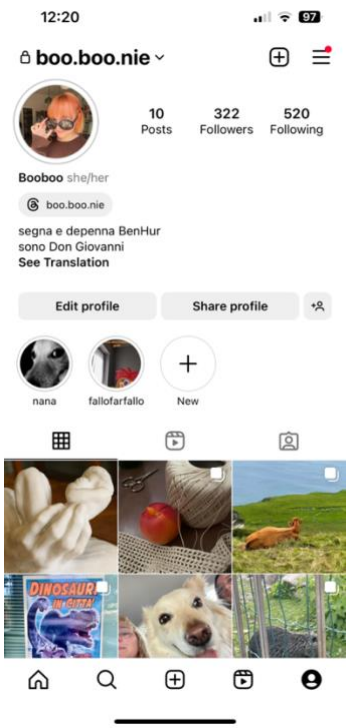


Figure 10. My own Instagram account, *@boo.boo.nie*, https://www.instagram.com/boo.boo.nie/?hl=en. Accessed 26 Dec. 2023

This is also true of profiles on TikTok, a platform that has grown extraordinarily in relation to its young age and counted more than one billion regular users in 2022.[125] There is one main difference between the two that influences the dwelling modalities of the two platforms: navigating an Instagram profile one can potentially have a complete overview of one's own contents without clicking on any other post in the feed, whereas this is impossible on TikTok. More specifically, there is a section of Instagram profiles that is dedicated to the users' videos, but it is not the main function of the app nor the first page of the profile that is shown to visitors. A general look at any TikTok account does not guarantee the visitor to know what its contents are, unless there are titles included in the thumbnail (fig. 11 and fig. 12).[126]

Figure 11. TikTok account *@greggiana.* https://www.tiktok.com/@greggiana?_t=8idtDyoTkKP. Accessed 31 Dec. 2023

[125] Iqbal, Mansoor. *TikTok Revenue and Usage Statistics (2022)*. 2022. P. 11

[126] In the first there are no titles in the thumbnails, the content of the videos is unknown before watching them. in the second there are titles in the thumbnails, the viewer knows the topic of the video, but the content is still not completely knowable.

Figure 12. *TikTok account @manonlagreve.* https://www.tiktok.com/@manonlagreve?_t=8idtGCbsFwv. Accessed 31 Dec. 2023

Virtual dwellings share with screendwellings by identification their a structural inclination to be inhabited, they are places we are supposed to know and be able to orientate in, they are made to be shelters of some sort. Like on the television screen, sometimes the images experienced do not represent real places, but are virtual. On television this happens through animation, where inhabitable space is still represented. On platforms like Instagram and TikTok the meme is one of the most frequently used formats: images are combined with text resulting in immaterial imaginary spaces that are often collected on profiles dedicated solely to them. In the infinite grids of those accounts' patterns are recognised, the usual shape of their posts is repeated innumerable times until it becomes another familiar nonplace in which anyone can situate themselves (fig. 13).[127]

[127] An example of the account's contents, virtual images that include graphics, text, and neutral backgrounds.

Figure 13. Instagram account *@avocado_ibuprofen.* https://www.instagram.com/avocado_ibuprofen/?hl=en. Accessed 26 Dec. 2023

The homes that will be descripted henceforth are part of the newest space we have reached and populated, a space which we move in by proxy. Leeker writes in *Space in America*:

> Although these digital spaces are not 'real spaces,' we refer to them bodily and they have an impact on our psycho-physis. […] When dealing with digital spaces, we are faced with mainly two problems: First, we need a representation in the digital space because we are unable to enter them physically. In order to enter digital spaces, users need interfaces, that is, devices allowing the user to control the digital circuits as, for instance, a keyboard or mouse. Additionally, user actions must be translated into digital operations which means that physical actions are transferred into data that can then be operated by the computer.[128]

There lies the problem with digital space, then. Once again, we dwell on a two-dimensional surface, this time thinner than the ones explored before, but just as absorbing,

[128] Leeker, Martina, "Dancing the Digital: American and European Visions of Digital Bodies in Digital Spaces*."* *In*In Benesch, Klaus, editor. *Space in America: Theory, History, Culture*. Rodopi, 2005.

by means of its interactivity. We feel the screen, our hands know where its limits are and what button to touch to make something happen. The two-dimensional image we see when scrolling through the photos on a profile is always different but always equally arranged: a username is followed by a photo, which is followed by a caption and a comment section. On TikTok the dimensions of time and sound should change things, but repetitiveness is encouraged as a way to grow an audience and be easily identifiable as a certain type of content creator. The surface, though, tends to be less noticeable by virtue of a less invasive interface.

In an analogue way we also dwell in the familiar scheme of our movements, in touching our phone screen, and in the response our gestures elicit on the surface. This surface, however, can allude to a depth that is only appearance: moving between the Instagram feeds and profiles, the areas in which we move mostly belong to an abstract universe of images. Even when the posts we see are real photos, not retouched and unfiltered, the complete image presented to us is made of the virtual lattice of Instagram, a white background hosts posts, and some elements look nearer – such as dark and bold text – while some are farther – such as light and small-sized text – but there is no actual depth. There is, of course, a physical place in which the image is created, but if the television set corresponds to a representational space for the actors, who experience it both as spatial practice and as a representation of space, the same cannot be said of virtual environments. The monitor shows essentially what is a representation of space, in it the user visualizes spatialized objects that can be acted upon as an effect of their gestures. Hence, spatial practice happens in a very different way on the virtual monitor, but representational space exists because space is lived and inhabited by the user so as to create a place, even if this process happens by proxy.

Spatial practice per se corresponds to our own on-screen habits. Digital devices are also emplaced in a physical and real setting, of course, thus being part of our real world in which movements made to interact with them occur. Quietly swiping between bundles of apps and browsing the web correspond to entirely different sets of movements, but both are active operations. Opposite to the partial stillness the television spectator is constricted to, interactive screens force the user to move for the image to appear or change. Without the user's fingers pressing on some key or swiping in some direction there is nothing that can happen outside of the numbers changing on the watch and the

screen going in stand-by, or in the case of TikTok, outside of videos repeating themselves incessantly. We have become so accustomed to this type of interaction that we expect images to lead somewhere else.[129] There are but a few elements on a phone screen that produce no results if touched, thus accommodating endless possibilities of action.

8.2 The door and its keys

As technical images, our virtual dwellings' doors have keys, both as a figure of speech and literally, that enable their manipulation through graspable, visualizable, and conceivable elements.[130] When a device is ready to be used, we press a first key to make contents materialize on the screen, turning the black surface into a first image, in which we can insert a password by pressing more keys. We have thus entered both the virtual dwelling and the apparatus in which it is produced, and we have started interacting with the images through tiny motions. To enter our own Instagram or TikTok profiles, we need to be logged into our phone, and then to touch the app's icon. The first time we enter we are asked to log in, and to do that we type a password. Multiple keys have been used, and more keys go on to be pressed, as the environment is essentially built for interaction. Every clickable image now acts as a key potentially opening an entirely new door. Even before we are logged into the app, though, we are going towards it with a set of movements we are used to making: we grab our phone and tilt our heads towards it, we start looking for the app on our phone. The first motion of our body directed towards the aim of accessing the app already works as a door leading to the virtual dwelling.

8.3 Social media shelters: engaging to hide

In the personal profiles of Instagram users set up photographic blogs and recount their lives' salient events or inspirational moments through images and text, while video, the main modality of communication used on TikTok, is less used. Anything can be posted as long as it complies with the platform's guidelines. Personal memories, family events, parties, and news are copiously shared by users. There is also a space for fleeting thoughts and photos that can stay on a profile for a short amount of time (stories), which can be

[129] Verhoeff, Nanna. *Mobile Screens: The Visual Regime of Navigation*, cit. P. 153

[130] Flusser, Vilém. *Into the Universe of Technical Images*. University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis 2011. P. 16

limited to be accessed by a reduced number of followers. Both the Stories that disappear in twenty-four hours and the profile in its entirety can be made private: the "Close Friends List," or just "Friends List" on TikTok, and the "Private" setting are widely used functions that close the door of the account to some. With these functions, information can be targeted only to some, and the possibility of hiding posts until others have our consent to access them makes previously open-to-all profiles feel safer.

On the other hand, the surface of the screen creates a partition between user and audience. When the screen is hit by light in a certain way, when we catch a glimpse of our reflection on the screen, we are reminded that we are not *physically* immersed in the virtual environment. In the public space of the internet, the physical separation from what is perceived as an audience of our actions allows for performativity, and the choice on how to be perceived seems to be in our hands. This can create the sensation of identification, that of freedom, or extreme alienation.

The use of mobile devices movement manifests – to some extent – the issue of movement limitation. We use weightless phones with small screens, and to browse social media the body can and must be engaged.[131] Motion seems to be less limited than the gestures linked to computer usage, since the device is mobile and typically small in size it would appear that the device is sheltered in our pockets rather than something that can shelter us. The gestural expressiveness in the act of looking at our phone, though, suggests that the opposite can be true. A study on non-verbal behavior and mobile phone manipulation examines the reasons users let themselves be distracted from social contexts to look at their phones; it is demonstrated that the movements made to use a phone give social signals to the people surrounding the user: they might belong somewhere else, they could be busy, uninterested in the interaction, or uncomfortable.[132] Suitably, in the study Nakamura states:

> What is also very interesting about this model is that it repositions the phone user behind something akin to the ‘‘fourth wall’’ (i.e., the imaginary wall that separates an audience from actors on a stage during a play). From this vantage, phone users

[131] Verhoeff, Nanna. *Mobile Screens: The Visual Regime of Navigation*, cit. P. 25

[132] Nakamura, Takashi. "The Action of Looking at a Mobile Phone Display as Nonverbal Behavior/Communication: A Theoretical Perspective". *Computers in Human Behavior*, vol. 43, Feb. 2015. P. 74

> are allowed to manage how they are perceived (i.e., they can use the act of gazing at their phones to control their face-to-face interactions in the manner discussed above, even if there is actually no new data on their phone).[133]

Thus, depending on the user's movements mobile phones, and particularly social media, can act as physical and emotional shelters.

8.4 Maps and rooms: the grid

While moving in the physical world means perceiving an area as virtually indifferent from its map,[134] navigating digital realities erases any distinction whatsoever between the real location and its representation. A digital environment can be imagined while it is not in use, which allows for a mental representation of its space to be separated from its real form. The graphic representation that is the grid of posts and videos is the practicable space itself; the location corresponds to the map and this works as a grid. In library-like realms, such as any profile on Instagram or TikTok, the grid organization is self-evident, since rows and columns of posts occupy the pages, posts are orderly arranged, occupying the chronologically organized identical square or rectangular slots. The grid in particular is the technique at the very basis of any screen's operations, images forming on a wide matrix of pixels. This is true of television monitors too, but in operative systems that require for information to be stored and visualized it explicitly becomes a way for us to orientate ourselves in space. Social media's grids are topographical maps, like the topographical maps of Latin America's early colonial settlements. Their function very much resembles Siegert's description of the charting of those territories:

> […] the city was not planned and built on the basis of the actual number of settlers, or as a means of distributing property, but with a settlement fantasy in mind. This fantasy is enabled and sustained by the possibility of writing empty spaces, that is, the ability to literally reserve a space for the unknown. This, in turn, presupposes the separation of data and addresses. Persons (be they public or private) are turned into data that can be stored for subsequent retrieval by the correct addresses that

[133] Ibidem, p. 74

[134] Bauman, Zigmunt, in Soja, Edward. *Thirdspace: Journey to Los Angeles and Other Real-and-Imagined Places*. Blackwell Publishers, Inc., Oxford 1996, P. 241

> logically and temporally precede them. The Latin American heterotopia is thus the first concrete realization of the storage model we know today as *working memory*.[135]

In the case of TikTok and Instagram profiles, the slots inside of the grid do not always correspond to people, but they always convey information, be it personal or public. Like in Latin America's settlements, the grid of the profile is designed to accommodate empty space in which elements may or may not still be placed, it precedes its contents, and once the photos are posted, the data is inserted in its address and can be retrieved. It is also a working memory, and one that works in tandem with our own short-term working memory to help us locate information. Unlike the settlements, though, the contemporary social media grid does not contain empty space, not visibly, but it hypothesises it by giving the user the option to post more. There is empty space because the space that can be filled by our own posts is virtually infinite, but the only empty slots that are actually shown are those in the last row of posts, in case the total number of photos is not a multiple of three, the set number of photos per row (fig. 14).

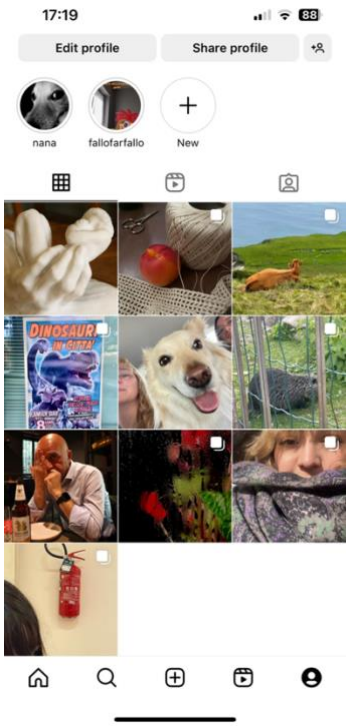


Figure 14. Two empty spaces at the bottom of my profile. *@boo.boo.nie*, https://www.instagram.com/boo.boo.nie/?hl=en. Accessed 26 Dec. 2023

[135] Siegert, Bernhard. *(Not) in Place: The Grid, or, Cultural Techniques of Ruling Spaces*. In *Cultural Techniques: Grids, Filters, Doors, and Other Articulations of the Real*, Fordham University Press, 2015. P. 107

This map of the contents influences the orientation on the surface and the nature of our gestures. It can be disorienting to use a new device because one is not immediately accustomed to the order of the apps, or to the size of the screen and its proportions. Social media sites like Instagram resolve this by appearing identical on every device, every profile divides the screen in three columns of posts, nothing has to be remodelled when moving on to a new phone or when using someone else's. Every surface welcomes the user inside of the same exact realm, the only adjustment to be made is the one to the dimensions of the screen itself.

The size of the screen still limits the user's freedom of movement, so it is relevant to notice that gestures made to operate devices also depend on the gridded map of the contents, and the same can be said of eye movements. The ways in which pages are navigated and data is computed always depend on two things: the user's orientation on the screen's grid, and on the acts of clicking on the page or typing on a keyboard, which is a particular matrix in which the rows look spaced out. The order of the keys itself is a factor of orientation, when using a foreign keyboard one can be disoriented in finding a different number of buttons, or some keys in different spots than the ones we are used to.

8.5 Time: synchronous and asynchronous communication

Because phone screens are motion-based and thus may be considered time-based media, and they can do few things without commands being given to them, time is an essential part of the dwelling experience. This is both obvious and less evident than in other types of screens: time on television and at the cinema clearly follows some scheme that can be more or less coherent or truthful, while places constructed in spaces like virtual dwellings, that do not move unless we move, make time less noticeable. The images on screen seem to retain some stillness when they are not being operated, but the various ever-present temporal indicators remind us of its flow, it is not fictional time, like in film, but the same one that regulates life outside of the screen. This is enough to describe the basic condition of time spent browsing on social media. We find ourselves once again in what Foucault defined a heterotopia of time accumulation.[137] But when we consider environments in which people cooperate to the production of content, if we click on the

[137] Foucault, Michel. "Of Other Spaces." Cit. P. 20

comment section of any post, for example, time takes another aspect. So many of the interactions that happen on screen and almost all the contents that are posted are marked with the date of their entry or with its approximation. On many occasions people may happen to communicate synchronously or asynchronously,[138] the first alternative being incarnated by the chat function of Instagram, and the latter by its comments section. In the moment in which they happen, interactions are occasional and yet chronic, observing Foucault's interpretation of time in the heterotopia.[139] When they are revived by their author or by a visitor, posts become items of time accumulation that originated from a chronic instance.

Signs of time are not only in the contents, but they also appear on the surface, fingerprints on the frame of phones indicate that they have been touched and operated, lived with. A phone is not only a tool used to communicate, be entertained, and work, just like a house is not just a place that shelters from the cold, but a home. Time is evident on the surface of phones, the protective film covering it can fill with tiny cracks, the cracks can become a part of how the contents are seen, the user's story blends with the ones witnessed inside of the screen. The cracks also inform us of movement, they can be monitions that we have not been careful enough, and that screens are bound to break when they are held by a hand from daybreak to nightfall. Mobile devices also tend to increase in temperature the longer they are used. It is a physical sign that time has passed or that the user's body has been still, scrolling or working for a long time, a period that can vary depending on how much time the task on screen requires or on how fast we can move to complete it. Watches are present in all devices and, in some, impossible to avoid having in one's field of vision. By picking up a mobile phone to check the time, we can also see an incredible amount of other information. Time can be visualized in potentially all the actions trackable on a screen: the number of open windows, the tabs of a browser, the contents produced by a user, and the number of words on a page are all indicators of time. Yet, time is not what is most noticeable in the overlap of elements.

---

[138] Gotved, Stine. *Spatial Dimensions in Online Communities*, cit. P. 408

[139] Foucault, Michel. "Of Other Spaces." Cit. P. 20

8.6 Furnishing: juxtaposition

Curating a feed, a story, or a video means operating precise choices: juxtaposing one thing to another signals a decision to show or to hide something. There are, of course, numerous reasons to manipulate the contents of one or more pictures: aesthetic choices might include the application of a filter, or the coordination of a more or less minimalist profile, practical choices often include using emojis to hide faces or data. The quantity of contents and items on profiles with huge followings is also dictated by sponsors and algorithm requirements. Notifications can appear from outside or from within the app, the user can choose to keep them or clear them, creating more cumulation or keeping a tidy space.

This juxtaposition of images contributes to the impression that the screen itself has depth, and the elements of the interface are placed under or above the content of the posts, but of course this only happens in our perception. The surface itself is flat, but it is part of a bigger setting, overlapping in its own right with the real place the user is in. Noises and movement can capture the attention of the user, who is reminded of the flatness of the surface they are operating as soon as they look up. The mixture of physical setting and screen setting in our field of vision can be joined by other screens, which the total mobility of the devices grants: it is easy to find oneself using a smartphone while watching television, or while working on a laptop. The experience of dwelling and screendwelling is then generated by the fusion of different monitors and images that loose or gain depth depending on which one the spectator/user focuses on.

Moreover, if we adhere to Verhoeff's definition of a panorama as the scene the viewer of which is required to move around in order to see, a scene that can thus be explored,[140] then we can appreciate her distinction between the experiences of motion in different screens:

> The aspect of movement, inherent to exploring space, from and within the panoramic image itself is characteristic of panoramic cinematography. In contrast to the panoramas mentioned earlier, where movement is reliant on the spectator (panoramic paintings) or the user (digital panorama), the movement of the gaze in

[140] Verhoeff, Nanna. *Mobile Screens: The Visual Regime of Navigation*, cit. P. 35

> panoramic cinematography has been previously recorded, registered, and also fixed by the eye of the camera. It has been scripted.[141]

The movements inside of the screen are as wide or as narrow as the camera's manoeuvres are, the motion we can feel by identifying in a character are those of the actor, but in the digital panorama it is our own small gestures that regulate the overall motion in the environment. The contents of the screen can move as much or as little as we like. The speed of most movements depends on our finger's ability to make precise gestures, and only in contexts in which waiting is required – i.e., loading screens, videogames, video contents – our choice is subordinated to other agents.

8.7 Furnishing: customization

At their core, the profiles we use all share the same basic characteristics. Just like the vast majority of houses has the prismatic structure of a parallelepiped but none shares the same exact interior design, so devices can look the same – they are mass produced, after all – but their contents depend exclusively on the user, especially in domains such as Instagram profiles, where the elements posted are mostly pictures and as such depend entirely on the originality of their owner. In other areas of the same platform, dedicated to viewing others' posts, there is no customization, the algorithm creates a sequence of posts from the accounts we have chosen to follow, but we have little say in what we are going to be shown. Customization of the device itself is also marginally possible, the choice of it at the moment of its purchase being the first instance of it, and successive iterations being the addition of a cover, or the application of stickers and such. The process makes the screendwelling one's own in its physical form, too.

With regard to motion, the way the user moves is their own, of course. The set of movements to be made in order to have an effect, on the other hand, are completely predisposed and out of the user's possibility of decision. In this context, on TikTok and Instagram profiles we can decide what to do with the platform, but not how to do it.

With its white space surrounding the individual sections of the site the platform feels as if it were built with blocks: each block a photo that can be double-tapped and liked, it can show the tags if tapped on the bottom left corner, or bring to its original profile if the

[141] Ibidem, p. 41

handle is touched. This is the way Instagram profiles can be visualized: an orderly array of photos one can curate and come back to, each with their captions underneath on a white background. The TikTok profile leaves no empty space to surround posts, and if opened, videos are going to be shown as if sewn together at the top and at the bottom. Captions and buttons appear directly on the image, covering part of the picture. Seeing is a whole other activity when its object are stream-like social media landing pages.

	as a building	**door and key**	**shelter + centre**
contents as depth	Perceived; virtual image, spatial practice by proxy	Keys as password	Storage for personal information, centre of the system
surface	Surface of the phone in a physical space	Any of the machine's keys	Separation from other users
motion	Scrolling animation, body movements, gestures on screen and animations	First interaction of the user with the device	Separation from physical setting, limitation of movement to a small area

	map, rooms, spaces to move in	**time**	**fullness/emptiness**	**furniture and designers/customisation**
contents as depth	Grid, representation of space, orientation depends on habit	Synchronicity of interactions, time markers	Juxtaposition on the screen (in perception)	Can depend on single user or on collectivity
surface	Depends on size and shape of the screen	Cracks, warmth	Juxtaposition outside of the screen	Can be chosen and modified
motion	Gestures guided by screen objects and keyboard	Depends on the user	Minimal movement leads to wide movements inside	Movements depend on the user but are not chosen by them

Table 2. A scheme for virtual dwelling.

9. Flow dwelling: at home everywhere

9.1 Landing page buildings

The notion of flow dwelling can be thought of as a product of the two kinds of dwelling discussed so far. Flow is the most characteristic experience featuring our relationship with screens in contemporary visual cultures and refers to the connection we have with devices of mass communication, which has been changing themselves quite a lot precisely in order to attend to the above-mentioned experience.

Contents are navigable as endlessly scrollable streams; these spaces exist as a hybrid form that includes both contexts of identification and entirely virtual spaces. What has substantially originated from the first social networks loosely shares with them the aim of connecting people by making communications faster and information easy to spread. The dwelling experience has shifted considerably with the aid of technological improvement and with the mass diffusion of image-based continuous scroll social media. Discerning between private and public, between work and leisure, or between production and consumption has become difficult if not impossible in this kind of environment.[142] This most recent way to inhabit is fundamental in the analysis of participation to community and social life, as illustrated by the practices of screendwelling presented in chapter two of this study.

A perfect example of the Augeian nonplace, extreme incarnation of the highway that does not ask of the traveller to stop and understand the landscape,[143] is TikTok, amounting to around one billion users.[144] It is a platform of abstract space in that its functioning agrees in many ways with Lefebvre's description of this notion:

> Abstract space relates negatively to that which perceives and underpins it – namely, the historical and religio-political spheres. It also relates negatively to something which it carries within itself and which seeks to emerge […] it transports and maintains specific social relations, dissolves others […]. It functions *positively* vis-a-vis its own implications: technology, applied sciences, and knowledge bound to power. Abstract space may even be described as at once, and inseparably, the locus, medium and tool of this 'positivity.'

Like television does, flow dwelling forms show us the reality of someone else, it is someone's lived space, i.e. their place, but unlike long-form contents and their settings, it does not leave nearly enough time or space for us to get used to it, so our permanence in the houses of strangers is short-lived. Other people's houses constantly pop up on the screen, asking to be seen, sometimes being the sole reason for a post. Just like signposts

---

[142] Silk, Michael, et al. "(Re-)Thinking Digital Leisure." In *Leisure Studies*, vol. 35, no. 6, Nov. 2016, pp. 712–23. P. 713

[143] Augé, Marc. *Nonluoghi, cit.* P. 89

[144] Ceci, Laura. "Number of Global TikTok Users 2025." *Statista*, https://www.statista.com/statistics/1327116/number-of-global-tiktok-users/. Accessed 15 Nov. 2023.

on the highway advertising famous landmarks, the posts aim to attract us to the exit of a profile. Social interactions happen continuously, they are the activity that keeps the site alive, but they are fleeting in most cases. Relations between users are effectively encouraged to remain stable – through rewards to audience engagement – when they can bring about interaction and content, but almost accessory in other cases. The space the user experiences is mostly regulated by algorithms, and yet, there is a feeling of ease in swiping through the familiar contents on the familiar surface.

It is a form of dwelling in the same ways dwellings by identifications and virtual dwellings are, and then it is in a sum of them. This is perhaps the most peculiar characteristic of this kind of space: its main visual element is that of juxtaposition. I access the app, and in a tap I find myself listening to a young man who is sharing information on linguistics from his bedroom (fig. 15), of which I am now a visitor. It works like film does, but it feels different. Elements of identification are present: we can briefly empathize with the video's creators, we are isolated from them by means of a surface, we can feel seasick from the irregular motion of the handheld phone camera. Icons and text cover part of the image, all sides of the screen are covered by some sign except for the left one, in this the space feels more like a virtual dwelling. But it also feels different than any of the other dwellings, because in a handful of seconds I swipe up and the next piece of content appears. It takes me a really short time to land on a video featuring a mouse dancing on a slice of pizza. This is not a real space, it is not inhabited by anyone but a virtual mouse (fig. 16). But like in the home of our Instagram profile, we can find our space, and create a sort of bond with objects that populate the screen: the animated mouse is a pet in the temporary virtual dwelling that hosts it. There are underlying differences between the TikTok "for you" page and the Instagram feed that make the former, rather than the latter, worthy to be studied as the apotheosis of flow dwellings. While both are landing pages on their sites, meaning that the first step inside of the home is going to be taken there, TikTok features short videos – mostly – that occupy the whole screen and that are not posted by the people we follow, but rather by creators the algorithm matches to our interests. This changes not only the aesthetic experience of navigation, but it alters most of the characteristics of the act of dwelling. The prevalent video format creates a different way to engage, there are movements to be followed and voices to be heard. Videos and reels are also posted to Instagram, of course, but it is not the primary function of the site nor the main focus of content creators.

Figure 15. A screenshot from my TikTok “for you” page, https://www.tiktok.com/en/. Accessed November 15, 2023. [146]

Figure 16. A screenshot from my TikTok “for you” page, https://www.tiktok.com/en/. Accessed November 15, 2023.

[146] Signs and text cover the video; information about the geographical place of shooting is present. Three levels of subtitles are shown one below the other.

What makes the spaces of flow not entirely dwellings by identification while not entirely virtual dwellings is their transitory nature: Augé compares transit to dwelling and passenger to traveller as opposites.[147] In 1992, he writes that most dwellings can be safely assumed to be places and most areas of transit are certainly identifiable as nonplaces, travellers visit places and passengers generally do not bother stopping by. But in the contemporary pinnacle of transience that is the flow of short-form content, there is a sort of home to be found, in a new temporary way. The home is inside of the phone that carries it, and it is the surface we touch thousands of times a day, it is in the habit of scrolling to the next post and seeing the same shifting animation over and over again.

Whereas the surface of TikTok is the same as Instagram's, both being navigable via smartphone and computer, motion is somewhat changed: not only the contents have an option to be scrolled automatically on the "for you" page – which has a hands-free feature – but they engage the user in a journey through a moving panorama, in which short videos with their different formats and motion patterns follow one another.

9.2 The door: immediate access

The door to the home is the access to the app, while the surface does not need accessing, it is already on. In this, most virtual dwellings and flow dwellings are similar. There is also a beginning of identification in the camera's eye every time a new video appears on screen. Identifying in a person on screen is something that can happen on some occasions – especially when creators post many times a day, creating a feeling of participation in their followers – but we are mostly led to identify with the eye of the camera. A quite popular trend on TikTok consists of creating a scenario that the viewer accesses from a determinate point of view, or POV, thus participating in the actions of the video. Some have equated the trend to Baudrillard's simulation of reality,[148] and undoubtedly in settings like POV videos – and short-form user-generated content at large – it is difficult to understand where the limit between real and unreal is. This is less

[147] Augé, Marc. *Nonluoghi, cit.* P.96

[148] Firdaus, Rima, et al. "The Influence of POV Trend as a Branding Image Content Creator on TikTok." In *International Journal of Innovative Science and Research Technology*, vol. 8, Sept. 2023, Pp. 102–07. P. 103

relevant to the posts on the Instagram feed, in which there is for the most part no motion to identify with. In both cases, there is a habitual way of moving in the stream of contents and – in the off-screen world – of scrolling down while liking sparse posts, that begins of course when the app is opened. The two movements, the one in the screendwelling and the one of the body outside of it, are ontologically different but work similarly, as the one inside of the screen depends on the gestures of the hand that is holding it.

9.3 Moving centres

The nonplace is transformed into a panorama, a place-like experience, it happens like it does in real highways' design plans, where the emphasis is placed on creating a temporary residence of passage; an experience is scripted[149] by an algorithm or by content creators, and in moving in the controlled open space of the flow, we can feel some freedom. We can navigate from home to home, in an endless stream of semi-familiar areas, in all the houses we have already seen pieces of and in new ones we have never been in. The shelters of other people become ours, the safety of their homes is presented on the screen, and we can see all sorts of objects in their rooms. In Figure 17 the colour of the room, the pink newspaper article attached to a wall, and the door can be seen in the distance. Filming their own homes, users make a great quantity of information public, partly because it feels like it will get lost in the stream. Private data is often revealed in the comment sections of short videos: every post is just one in millions that are published every day, the transience of posts by users one does not follow and could potentially never see again can create a sensation akin to the one of whispering something in the wind both for the creator – who will be lost in the stream of contents – and for the user who comments. This happens differently on Instagram feeds, where audience engagement works in an evidently different way and many of the people in our network are acquaintances, relatives, and friends. There is a similar form of shelter though, manifested in the possibility of shortlisting the users who can see our contents and in selecting the users that will appear on our feed.

The surface once again shelters us from the reality of other users' lives: besides the physical distance between users, the device dwelled in can be turned off, the app can be

[149] Verhoeff, Nanna. *Mobile Screens: The Visual Regime of Navigation*, cit. P. 33

logged out of, a difficult interaction can be forever abandoned, if that is our decision. On both TikTok and Instagram, this is made particularly easy: private interactions are kept in a tab that can easily be set to never notify the user, and activities originating from public posts are in a separate folder, which sends only some of the many notifications. As environments that partially work like virtual dwellings, flow dwellings divert the user from their physical setting as well, providing an active engagement to distract oneself.

Like sitcoms and soap operas, our flow dwellings have centres we can go back to, there are tabs that only feature people we follow, which on some platforms, such as Instagram, are the main page. On TikTok, though, the home is the "for you" page, the site's algorithm seems to perfectly recognize tastes and interests, shaping the page on the user's preferences. This means that the perfect selection of random content may not feature a known scenery for an indefinite amount of time. The repetitive scrolling motion makes finding a centre difficult, but it is simultaneously a pattern that is sure to be repeated. A centre is thereby created in the rhythm of the constant motion, in the frequent gestures of the finger on screen and in the shift from one post to the next. This happens similarly on Instagram, with the only exception of still images being the main outlet of content production, thus creating less movement on the screen.

9.4 Tactile maps: grids and gestures

We can find refuge in the homes of strangers, but there is no mental map of the physical places we visit. Conversely to television and film, we never get to see the entire setting of a post, we merely see a thin slice of it, often surrounding the face of the content creator; oppositely to virtual dwellings our sense of orientation is not assisted by a grid. Orientation thus happens in a mixture of different places that frequently change, the only one remaining unvaried – most of the times – being the site's structure. The haptic feedback of the screen, though, is designed to lead the user:

> […] tactile engagement that is not directed by volitional movement tends to produce an increase in somatosensory input. Good design works to these ends, insofar as it aims at placing devices into hands in ways that do not require conscious

> effort or thought. […] good design should place the hand; […] the hand should respond easily and intuitively.[150]

Moreover, in contents that feature close-ups of people the face is a map,[151] like in film and on television. This happens in the cases of moving and still people alike and is appliable to both Instagram and Tiktok.

Because the motion in the single pieces of content is too different from one another, the movements we can rely on in terms of orientation are those in which we have previously found a centre, and the ones that feel most natural in the areas of flow: the gestures of scrolling and tapping, movements that come to our fingers without any thought and without even having to actively learn them, they just feel right. It is worth to take notice of the fact that participants in studies on gesture customisability, such as Oh and Findlater's, tend to focus on known gestures on the attempt to create one's own gestures, proving the intuitiveness of existing gestures and their influence as habits.[152]

9.5 Time in the flow

The aspect of time tends to recall cinema because of the video contents, on TikTok, and virtual time because of the interface itself, both on TikTok and on the Instagram feed. On TikTok the watch appears directly on the posts like all buttons do, and the most noticeable graphic expression of the passing of time is the thin line at the bottom of the page, showing the contents progress. The timeline can be manipulated, scrubbing to move forward or backwards in the videos. Switching between pieces of content furtherly bends the perception of time, slow and fast videos come one after the other. Even with a watch on the screen, we really notice time only when we swipe from one video to the next, too enraptured in the fast and slow speeds of the screen. The same watch appears on the Instagram landing page, reminding the user of their own timeline, while the contents in the flow of the feed manifest a wide set of situations all taking place in different moments, in which the user finds themselves immersed for a fraction of time. Heterochronism is

---

[150] Cooley, Heidi Rae. *It's All about the Fit: The Hand, the Mobile Device and Tactile Vision*, cit. P. 139

[151] Deleuze, Gilles, and Felix Guattari. *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, cit. Pp. 170-172

[152] Oh, Uran, and Leah Findlater. "The Challenges and Potential of End-User Gesture Customization." In *Proceedings of the SIGCHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems*, ACM, 2013. P. 1136

exasperated in the fruition of these contents: images and comments are produced and consumed in different moments, they gather and multiply until they stop being shared, continually breaking the traditional flow of time.

If the feature that allows automatic scrolling on TikTok is enabled, the surface of the screen is left in its reflections, scratches, and temperature, to remind us that time is moving differently for us. In flow dwellings the haptic sensations of the device in our hands remind us of the separation between our time and the multitude of times overlapping on the other side of the glass.

In the case of motion, time spent in a flow dwelling resembles the one of virtual dwellings: we are partially still and absorbed by the monitor, performing the repetitive gestures we are used to. Movements are made according to our feelings regarding the contents and our speed in switching to the next post depends on whether we want to keep looking at it or not.

9.6 Furnishing: use of space, design and customisation

Every house in the flow dwelling looks virtually the same, most interiors have a predictable design. Like in a giant suburban area, the user interfaces are mass designed and cannot be modified. No code can change the appearance of a TikTok “for you” page – which leaves most of the screen to user created contents – or of an Instagram feed, which regularly places posts on a white background. Content creators are incentivized to produce certain types of potentially viral products, showing certain posts on all feeds and making many feeds very similar to one another. The preferences that decide which content is published are technically the ones of their audience, but even considering audience preferences made of all the preferences of individual users there is no conscious choice of the contents that are going to be shown. The houses look like the neighbourhood: the “for you” page resembles the Instagram feed, and they look almost exactly like the navigation of a profile on the respective sites does, the only thing varying is of course the possibility to customise the contents of the user’s own profile. In the case of TikTok the juxtaposition of images, speeds, signs, and texts is preponderant in the home we inhabit, and it overlaps with the physical space we are in, in fact, it almost overshadows it, strongly prompting our attention to focus on the screen. To produce content, a tab of the app connects with the camera, or with the phone’s camera roll, which happens on Instagram, capturing physical reality, which is then transposed on the screen.

If the screen itself is part of a device that can be chosen and customised, albeit not greatly, the motion on the screen is the product of a shared effort of individual users and community, a system that is difficult to control and almost impossible to change willingly. The conjunction of screendwellings and other screen spaces produced is a spatial entity unlike any other, capable of hosting all spheres of life while being – at least partially – immaterial. The angles from which the neighbourhoods of the screen could be studied are many. In the next chapter I will consider them in their social functions of gathering place and workplace, which are in some manner concretized in the screendwelling.

	as a building	**door and key**	**shelter + centre**
contents as depth	On the other side of the screen but also as virtual space	Keys as password, start of the content	Familiar homes, apparent safety of personal information, familiar people on the screen
surface	Surface of the phone in a physical space	Any of the machine's keys	Shelter from other users, and from realities "inside"
motion	Scrolling animation, body movements, gestures on screen and animations, camera movements	First interaction with the device and first movements in the content	Motion of the image or of animations, scrolling motion

	map, rooms, spaces to move in	**time**	**fullness/emptiness**	**furniture and designers/customisation**
contents as depth	A mixture of spaces, depending on the content	Synchronicity of interactions, time markers, also difficult to discern, changes fast	Hyper-juxtaposition	User generated content, community chosen, predesigned interface.
surface	Depends on size and shape of the screen, the face is a map, there is tactile engagement	Cracks, warmth, timelines separated by the surface	Screen and its environment, often the screen reproduces its environment (filming)	Can be chosen and modified
motion	Cannot get used to all movements on screen, we only get accustomed to the scrolling	Repetitive gestures; speed of contents	Minimal movement leads to wide movements inside + changes depending on scene, stylistic/narrative choices	Depends on user and community

Table 3. A scheme for flow dwelling.

Chapter Two: The Neighbourhood

10. The Spatial Turn and the geography of screendwellings

Screendwellings have been approached as homes in the previous chapter, but by being structured around social interaction they also embody different functions which must now be confronted. In the past two decades online spaces have taken different shapes and meanings in their users' lives. While maintaining their dwelling function, screens have always been – each in their own peculiar ways, dictated by their evolution and by the state of technology – spaces of work and leisure time, but the way these dimensions have evolved to coexist makes the study of their context needed. The screendwelling is not experienced in isolation, but as a space to be seen as part of the "complex, fragmented, jumbled spaces of postmodernity"[153] that became relevant with the Spatial Turn, the long process of reassertion of geography and spatial matters in science and the humanities that unfolded over the nineteenth century, and that has been influencing research in the areas of screen studies as well.[154] The neighbourhoods in which our screendwellings are situated describe a broader mediascape that they populate alongside very many other screen devices. They are to be defined in relation to spatial theory and, for the purposes of this research, to the works that have most contributed to it.

Warf delineates a history of space and vision in the passage between geographical surfaces to geographical networks. He describes the use of surfaces in European colonialism, from the control that cartography allowed the power to maintain to the inventions of linear perspective and printing, which in their own ways served hegemonic power and had social significance. It is argued that surfaces were the most common way of seeing and understanding space until the late twentieth century, which marked the passage to the model of networks. This happened due to the exponential growth of globalization and to the great speed of communication and transportation that came with it. One of the biggest changes was the incredible transformation of the

[153] Warf, Barney, and Santa Arias. *The Spatial Turn: Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, cit. P. 5

[154] Please see De Rosa, Miriam and Fowler, Catherine. "Making conjunctions: thinking topologically with contemporary artists' moving images." in *Screen*, vol. 62, issue 4, winter 2021. Pp. 512–532.

telecommunications field: the Internet annihilated distances and connected the power hubs of large cities situated all over the world. This new interpretation of space is to be understood as centred around its social use rather than on the fixedness that prevailed in the age of geographical surfaces.[155] The consequences of the shift are not only observable in the way power works and communicates, but they are a palpable part of the space 65.7% of the World's population uses.[156] Warf writes about the influence of cyberspace on social interaction:

> Indeed, in a socio-psychological sense, cyberspace may allow for the reconstruction of "communities without propinquity," groups of users who share common interests but not physical proximity, although the ability of virtual communities to substitute for face-to-face ones is debatable. The implications of this process are sobering. As Graham and Aurigi (1997: 26) note, "Large cities, based, in the past, largely on face-to-face exchange in public spaces, are dissolving and fragmenting into webs of indirect, specialized relationships." More generally, cheap, instantaneous, and ubiquitous communications have made the notion of place as a discreet, bounded entity increasingly problematic by allowing people to be in several places simultaneously.[157]

Screens, in general, have bent socio-economic dynamics in innumerable ways, contributing to immense changes in the use of space, especially public space, and in the construction of place – aspects that have been object of scholarly discussion since the Eighties.

11. Screendwellings and third places

The concept of third place becomes of scholarly interest in the early Eighties when Oldenburg and Brissett publish *The Third Place*, a paper in which they demonstrate the social relevance of aggregating spaces as a support to the lives of individual members of the community who would otherwise base their life satisfaction solely on their home and

---

[155] Warf, Barney. "From Surfaces to Networks*."* in Warf, Barney, and Santa, Arias. *The Spatial Turn: Interdisciplinary Perspectives*. Routledge, 2008. Pp. 61-70

[156] "Digital 2023 October Global Statshot Report". *DataReportal – Global Digital Insights*, 19 Oct. 2023, https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2023-october-global-statshot. Accessed 4 Jan. 2024.

[157] Warf, Barney. "From Surfaces to Networks*."* Cit. P. 67

work. Third places can add value to the lives of individuals by integrating them into a social context without any purpose other than sociality itself. They provide an alternative to the dichotomy of home (the first place) and work (the second place); Oldenburg and Brissett also argue that the progressive lack of such places influences the discontent of the American people, robbing them of opportunities to express themselves freely and without the inhibitions typical of the workplace.[158] The concept of third place, later delineated in detail by Oldenburg in his 1991 *The Great Good Place,*[159] has some core characteristics that are appropriate for the description of screendwellings as well.

To be a third place, a space has to be accessible to everyone, it can be public or semi-public, but it can be a commercial activity as well, and many are. Its most outstanding characteristic is its integration into the daily life of its inhabitants, who must appropriate it as their own. It must be frequently visited and provide occasions for gathering.[160] With regards to screens' integration in daily life, the average user spends more than two hours per day browsing social media, and the figures are similar in the case of television spectatorship, with the average viewer spending more than three hours a day watching television.[161] The gathering aspect is at the root of social media use, the activities carried on via cyberspace are of inherently social nature. Relationships built online can be meaningful and social life on the Internet gains meaning from spatial relations just as it does in real life. There are spatial identities used by online communities that can be referred as third places, but it is significant that the interaction between users does not necessarily happen synchronously.[162] Television's accessibility makes it an ideal candidate for the definition of third place, its language is clearly understandable because of the constant presence of moving images, and the condition of an outside spectator that

[158] Oldenburg, Ramon, and Dennis Brissett. "The Third Place". In *Qualitative Sociology*, no. 5, 1982. Pp. 265–84.

[159]Oldenburg, Ray. *The Great Good Place : Cafés, Coffee Shops, Community Centers, Beauty Parlors, General Stores, Bars, Hangouts, and How They Get You through the Day*. Paragon House, New York 1989.

[160] Oldenburg, Ramon, and Dennis Brissett. "The Third Place." Cit. P. 270

[161] "Digital 2023 October Global Statshot Report". *DataReportal – Global Digital Insights*, 19 Oct. 2023, https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2023-october-global-statshot. Accessed 4 Jan. 2024.

[162] Gotved, Stine. *Spatial Dimensions in Online Communities*, cit. Pp. 406-408

watches the actors inside of the device creates a distinction from the other that is typical of communities.[163]

The second requisite for a space to be unequivocally defined as a third place is the absence of status, the people involved in the use of a third place abandon hierarchies and enter a condition of equality, democracy, and pure sociality.[164] The television screen follows this rule partially but in some way it also eludes it: the broadcasted programs are a common ground for conversation across all categories of society, the broad scope of its transmissions reaches the most part of society and is intelligible by all.[165] On the other hand television can be understood as an instrument of control, as Deleuze wrote in his Letter to Serge Daney,[166] because it creates a one point perspective guiding public opinion. Social media and cyberspace also have a democratic nature, in the early days of the Internet there is no status to uphold, because every user is a newcomer. Social networks offer a platform to anybody who requests one, thus seemingly incarnating the pinnacle of democracy. Nonetheless, the manipulation of public opinion has been shown to occur on social media platforms using tools such as troll accounts and bots, making social media a weaponizable means of communication.[167] Moreover, the claim of the absence of status can be supported on social media only up to a certain level: while it is true that wide masses of people communicate as equals in a variety of environments, it is equally true that status can be gained as a result of social media use, putting some users above others both in function of their celebrity and as a direct result of it, by accelerating the diffusion of contents produced by them.

The third trait typical of third places is the neglect of personal problems and individual worries that everyone seems to observe paired with the tendency not to speak out of turn, which, Oldenburg and Brissett write, is "unlike corporate meetings where status dictates

---

[163] Adams, Paul C. "Television as Gathering Place." Cit. Pp. 125-131

[164] Oldenburg, Ramon, and Dennis Brissett. "The Third Place." Cit. P. 271

[165] Adams, Paul C. "Television as Gathering Place." Cit. Pp. 126-127

[166] Deleuze, Gilles. *Negotiations, 1972-1990*. Columbia University Press, New York 1995. Pp. 75-76

[167] Chen, Long, et al. "Social Network Behavior and Public Opinion Manipulation". In *Journal of Information Security and Applications*, vol. 64, Feb. 2022. P. 13

not only who will dominate serious conversation but also who will engage in levity."[168] Again, this is generally true of entertainment, in many occasions screens are used in leisure time and provide an escapist distraction from work life and the problems of home. Television offers catharsis and emotional involvement in situations that do not remind the viewer of their personal worries; all screendwellings can be, as discussed in the previous chapter, familiar shelters that can abstract the spectator from their physical environment. But there is a degree to which this notion is challenged because television and cinema create a class of well-known agents – either actors or public personalities – whom the spectator can identify with but who are ontologically other, thus becoming a centre of attention and a magnet for fame. A similar process interests social media celebrities and is perhaps even more relevant than it is for television personalities. Building their career by actively producing online contents, they make their own life the centre of public discourse, both assuming a different, more powerful position than the rest of the sites' population and, conversely, providing topics of discussion about which the rest can communicate democratically.

The last point that is made about the nature of third place reads as follows:

> Another kind of communication (nondiscursive symbolism) establishes not contractual bonds between people but spiritual ones, providing not simply *knowledge of* people but *knowledge about* people. This kind of speech is idiomatic and steeped in local heroes and local tragedies, in gossip and romance. It ties people to places and yet removes them from the little schemes and strategies of self-interest. It gives individuals a sense of continuity. Always, it evolves from the people themselves and is not manufactured by hucksters or campaigners. There is nothing rational, instrumental, exploitative, or promotive about such talk. To the extent that men engage in it, they maintain unity and a sense of belonging. […] what Klapp calls "nondiscursive symbolism" refers precisely to the chatter and banter of third places[169]

Some nuances of the previous attributes are present, but the stress is on communication per se: in third places communication happens in an accessible language that stems from the people who inhabit them, the topics of conversation revolve around purely social

[168] Oldenburg, Ramon, and Dennis Brissett. "The Third Place." Cit. Pp. 271-272

[169] Ibidem, pp. 272-273

themes that do not to promote other goals, nobody dominates such discussions. Many interactions that happen in a screendwelling's shared spaces indeed take a non-discursive form, but it is not necessarily true of all conversations. Since part of the screens' dwellers is economically dependent on their screen activities, non-discursivity is not granted, but this does not directly mean that the screen in question is any less of a third place for the users interacting with them. Television programs are interrupted by advertisement, social media is greatly crowded with influencers and marketers, and the line between pure sociality and interaction based on economic interest becomes blurred. Nonetheless, it is possible to read part of all screendwellings as third places, but in the mosaic-inspired manifestations of such peculiar nonplaces – we ought to remember that even while incorporating third place characteristics screens remain nonplaces – in some instances, the use of screens is work-related.

Soukup has provided a critical reading of the intersection between screens and third places in 2008; the focus of the essay is cyberspace, and specifically on computer-mediated communication. The author posits that multi-user domains and other computer-mediated communities can acquire the aura of small-town shops as they host users in their leisure time:

> Internet users often briefly interact in multi-user environments or chatrooms as a 'break' during their workday. Thus, if CMC contexts such as MUDs provide a 'social refuge' from the stress of work and home life, this computer-mediated interaction reflects Oldenburg's imagery concerning his great good places such as pubs and coffee shops. Functionally, both third places and computer-mediated environments such as chatrooms and MUDs are essentially social spaces outside professional and familial roles for the purpose of informal social interaction.[170]

Among the similarities between computer-mediated communication and physical third places Soukup lists the playful quality of conversation, the recurring loss of time perception reported by their users, the regularity of visits by members, and the reproduction of real-world third places. The latter is less common in present day virtual communication and third places and more in screendwellings by identification, but the others can be considered suitable to the context. Soukup also reports on the ontological

[170] Soukup, Charles. "Computer-Mediated Communication as a Virtual Third Place: Building Oldenburg's Great Good Places on the World Wide Web". In *New Media & Society*, vol. 8, no. 3, June 2006. Pp. 4222-424

distances between the concept of third place and digital spaces. The degree of realness of physical third places is the most evident objection to the claim of coincidence between the two,[171] but as previously illustrated, screens are able to host certain configurations of spatial practice, as well as a precise representation of space, manifesting in a way that approximates realness. Of course, the use of simulation alters the modalities of interaction and the subsequent positive effects gained from the reiterated practice of such spaces, but it does not mean that regular users perceive it as any less of a third place. Certainly, dating back to 2008, the study must be commented by considering new data and the present state of social media and Internet diffusion.

After February 2020 the use of screens has been undeniably innovated, both qualitatively and quantitatively. Time spent outside has reduced to a historical minimum during the years of the pandemic, forcing most interaction – virtually all interaction between people from different households – to happen through screen-based media. During that time all gatherings between friends were held on calls in which the grid of the interface was the only viable alternative to a physical third place. Those instances of screen use – which do not differ substantially from the ways Internet based communities regularly interact – cannot be disqualified from the definition of third places: quarantined localised communities reconnected through screens, and access to the platforms was granted to anyone with an internet connection. Another factor that formerly discouraged the definition of virtual realities as third places is the claim to accessibility, which could be considered false not much more than a decade ago.[172] Today statistic figures appear to completely disprove the argument for heavily unbalanced representation on the Internet, with the components of its population ranging from the lowest percentage in the Caribbean area (0.6%), to the highest in Eastern Asia (23.9%). Together with the percentage of each population's access to the Internet – which ranges from 28.4% in Middle Africa to 97.3% in Northern Europe – the picture presently painted is not one of complete equal opportunities, but neither one of limited Internet diffusion nor scarce representation of some.[173] The narrowness of online communities discussed by Soukup

[171] Ibidem, p. 426

[172] Ibidem, p. 428

[173] 'Digital 2023 October Global Statshot Report'. *DataReportal – Global Digital Insights*, 19 Oct. 2023, https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2023-october-global-statshot. Accessed 7 Jan. 2024.

in the above-mentioned study is also a non-issue in today's Internet, be it because of the wide-spread use of technology or because of the interfaces we use, focused less on orientating the user towards closed communities and more on connecting each account to a number of interests.

A presently valid argument against the validity of understanding screens as third places is the disaggregation of local communities that time spent communicating through screens adds to, as already stated by Oldenburg in 1999.[175] The readily available connection of distant people means that less time is potentially dedicated to bonding in local third places, and a worldwide average of almost seven hours of daily Internet use suggests that such potential holds a claim on reality. Moreover, these data relate to interactive screens connected to the internet, meaning that to have a better understanding of the average screen-time, the previously mentioned statistic on time dedicated to television must be added. The more than six hours of Internet use are thus added to around three hours of television use, [176] which amounts to roughly ten hours of average screen use per day per individual user. These notions, although previously mentioned, bear repeating because they contribute to a more complete understanding of time expenditure in the context of screen use and of the time available for participation to the frequentation of third places.

The applicability of this description of communal space is less immediate in the case of television, and it changes based on the type of screendwelling, but most screendwellings can nonetheless create occasions for the manifestation of a third place. Purnell suggests an interpretation of places depending on their use rather than their designation. In his study first places are explored in the specific case of their use as third places, and the case of community held "family dinners" is used to demonstrate the potential of private homes for the community.[177] When homes are opened to the public

[175] Soukup, Charles. "Computer-Mediated Communication as a Virtual Third Place: Building Oldenburg's Great Good Places on the World Wide Web." Cit. Pp. 426-428

[176] 'Digital 2023 October Global Statshot Report'. *DataReportal – Global Digital Insights*, 19 Oct. 2023, https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2023-october-global-statshot. Accessed 7 Jan. 2024.

[177] Purnell, David. "Expanding Oldenburg: Homes as Third Places". In *Journal of Place Management and Development*, vol. 8, no. 1, Mar. 2015. Pp. 1-4

they become a centre of gathering, Purnell advocates for a less rigid method of place definition, in which spaces can have more than one purpose simultaneously and fluidly:

> […] someone's third place can be someone else's workplace, or, in the case of family dinner, a place can serve a dual role of one's home (1st place) and someone else's third place. The point is that third places need not be static based on the intended purpose as a third place, but rather they might alternatively be dynamic, allowing for the host environment to shift in and out of its status as third and alternatively non-third places as needed.[178]

The observation is valid for screendwellings too, in that – perhaps more than other spaces – they can be dwelled in as multiple types of "places" at once. This happens differently on every screen and virtually with every content that emerges on its surface, but it can be explained employing the cases from Chapter One, which I will illustrate within the same framework.

11.1 Screendwellings by identification as third places

In his book *Television and Everyday Life*, Silverstone makes the case for television as a domestic medium, an important part of family life not only because of the entertainment it provides, but also by virtue of its schedule's ability to create a rhythm for the household it is situated in. If television is a part of what is broadly described as "home," the concept of home is also stated to be "where we belong." According to the author, "such a sense of belonging is not confined to house or garden. Home can be anything from a nation to a tent or a neighbourhood."[179] In the previous chapter screendwelling by identification was separated from its virtual and flow-based counterparts because of – among the other distinctive qualities – the fixedness of its physical emplacement. Televisions are special pieces of furniture, able to interact with and to create social impact on their viewership. Offering place-like experiences, the screen of television transports the viewer in a variety of space types. The fixed sets of *Un Posto al Sole*, which have been considered previously, can offer a sample of place experiences: most sets represent the first places of the characters' homes, but there are second places such as hospitals, offices, and a radio

[178] Ibidem, pp. 13-14

[179] Silvers Silverstone, Roger. *Television and Everyday Life*. Routledge, Abingdon 2003. Pp. 24-26

station, there is also one frequently visited third place, the diner *Il Vulcano*, of which all characters are regulars who socialize independently of the social class to which they belong. In the pilot episode of *Twin Peaks: The Return* the viewer is almost violently pulled out of the familiarity they have acquired with the town's environment in the previous seasons and finds the characters moving in bizarre heterotopic imaginary places. The real places featured are offices and secret rooms that work like second places, there are some apartments – the most classic example of first place – and there is a prison, which is a space of contiguity between the states of first, second, and third place. The spectator experiences the closest thing to a familiar ambience in the scenes set in the utopic Red Room, a surreal setting which appears throughout the whole show. Only in the final scene a real third place appears: the Roadhouse creates a nostalgic atmosphere in which cross-generational gatherings of the town's people are held. While the characters move in disparate settings, making the occurrence of on-screen third places somewhat rare, the team of actors that appears in the frame is in its second place, on set. The viewer is in a peculiar position, experimenting all of the spaces explored by the characters, but finding most characteristics of third places in the activity of watching.

The use of television as a third place is partly made possible by the simultaneously connecting and separating function of the screen's surface. By distancing the spectator from the facts of fiction the surface makes it possible for them to be entertained rather than troubled by the occasionally extreme events, as suggested in Chapter One. By connecting the spectator to places of interaction and to recurrent characters that become known by and close to them, the sense of familiarity typical of both first and third places is created. Furthermore, the separation function gives the audience an opportunity to be detached from the problems of their own life and engage in parasocial relationships that – excluding the instances of advertisement and explicit propaganda – creates emotional feedback reminiscent of in-person sociality.[182] To affirm the relevance of the television as a social medium, Adams writes:

> Such an integration must address the central role of mass communication in socioeconomic as well as cultural life in modern societies. To enter into this discussion requires that geographers consider expanding their definitions of place to

[182] Lacalle, Charo, et al. "Friends or Just Fans? Parasocial Relationships in Online Television Fiction Communities". *Communication & Society*, vol. 34, no. 3, May 2021, pp. 61–76.

> (at least temporarily) meet the media theorists on common ground. My unconventional use of the term "place" is undertaken in this spirit. By considering television as a place I am not denying the importance of location to the traditional concept of place, but rather pointing out the decreasing importance of location in the structuring of social life and the construction of meaningful human experiences.[183]

The labelling of television as a place – acknowledged by Adams as an extension of the definition – is in this context instrumental to the confirmation of its meaning in the lived experience of the viewership. I would argue that the recognition of a location's optionality in social life corroborates in actual fact the possibility that television has a role in the creation of meaningful experience, even as a nonplace, thus lacking both location and real relationality. In addition, television can be considered as a means for the production of shared knowledge, contributory to the social relations entertained by audiences in the physical world.

> If the dispersion into the suburb can be laid at the door of the automobile (and of earlier, public, forms of mass transportation), its consolidation can be ascribed to the electronic communication technologies: the telephone, the radio and the television, that followed. […] Each household became the centre of a network: of broadcasting in which nations and neighbourhoods shared a common culture (Scannell, 1989); and of telecommunications in which households, through the activity, principally of the 'housewife', were linked to other households, both of kin and friendship (Moyal, 1989). Falls in the numbers of those attending the cinema are symptoms of the withdrawal of entertainment into the home.[184]

With this passage Silverstone recounts a passage of the suburbs' history in which the place of television in the cultural and social life of the dwellers is clear: fast communications and transportation distanced people from physical centres, bringing a major part of their lives inside of their homes. At the same time the mass diffusion of the television supplied the population with a source of shared material and with a common leisure activity.

---

[183] Adams, Paul C. "Television as Gathering Place." Cit. P. 122

[184] Silverstone, Roger. *Television and Everyday Life*, cit. P. 64

With regard to motion the content of television programmes makes a difference. In the cases employed presently the gestures and body language of the characters – part of what prompts the mechanism of identification – are those of professionals in their second place but seek to imitate the motion typical of the place represented by the set at hand. The movements of the spectators are always suitable to first and third places, independently from the contents at hand. Nevertheless, there are cases in which screendwellings by identification are not – or not completely – used as third places: the news, for example, largely violate the idea of non-discursive speech and most likely also the requirement of a tone of lightness and distraction. The gestures of a news host are those of someone working, and there is little potential for the feelings distinctive of third places to emerge. Not all screendwellings, as will be illustrated subsequently, have an unquestionable claim to the definition of third place, however, this does not disprove their frequent employment as such.

Screendwelling by identification	**Third Place Use**
Contents as depth	Second place for the actors, first, second or third for the characters, third place for the viewer.
Surface	Connects and separates a second place (seen as first, second or third) from a first place, creating the occasion for the manifestation of a third place.
Motion	The gestures in television are those of people who are working or those of characters in their daily life, but the spectator's movements are relaxed and typical of third and first places.

Table 4. Use of screendwellings by identification as third places

11.2 Virtual screendwellings as third places

Virtual environments can, in many regards, be thought of as third places. When studying virtual screendwellings, though, a distinction has to be made between those that allow for and even require interaction, and those that exist in a private sphere only. Like Instagram and TikTok profiles, other spaces work as virtual dwellings: homepages of all sorts and video games are some of them, but the list also includes programs' interfaces such as photo and video editing tools, desktops, photo galleries, and electronic sheets for the production of writing, tables, or presentations. The difference between the first group and the second is that the latter does not have social purposes, and the possible

interactions are limited to selected members or items, i.e., multiple accounts can have access to a file that can be manipulated by all of them, but the mechanism does not translate to the production of a social environment and the software in question are mostly used for professional endeavors related to a second and a first, rather than to a third and a first place. The virtual dwellings that require social interactions are the ones that will be examined in this paragraph.

Social media profiles are interesting environments: the first impression upon entering any profile is that of being welcomed in someone's house; the same happens when observing someone's desktop, i.e. in the case of desktop cinema, a format that I discuss in relation to *Home* – my 2023 videoessay – in chapter three. like all virtual dwellings, in fact, these spaces are meant to be customized and furnished in any way the user pleases, and they are not as open to external contribution as the feed's landing page is. The posts on a given profile are all owned by the same person, of course, but there is a component of sociality both in the reason for posting a picture – to share it with others – and in the way others can interact with it – by deciding to like it or to comment on it. These social spaces, accessible to all those who have a mobile device and an Internet connection, have a parallel in another type of virtual screendwelling, one that precisely incarnates both the features of home and those of third place: it is the interface of multiplayer videogames, studied precisely in their relation to third place theory by Ducheneaut. Whilst delving too thoroughly into game studies exceeds the purposes of this dissertation, it is still worth mentioning that, as the evolution of Massively Multiplayer Online Games is analyzed in light of their design's function to promote sociality, it is apparent that the same considerations concerning third place are appliable to all those virtual screendwellings that make social exchanges possible, as well as to flow dwellings.

> Multiplayer games heavily rely on space (virtual space, but space nonetheless) to create and maintain a sense of community among their players. Indeed, while most of the earlier online social spaces were entirely text-based (e.g. MUDs, electronic mail and newsgroups), the newer MMOGs distinguish themselves by their rich 3D worlds. Most games have cities modeled after real-world cities and have large public spaces, as well as buildings with clearly identifiable functions (e.g. bars, banks, marketplaces). As such, they represent a fascinating laboratory to observe sociality

> online in a setting that tries, by design, to reproduce the features of some successful social spaces of the physical world.[185]

Like in Ducheneaut's MMOGs, a profile on Instagram or on TikTok gathers followers with the same interests and views allowing them to communicate with one another and share opinions on a given subject, provided by the profile's owner. The three-dimensional world on social media is the one portrayed in the photos and videos posted, but the real-world places presented are not a site of interaction between users but contribute to the provision of context to the image by introducing places that can be first, second, or third. While a multiplayer videogame is used as home, third place, and as a representation of a variety of other types of place all at once, profiles on Instagram and TikTok seem to be, at a first approach, only homes, and must be navigated to find the areas designated to social use.

The virtual dwelling's surface provides an opportunity that the television screen does not offer by requiring its dweller to interact, which puts them in direct relation with the contents, shortening the distance that is felt from the other side of the monitor. While sociality in the case of television takes the shape of parasocial relationships, social media profiles create another type of bond: the parasocial interaction, which occurs similarly to real relationships, but does not constitute an alternative to them.[186] The separation from the contents of a profile – like the customization of a videogame character – allows its owner to be in control of their image, managing others' perception of their person, and it also signifies that any interaction can be ended as soon as one of the parties involved decides so. Moreover, the non-discursive tone of conversations is not always granted in the spaces of social media, which are in their present form, in great part, a means for the diffusion of advertisement and for the process of influencing consumers; nevertheless, the presence of commercial or political interest on the part of some does not mean that no genuine interaction is possible.

The surface of virtual dwellings – similarly to the one of dwellings by identification – both connects its users to and shields them from real participation in a social activity. This

---

[185] Ducheneaut, Nicolas, et al. '"Virtual "Third Places": A Case Study of Sociality in Massively Multiplayer Games". In *Computer Supported Cooperative Work (CSCW)*, vol. 16, no. 1–2, Apr. 2007. P. 131

[186] Lacalle, Charo, et al. "Friends or Just Fans? Parasocial Relationships in Online Television Fiction Communities". In *Communication & Society*, vol. 34, no. 3, May 2021. P. 63

surface is the phone screen or the computer monitor, in both cases a device that is most likely mobile, unlike the television. Mobility is not a stranger to television or cinema, there is a dynamic movement in watching film even when the spectator is still[187] – as previously mentioned – but eradicating the screen from its fixed emplacement creates a universe of new possibilities. Verhoeff includes in her work on mobile screens some considerations on the mobilized gaze:

> The gaze is put in motion, made mobile, […] Friedberg seeks to emphasize the way in which nineteenth-century modern man makes use of different technologies through which the world can be admired in motion. […] Friedberg establishes a relation between the literally 'mobilized' gaze as a preoccupation in contemporary society, with the development of media technologies that enable the virtual gaze. She defines the latter as follows: "The virtual gaze is not a direct perception but a received perception mediated through representation."[188]

The trope of mobility as related to both fast travel and fast communication poses the conditions for a system in which the screen allows for the gaze to travel – both spatially on the navigable interface and geographically through the images appearing on the screen – and for the device to be carried. "The mobility of the screen and its user meets the mobility on the screen," writes Verhoeff.[189] It follows that the collection of first, second, and third places mediated by the device at hand is embedded in a real place – most likely first or third – in which the person operating the device itself moves.

---

[187] Bruno, Giuliana. *Atlas of Emotion : Journeys in Art, Architecture, and Film*, cit. P. 56

[188] Verhoeff, Nanna. *Mobile Screens: The Visual Regime of Navigation*, cit. P. 44

[189] Ibidem, p. 90

Virtual dwellings	**Third Place Use**
contents as depth	Usually virtual third place, features first, second or third physical places.
surface	Means of connection, everyone sees the same third place, its emplacement can be a first, second, or third place. Separation from the contents grants control.
motion	Mobility of the gaze inside of and through the screen.

Table 5. Use of virtual screendwellings as third places

11.3 Flow screendwellings as third places

Navigation of the virtual dwelling requires a series of choices to be made: the profile to be visited, the post to be clicked on, the option to respond to a comment, the actions to be carried out in a videogame, or the forum to be visited are all active selections. Flow dwellings, conversely, are approached with a sort of base inertia, which is not to say that no action or choice is required but rather that there is a preset direction in which the screen's contents are arranged, the direction of the flow. Navigation is, in these spaces, less articulated and more passive than it is in virtual dwellings. The landing pages of TikTok and Instagram are constructed like highways, and it is not by design that they act as spaces of dwelling. Visiting spaces and places is at the heart of the feed-scrolling habit: there is no necessary coherence between the contents that follow one another, except for the unifying characteristic of falling within a set of algorithmically defined interests. Still, the sequence of places, spaces, and people appearing on the screen can be read as a narrative, as navigating the screen means selecting spaces to connect and metaphorically travelling.[190] Verhoeff also describes interactive navigation as follows:

> First, navigation is directional: the desire is not for an overview but for a destination, a place to go to. Second, it is constructive: the navigator makes the itinerary, and as such constructs the space. Rather than an arrangement to be taken in or to traverse, interactive navigation is a creative act.[191]

[190] Ibidem, p. 69

[191] Ibidem, p. 138

In the case of flow dwellings, the direction of the stream is in itself a destination, there is no aim in scrolling a feed other than navigating, the possible choices are somewhat limited: one can either interact with the content on the page, ignore it and swipe to the next item in the flow, or leave the space and navigate to another section of the site. The differences between the TikTok "for you" page and the Instagram feed influence this aspect too. The latter is visited specifically to be exposed to new information on the accounts followed – meaning that the aspect of sociability is intentionally built in the site – whereas the first is accessed to be exposed to content tailored for the user – meaning that interaction and the creation of third places are incidental, even if frequent. In both cases the act of navigating the feed is highly accessible and well-integrated in the users' lives, and it certainly provides a distraction from external life for them.

The aspects of sociability and non-discursiveness are more nuanced. Sociability functions similarly to how it does in virtual dwellings – parasocial interaction is at the heart of it – with the only difference being that a flow contains items that are not necessarily afferent to the same theme, person, or generic interest. The result is that of a more democratic assortment of expressions, all coming from different creators, making the environment more adherent to the principles of third places, in which nobody soars above others, but also interceding less for the creation of a community. Yet, it is true that in the case of an algorithm such as that of TikTok, communities are created through frequent exposition of a set of users to a certain type of content in which they are interested; as for the Instagram interface it presents a set of chosen accounts and occasional new contents suggested on the basis of shown interests, so the involvement in a community depends on the user themselves. The constant switch between spaces and the emergence of different people on the surface make it difficult to know when contents with discursive purposes are going to be presented. On Instagram choosing who to follow means knowing – or at least being able to infer – if there is going to be commercially or politically interested content in a feed, on TikTok this is not true because of the choice being only indirectly the user's. The flow dwelling is a particular component of the space of flow:

> […] "space of flows" means that the material arrangements allow for simultaneity of social practices without territorial contiguity. It is not a purely electronic space […] although cyberspace is a component of the space of flows. First, it is made up of a technological infrastructure of information systems, telecommunications, and

> transportation lines. The capacity and characteristics of this infrastructure and the location of its elements determine the functions of the space of flows, and its relationship to other spatial forms and processes. The space of flows is also made of networks of interaction, and the goals and task of each network configurate a different space of flows.[192]

Castells explains in this passage his definition of space of flows, an occurrence that is typical of contemporaneity, of which flow dwellings are a part and a sort of representation: they connect great distances and contain nodes – such as profiles and tags – that act as the network centres, each relating to their own space of flows.

The passage from one part of the flow to the next is handled differently on the two platforms presently discussed: the surface is able to frame the spaces between posts on Instagram, allowing for more than one place to be present on the screen at the same time, generating a sense of contiguity between distant realities coexisting on the screen. This is not possible on TikTok, where the possibility of stationing between contents is not possible, and the only intersection between spaces is the one that navigating the comment section creates, juxtaposing the area where the third place is manifested (the comment section) to the one where the area in which the author of the post moves. Again, we find that the surface acts as an intermediary between the place of the post's author and the one of the person watching, who – in the flow as opposed to the virtual dwelling – has less control over which places to visit in their downward scroll.

Motion is also similar to virtual dwellings – some of them are in fact parts of the flow – but the gestures used to navigate differ in one detail. A social media profile is usually made to provide an overview of someone's activities, visiting it means being able to alternate between past and present contents and to move from the grid of the overview to single posts in the preferred order. The fingers navigating the flow dwelling are mostly apt to sliding in a scrolling motion, joining the conversation from time to time when they wish to take advantage of the available third place.

[192] Castells, Manuel. "Grassrooting the Space of Flow". In *Urban Geography*, vol. 20, no. 4, May 1999. P. 296

Flow screendwellings	**Third Place Use**
contents as depth	Navigating as its own end, a space that sums up a huge number of first second and third places by flowing through them.
surface	Means of connection, everyone sees the same slice of third place, its emplacement can be a first, second, or third place. Separation from the contents grants control, but only partially.
motion	Mobility of the gaze inside of the screen plus continuous motion between one space and the next.

Table 6. Use of flow screendwellings as third places

11.4 Intersections: fourth places and the Aleph

The possibilities of the screen's use as place could be articulated infinitely because of its heterotopic and nonplace nature. The highly transformable space of the screen molds itself to serve the necessities of its operator; other than a home or a third place, the screen can act in many situations like a workplace. The use of digital devices in a second place contexts brings evident changes to the use of space; in particular, employment in social media related fields contributes to gender inequality, creating an occupational category that transplants the occupation of women in a precarious place in the digital economy, through jobs that remain marginalized. Women are employed in these roles partly by virtue of the flexibility and tolerance required.[193] The possibility to work at home granted by many jobs generates a condition of coexistence between first, second and third places, a condition of space combinations that is omnipresent in the experience of the screendweller. The space lived through the screen also brings together different spatial dimensions in the ways described previously. The result of the proximity of a variety of places and spaces generally falls in the definition of fourth place suggested by Morisson: a space that merges "elements of two or more places, leading to new spatial categories such as coliving, coworking, and comingling spaces."[194] This pertains both to the hybrid experience of digital spaces in physical places and to the experience of screendwellings

[193] Duffy, Brooke Erin, and Becca Schwartz. "Digital "Women's Work?": Job Recruitment Ads and the Feminization of Social Media Employment". In *New Media & Society*, vol. 20, no. 8, Aug. 2018. Pp. 2984-2985

[194] Morisson, Arnault. "A Typology of Places in the Knowledge Economy: Towards the Fourth Place". In *SSRN Electronic Journal*, 2017. P. 6

– considered in isolation – in which one can find their temporary home, third place, and workplace.

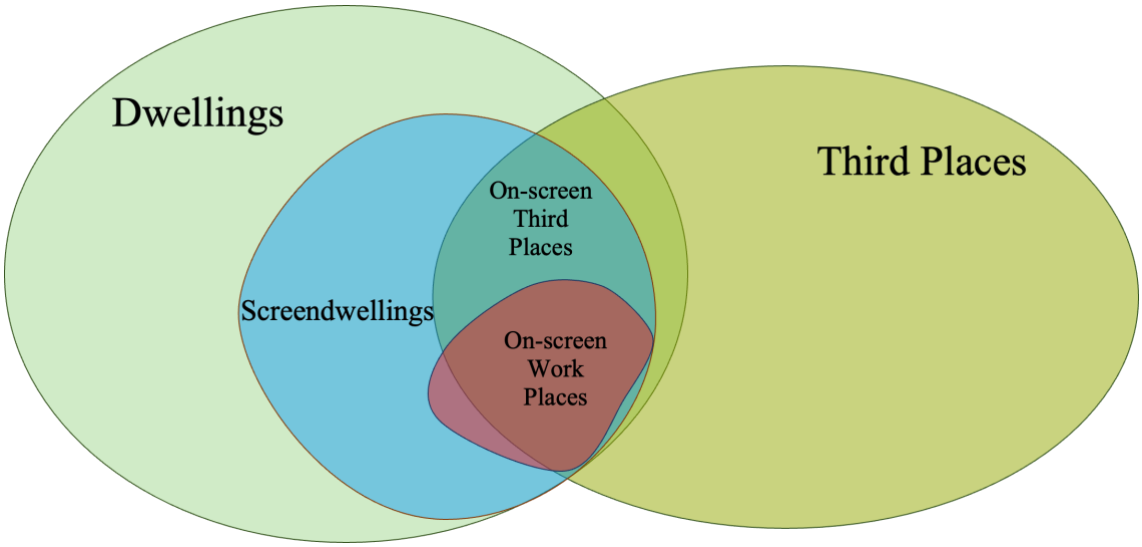


Table 7. A Venn diagram that illustrates the intersections between dwellings, third places, and screens. My elaboration.

In this chapter I have given a description of the intersection between dwelling and third place as manifested on the screen, which occurs similarly to the one between real homes and community explored by Purnell.[195] The mediated on-screen third places – that exist in a physical place and open their visitor to perceiving a variety of distant places – can be a second place, digital work being a case in point. There are occasions in which the screendwelling is a second place without also being a third, but all screendwellings allow for a combination of spaces.

This understanding of a space that reaches and connects all types of spaces and all places is reminiscent of Soja's comments on *The Aleph* by Borges as a metaphor for the Thirdspace as the conjunction of real and imaginary spaces:

> "The Aleph" is an invitation to exuberant adventure as well as a humbling and cautionary tale, an allegory on the infinite complexities of space and time. Attaching its meanings of Lefebvre's conceptualization of the production of space detonates

[195] Purnell, David. "Expanding Oldenburg: Homes as Third Places." *Cit.*

> the scope of spatial knowledge and reinforces the radical openness of what I am trying to convey as Thirdspace: the space where all places are, capable of being seen from every angle, each standing clear.[196]

In the next chapter the experience of the screendweller, who moves in this complex Thirdspace made of distant realities, homes and digital neighbourhoods will be described in its aesthetical and phenomenological aspects.

[196] Soja, Edward, W. *Thirdspace: Journey to Los Angeles and Other Real-and-Imagined Places*, cit. P. 56

Chapter Three: The Dweller

12. To dwell: experiencing the surface

To have a comprehensive commentary of what it means to dwell on the screen, it is necessary to inquire about the lived experience of the dweller, who is in a peculiar phenomenological position. The interweaving of public and private dimensions has been drawn attention to in these pages in consideration of the frequent juxtaposition of the home and third place characteristics of screen spaces, but it will now gain new meaning as an element of spatial distortion in the life of the subject who experiences the process of screendwelling. In the interaction with the surface of the screen, the dweller is between different types of lived experience that do not always present clear boundaries or continuity. To describe such experiences it may be useful to, once again, employ a case study.

12.1 *Home*, May of 2023

To explore such a threshold space I would like to come back to the event that started my venture into the study of screens, one that contained, in fact, the original root of the present work. It was the spring of 2023 and classes were drawing to a close, as a final assignment the students of Professor De Rosa's Visual Cultures class had to present short videoessays involving a word, a surface and a gesture. It was a way for us to work practically on the suggestions received during the lectures and to share reflections with our peers. When I started gathering ideas for my essay, I was particularly sensitive to the topic of home and of place. Temporarily unable to leave Venice – but soon to move away – I was feeling nostalgic of the places I could not return to and of the ones I would have soon abandoned. I decided to virtually visit the places I missed and that they would be the object of my essay. As a matter of fact, navigating the point-and-click interface of interactive maps all the way to the places of my teenage years did not feel unlike travelling home, I began to realize that composing virtual walks in my memories to show in class was *de facto* a public exhibition of my inner world. When Professor De Rosa suggested I read Heidegger's *Building, Dwelling, Thinking*, the idea that I could describe the condition of dwelling as experienced on a screen began to materialize into a tangible project.

I divided the video, titled *Home,* in three sections titled *the four*, *the saint of the bridge*, and *leaving home.* The first act assigned a place in my memories to each component of Heidegger's fourfold, the earth that is saved, the sky that is received, the deities that are awaited, and mortality which is the nature of humans.[197] Additionally, every one of them was associated to an element – in the form of a tarot card sign – that the place represented for me (fig. 17). The four places were simultaneously explored in four windows that I put side by side on screen in a sort of split screen. I opted for a street view mode and I employed it twice: once going towards a home and once leaving it and going back to my house. The reason for this simultaneity was to divert the spectator's eye from seeing the whole, to prevent my memories from being fully observed and from becoming, as a whole, the object of others' perception. Editing such a scene created a case of temporal disassociation in which asynchronous events were forced into synchronicity and flattened into one single moment: unable to operate four browser windows at the same time I had recorded each session in different moments and edited them together (fig. 18). By pasting on top of the recorded journeys old photos and clips of text being typed out, I added further moments to those, the times in which the pictures were taken and those when I typed the phrases on my keyboard were all present at the same time in front of the class (fig 19). This was also the unfolding of my personal stories, a collection of my past emotions, the landscape in my imagination met the virtual mapped ones on the screen. The attempt to communicate parts of my lived experience through its spatial configuration summons back Bruno's reading of mental images and their fabric:

> A landscape is, ultimately, a material work of the mind. Places and affects are produced jointly, in the movement of a superficial projection between interior and exterior landscape. Affects not only are makers of space but are themselves configured as space, and they have the actual texture of atmosphere. To sense a mood is to be sensitive to a subtle atmospheric shift that touches persons across air space. In this way, motion creates emotion and, reciprocally, emotion contains a movement that becomes communicated. It is not by chance that we say we are "moved." […] An interior landscape moves, creases, and folds in tangible ways. It is, in many ways, designed—woven as if it were handmade.[201]

---

[197] Heidegger, Martin. *Building, Dwelling, Thinking,* cit. Pp. 147-149.

[201] Bruno, Giuliana. *Surface: Matters of Aesthetics, Materiality, and Media*, cit. P. 19

The equation of the four different "video-walks home" implied that in all four the same qualities of dwelling could be found, that in all four I had built something, and that the practice of inhabiting those spaces had something of the universal dwelling experience.

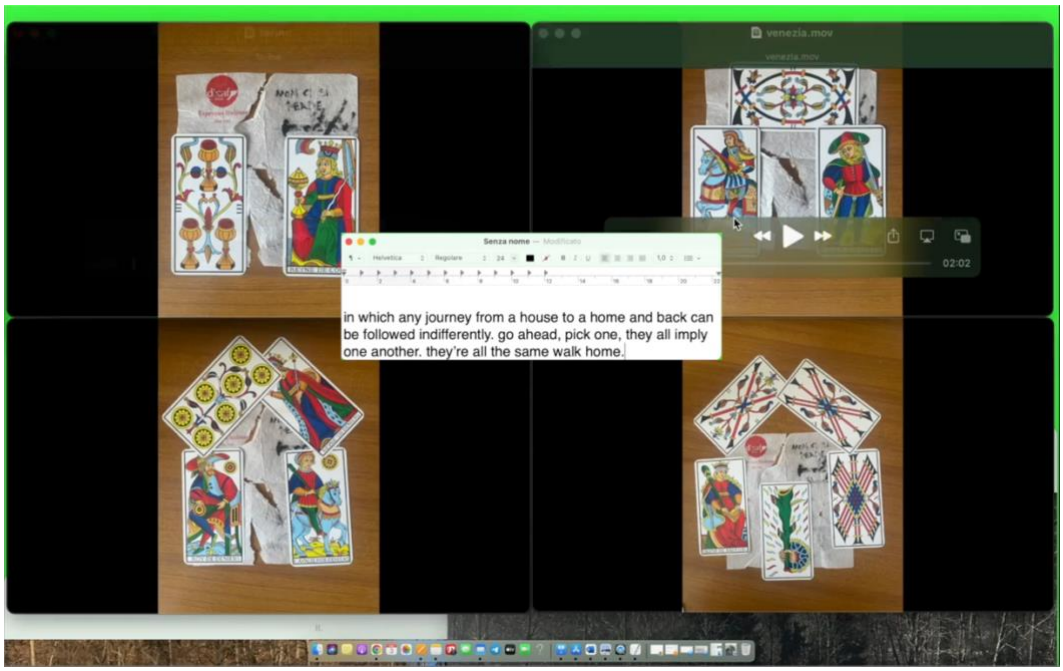


Figure 17. Still from *Home*. Directed by Benedetta Andreasi, videoessay, Ca' Foscari University, 2023.

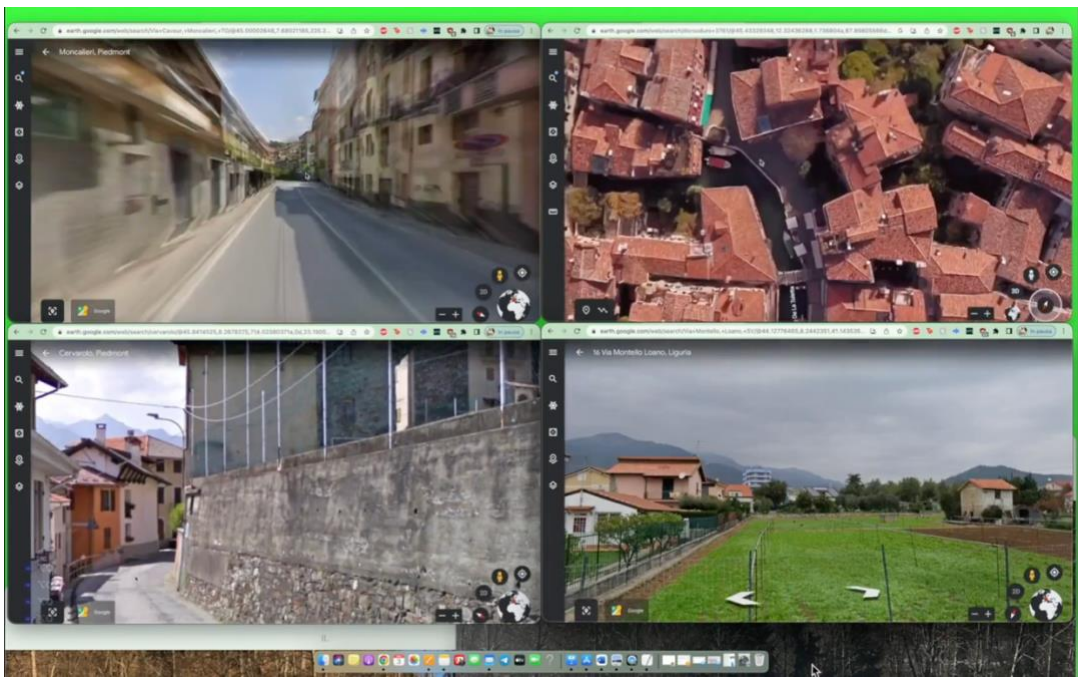


Figure 18. Still from *Home*. Directed by Benedetta Andreasi, videoessay, Ca' Foscari University, 2023.

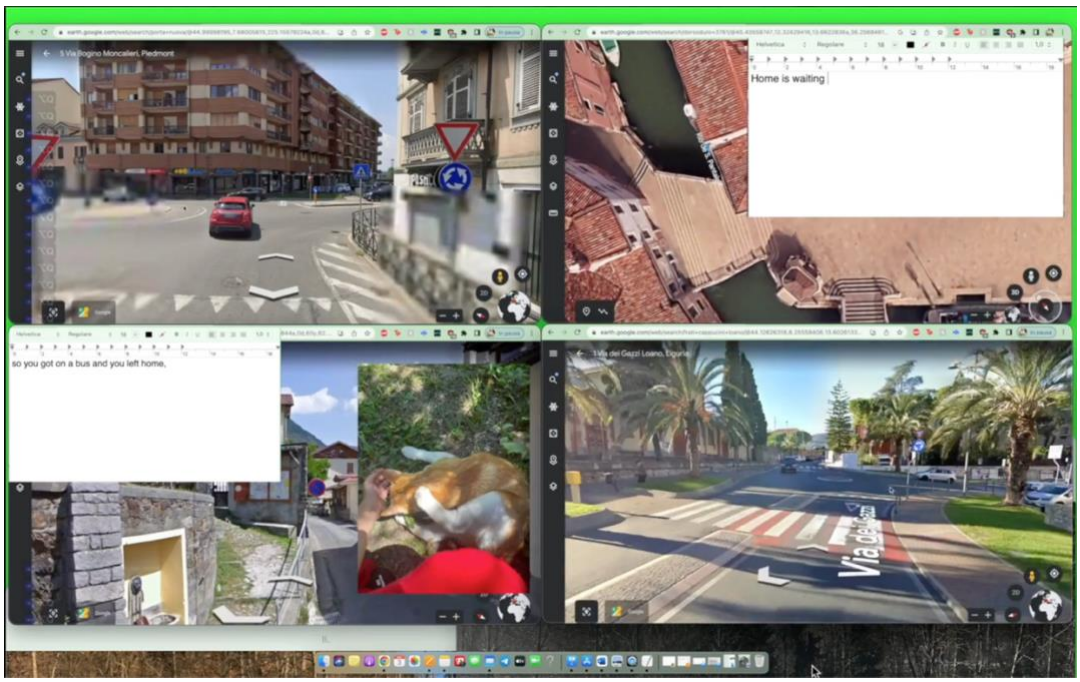


Figure 19. Still from *Home*. Directed by Benedetta Andreasi, videoessay, Ca' Foscari University, 2023.

I named the second act of the essay *the saint of the bridge*, once again referencing Heidegger. In it I asked a friend to film me as I dissolved a meaningful fragment of paper as a sort of exorcism to destroy my bond to the homes of the past and accept that building something new was not only possible but necessary. The segment does not inherit its name from being shot near a canal, but from its aim. In the first part of the video the four settings are clearly separated, each kept in their own window. Now the memories from each place converge on the same desktop, every image or videoclip covers the one that was opened before it. I set the desktop's wallpaper to a greenscreen to superimpose the folders and files on the video. This was a bridge between my own places, symbols of the fourfold, as well as a bridge between the real world and the world of the screen. It is significant to emphasize the gathering aspect, the main role of the bridge:

> The bridge swings over the stream "with ease and power." It does not just connect banks that are already there. The banks emerge as banks only as the bridge crosses the stream. The bridge designedly causes them to lie across from each other. […] It brings stream and bank and land into each other's neighborhood. The bridge *gathers* the earth as landscape around the stream. […] The bridge lets the stream run its course and at the same time grants their way to mortals so that they may come and go from shore to shore. Bridges lead in many ways. […] The bridge gathers, as a

> passage that crosses, before the divinities—whether we explicitly think of, and visibly give thanks for, their presence, as in the figure of the saint of the bridge, or whether that divine presence is obstructed or even pushed wholly aside. The bridge gathers to itself in its own way earth and sky, divinities and mortals.[202]

Although in the making of *Home* I was mainly aiming to convey the dimension of dwelling in itself, the digital medium forced me to consider the space of the screen as a world that was different but in itself inherently possible to dwell in. The desktop full of memories and photos and writings played the role of my conscience's contents as I drowned the piece of paper. I had furnished my screen like a representation of my gathered thoughts and memories. In this second moment there was also something that was not present in the first: I was present on the screen, the movements were not the ones of my pointer zooming in and out on the map anymore, they were the camera's and my own at once (fig 20). In the frames in which my hands are present and moving, my own role is split in two: I am the dweller on the outside physical off-screen world, editing and watching the image, and the one on the inside on-screen world, performing a ritual and a scene. The object of the ritual, the piece of paper, appears in a photo taken inside of a car and in the public space of Venice. The following instants see my hands disappear and files containing other moments of my life open, videos of friends introduce other cameras with their own perspectives and new protagonists that run and sway on the screen for a brief length of time (fig 21), then the third act starts: *leaving home*. The open files are rapidly closed and moved away from the desktop; the text window spells out thanks to all the people who have helped me build something (fig 22).

[202] Heidegger, Martin. *Building, Dwelling, Thinking*, cit. Pp. 147-149.

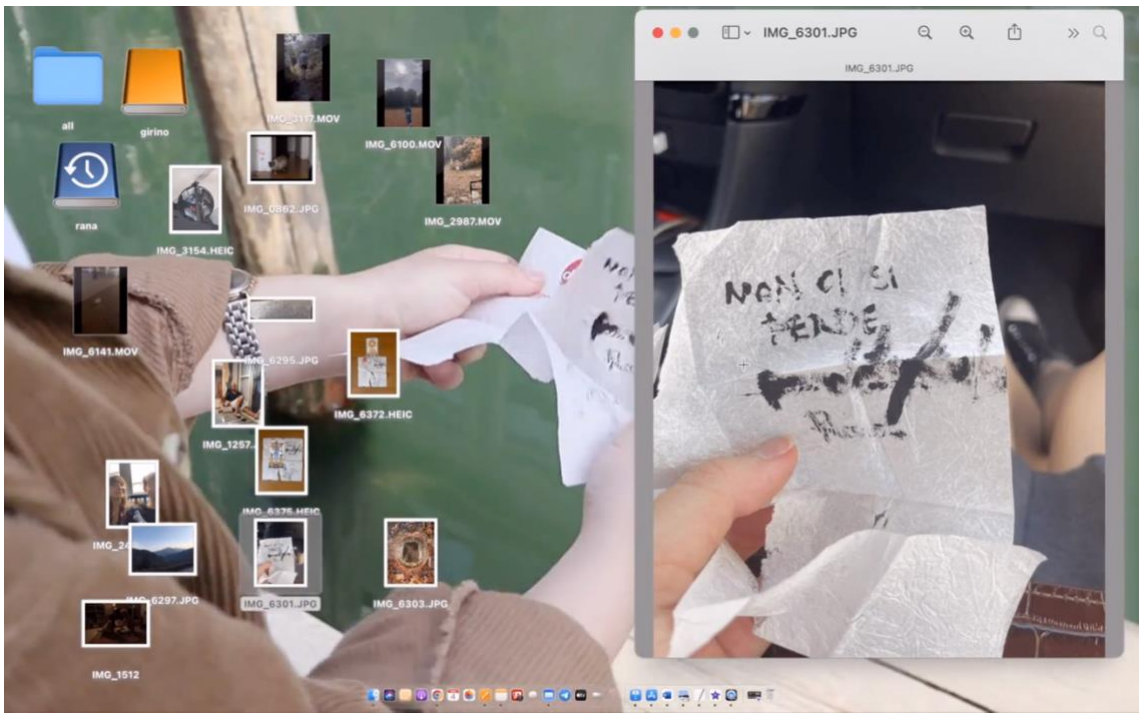


Figure 20. Still from *Home*. Directed by Benedetta Andreasi, videoessay, Ca' Foscari University, 2023.

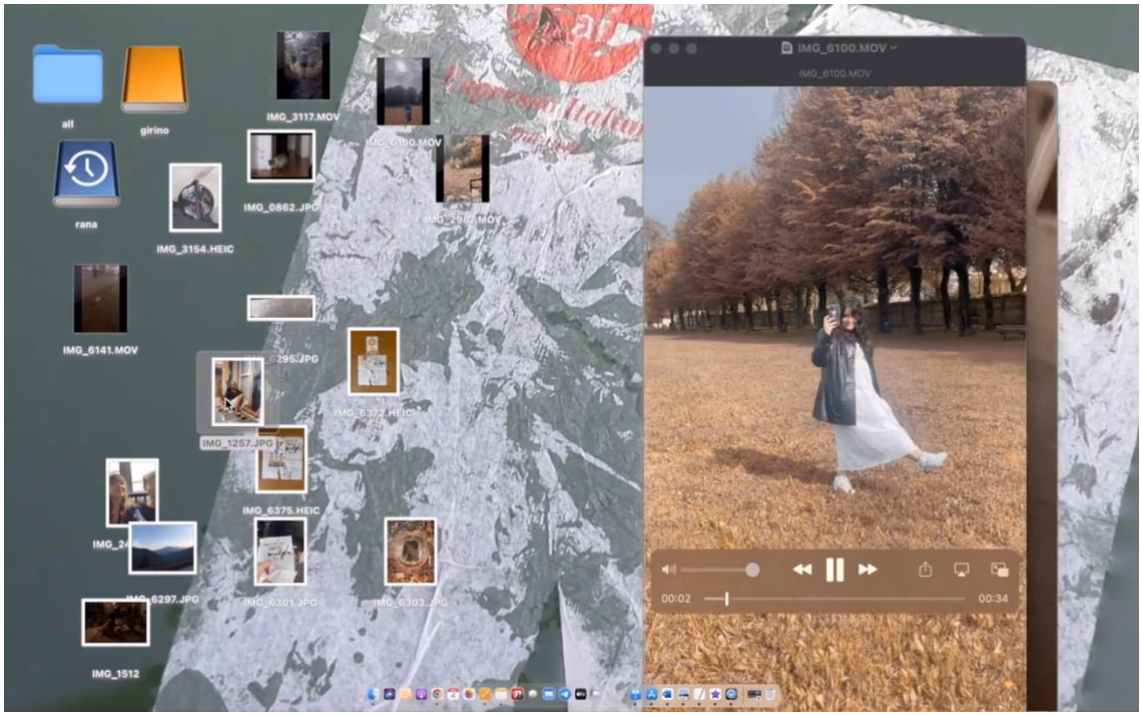


Figure 21. Still from *Home*. Directed by Benedetta Andreasi, videoessay, Ca' Foscari University, 2023.

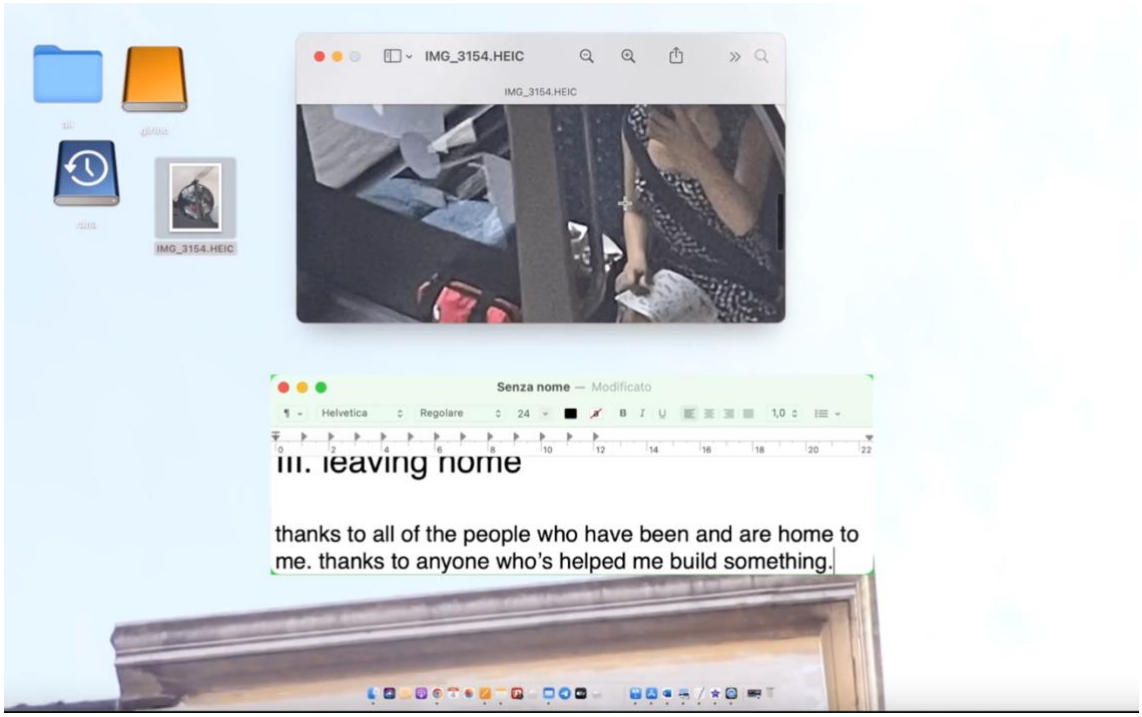


Figure 22. Still from *Home*. Directed by Benedetta Andreasi, videoessay, Ca' Foscari University, 2023.

Again, the meaning of it was purely symbolic, formerly, but the act of creating that space meant building places to be dwelt in: *Home* was – still unknowingly – a single specification of the concept of screendwelling, but it contained identification, in the eye of the camera and in the incidental actors, it was created within the walls of the virtual home of the desktop interface, and its discontinuities and juxtapositions evoked the flow dwelling. Its dominant character is that of desktop cinema, which suggests that rather than a mix of the three forms of screendwelling it is a virtual dwelling that presents occurrences of identification and flow. This interpretation allows one to take its navigational profile into exam. Moving through the streets on the map translates for all intents and purposes to walking without any boundaries but the possibilities offered by the interface, and the same observation can be made about the opening and closing of windows and files on the desktop. During its making, navigating the spaces of *Home* meant having full agency over my mobility, fitting the virtual travel metaphor of the pedestrian.[206] The experience of watching it, on the other hand, implies the obligation of

[206] Verhoeff, Nanna. *Mobile Screens: The Visual Regime of Navigation*, cit. Pp. 52-53

a strict point of view, the narration to be followed is set on maps – both in the literal sense and as the desktop's scheme of disposition – that are actively toured, the actions of clicking and dragging allow the user to see or hide spaces from view. The desktop's space is transformed throughout the essay and the screen's functions are used to generate a narration of dwelling, similarly to how De Certeau's descriptions of apartments become narrations of tours and maps.[207] *Home* was not only a representation of my interior world of memories and a space with dwelling purposes, but it existed as a part of my work, thus becoming a combination of spaces and of ways to inhabit them. The present work contains initial intuitions that were already observable in the video-essay such as the public crossing into the private sphere, the different degrees of agency experienced by the individuals creating and watching the contents, and the idea of the screen as an architecture to be dwelt in. The very framework I used to analyse the screendwellings' architecture – based on the distinction between contents, surface, and motion – is reminiscent of the directions for the realisation of the videoclip: to use a word, a surface, and a gesture. After observing the specific structure of some chosen screendwellings, and having described the experience of one screendwelling instance, a broader delineation of the dweller's encounter with their dwelling surface can finally be sketched.

12.2 Phenomenological dwelling

The Heideggerian assumption that to live is to build places within the space that is experienced leads – in this context – to the observation of the way screens are dwelt in and hence to their integration in the fluidity of places they are experienced in. If it is true that screens cannot entirely fall under the definition of place, they are inextricable from the environment that surrounds the dweller, who always exists firstly in the real world. The digital image is, at present, deeply rooted in the space of the everyday, marking an experiential contiguity in which the subject opens to otherness and collects experience, gradually defining their identity. The subject asserts their presence in the world, in relation with the images and the environment around them; but the screen's surface is not like any other object in the way that it can make space its place. The images produced dwell in space like the subject does, the dweller inhabits space through and with the images. De Rosa's observation of the image as an element that we experience the world

[207] De Certeau, Michel. *The Practice of Everyday Life*, cit. P. 119

both with and through[209] is an especially relevant step of the present reflection because it reveals the peculiarity of the surface as an object of our intentional lived experience whose meaning does not cease with the perception of the object itself, it marks the connection of the subject to other spaces and other subjects. The screen exists by virtue of the transient connections it produces. In this respect Casetti points out that

> no device possesses the status of the screen independently from its functioning within a specific context. […] A screen as such does not exist. A screen becomes a screen when it interacts with a group of elements and is connected with a set of practices that produce it as a screen.[210]

The luminosity and interactivity of the screen mark the entrance to a different world that would not be experienced otherwise. The experiences the screen opens to put the subject alternately in the position of passive spectator and in one of intersubjectivity in which they can act and react. These conditions present themselves as the colour of the dweller's experience to different degrees depending on the situation and determine a shift in intention. Costella writes of two worlds that are intentioned by the airplane pilot, for whom the condition of observing at the same time the environment around the plane and the display manifested well before the wide-spread diffusion of screens on the workplace. In its evolution the display interface moves from the cloche of the airplane to the window glass, placing the "environment-world" behind the "information-world," it becomes transparent, the two worlds are not intentioned separately, but one is observed through the other. Costella also makes an argument for the shop's window as a transparent interface that guides the attention of the passer-by; he writes that all transparent interfaces allow the observer to dominate the observed, but also give images a way to guide the observer to their advantage.[211] It is an appropriate description for the subject's experience of spectatorship, the surface is active, it lights up and calls for attention, the images move and make the surface difficult to ignore.

The screen is navigable, but the image is seen from an established point of view: the infinite possibilities of observation are restricted to the one decided by the creator of the

---

[209] De Rosa, Miriam. "Abitare Con Le Immagini. Percorsi Tra Spazialità, Quotidiano e Cultura Visuale." In *Immersioni Quotidiane: Vita Ordinaria, Cultura Visuale e Nuovi Media*, Meltemi, Milano 2023. Pp. 299-306

[210] Casetti, Francesco. *Screening Fears: On Protective Media*. Zone Books, New York 2023. P. 22

[211] Costella, Alessandro. "Forare La Superficie. Storia e Archeologia Dell'interfaccia Trasparente". In *Immersioni Quotidiane: Vita Ordinaria, Cultura Visuale e Nuovi Media*, cit. Pp. 211-221

content and to the eventual alterations the subject can expose the object to. In other words, and with regards to the traditional phenomenological assumptions, the notion that the intentioned object is not only part of the intentional lived experience[212] holds true with a peculiarity: the objects experienced through the screen are truly present as objects, but they are also modified and mediated, the perception is more often perception of the interface than of the object-in-itself. The intentioned objects have a duality that materializes in our perception of them through the screen and not in their pure unmediated form, the object-for-us is often completely different than the object-in-itself that is intentioned, because through the surface it gains qualities such as texture and distortions, it is filtered or covered by images that only manifest on the screen. The perception of the screen in itself constantly changes depending on the contents, and the surface as object is only observed by virtue of its contents, a device in itself is rarely the object of examination if not related to its potential or present use.

When the spectator approaches the contents of the screen – writes Resina about the phenomenology of documentaries – they are in two spaces: the space of ocularity and that of intuition. [213] This distinction of spaces arises from the role of the eye as a material object and as the place of sight that can never be an object of our perception; ocularity is extended by the eye of the camera and constitutes the space in which images are perceived but not yet understood, where a sort of phenomenological reduction crosses the surface and grasps the objects framed by the camera. In the space of intuition the image is understood not only in its strictly perceived elements but in its context, the quality of the act of observation changes and the spectator makes sense of the image's entirety "in an intentional state of consciousness that mediates between the subject's past involvement in the perceptual field and the next one."[214] The space of intuition then finds its fiction film counterpart in the space of fantasy. Hence the eye of the camera decides of the spectator's subjective act of perception, it decides which objects are manifested and which are not.

---

[212] Costa, Vincenzo, et al. *Parte Seconda: La Fenomenologia Di Husserl, Capitolo Secondo: Significato, Intenzionalità e Logica, 5. Il Concetto Di Intenzionalità*. In *La Fenomenologia*.

[213] Resina, Joan Ramon. "Documentary as a space of intuition: Luis Buñuel's Land Without Bread*."* Cit. Pp. 192-195

[214] Ibidem, pp. 192-195

Observations such as these are suitable to describe the space of the screendwelling by identification and can be just as adequate to virtual and flow screendwellings if some further remarks are made. The subjective acts on navigable and mobile screens depend largely on the conscious decisions of the subject, the manifestation of the objects in these screendwellings is called by the subject operating the device, who is not merely assenting to dwell in a spectating position, but bringing forth the objects they wish to act upon. Spaces similar to the one of observation and intuition exist in virtual and flow dwellings since there must be a passive and an active genesis, but the passive genesis – in which the object is perceived – is always made possible by the very subject or by other subjects, and the moment of active genesis – in which the object is reconstructed in its meanings – makes new actions possible. In other words the appearance of a post that the subject has clicked on, for example, exposes the object in its (presented) entirety and opens the subject to its comprehension, simultaneously allowing them to share or comment on it.

Two elements thus indicate a different experience than the one of pure spectatorship: the body and the other. In the Husserlian phenomenology the body has a transcendental function, it allows one to know because it allows one to bring objects in their field of vision. One knows of the object's existence because one can reach and experience it.[216] These statements are completely reflected in the use of the subject's own virtual dwellings, the possibility of furnishing a page with known items such as photos and text is realised in that mechanism in which the subject goes back to something they are able to know and locate to move it and bring it to the attention of others. In flow dwellings a slight distinction must be made. An intentional lived experience that retains its objects for long is seldom verified in environments characterised by a condition of flow, and exception made for buttons that are always in the same position, there is no expectation or prior knowledge of something to be found. Scrolling is perpetual exploration, and its object is not unique, its aim is merely to reach the next item, there is no purpose in navigating flow dwellings other than experiencing a new environment with new information and leaving it an instant later. The space of intuition found in documentaries is supplanted by a sequence of intuitions that are expected to be disregarded, novelty and surprise are paramount in the experience of the flow; each time a new item is brought to

[216] Costa, Vincenzo, et al. *Parte Seconda: La Fenomenologia Di Husserl, Capitolo Quinto: Costituzione e Teoria Dell'esperienza, 6. Esperienza e Spontaneità Cinestetica*. In *La Fenomenologia*, Einaudi, 2014.

the surface a quick cycle of passive and active genesis starts, and when the subject has made sense of the new object their body moves it away and lets the next one emerge.

The activity of the body is at any rate what allows the subject to experience screendwellings, it is the bridge that brings the subject in front of the object in screendwellings by identification, as well as in virtual and flow screendwellings. But the body is also central in the manner that it can bring the subject into the position of object in its connection, however brief it might be, with the other. Husserl's research on intersubjectivity is founded on the relation of the body, the *Leib*, with its surrounding world. Intersubjectivity originates in the recognition of a world around the subject that is populated by other similar entities that function in the same way. When the other is noticed, a mechanism of empathy, or *Einfühlung*, begins: the other subjects are identified as analogous to one's own.[217] There are observations to be made on the world around the subject and on the other that is present in it; it has been indicated that a transparent surface such as that of a screen can call the attention of a subject to another world, which means that while operating the screen one stands in the two environments of the real world and of the screendwelling simultaneously. The other is present in both worlds: in one the others are always able to find the object of their experience in the dweller, in the other the subject can decide when to show themselves and when to hide, maintaining their status of subject and eluding the metamorphosis in object. In the circumstance that others are present in the real world of the dweller, the subject is observed in a state of absorption and unavailability, but they are seen, whereas in the screen they can be invisible or appear and be perceived.

Peculiar conditions for the perception of others are then set for the analogic apperception that verifies on screendwellings. In the real world *Einfühlung* allows to feel the others as experience, creating an "us" that is perceived harmoniously, Husserl defines it as *Paarung*, a pairing with the other that implies a consideration of the other as an entity similar to the subject that has characteristics the subject does not have.[218] The implication that the other exists as experience is articulated differently in the three types of

[217] Costa, Vincenzo, et al. *Parte Seconda, La Fenomenologia Di Husserl, Capitolo Sesto: Intersoggettività e Mondo della Vita, 1. Costituzione e* Intersoggettività. In *La Fenomenologia*, Einaudi, 2014.

[218] Costa, Vincenzo, et al. *Parte Seconda, La Fenomenologia Di Husserl, Capitolo Sesto: Intersoggettività e Mondo della Vita, 3. Empatia e Accoppiamento*. In *La Fenomenologia,* Einaudi, 2014.

screendwelling. If we observe the others that appear in the screendwelling by identification, then seeing and being seen assume the nuance of a recognition of ourselves in the person on the other side of the screen. Empathy for the characters is generated from the understanding of their experience as part of our own that is inherent to the identification process. By momentarily attaching our sense of self to a character on television we are participating of their own intersubjectivity, borrowing parts of their perception of others and the roles as subject and object they play in their relations. In virtual screendwellings there is a more direct perception of the self and the other, but there are also a conscient decision on the way one appears and, vice versa, an understanding of others as they want to appear. When I produced *Home* I was giving a certain picture of my experience, which meant that the *Paarung* was coordinated, others understood me through a lens of my own fabrication. A virtual dwelling returns a picture of its dweller that is as complete and clear as they wish for it to be, which differs from the experience of the other that is possible in flow dwellings; in the flow the other is seen fleetingly if they are seen in the form of the protagonist of a video or image, in the infinite sequence of perceptions of others that can appear in front of a subject. The perception of the other is thus limited to a figment of the image of themselves they arrange inside of their virtual dwellings.

In all screendwellings there is another mode of perception which does not associate a body to the content produced by it. When watching a movie we know it has been directed by someone, but we do not see them making it, nor we see the person writing the subtitles, but we know they must have been there. When reading a comment or seeing the number of interactions under a post we know – most often – that they derive from human activity, but in all these instances it takes an active effort to realize that what we see is the result of someone's own experience. If normally the subject is seen in the first place in itself and only then is their experience taken into account, when we meet the traces left by others on the screen we see the direct result of their experience but we do not immediately feel it as attached to another subject. The universe made on the screens and their interconnection produce a world that relies on complex identification processes.[219] This, in turn, produces motivations that are almost entirely fulfilled inside of itself unless the others experienced by the subject through the screen are also known outside of it. The

[219] Metz, Christian. *Cinema e Psicanalisi*. Marsilio, Venezia 2006.

perception of another world in a universe that is not as real as the subject's immediate surroundings makes relations ambiguous; the plurality of the screen's spatial meanings – in that it can be a home, a site of entertainment, and a workplace simultaneously – makes it easy for the distinction between environments to be felt as vague. The possibilities offered by a monitor used to work from home allow one to approach the participation to the two spaces as one pleases: during calls the video can be switched off as the microphone can, space can be calibrated so that the subject is involved in the work environment more or less than they are in the surrounding world of home. Spatiality, though, is still articulated around the presence of the screen when it is being used, even – and more so – when the subject tries to subtract themselves from its presence. De Rosa describes the condition of an online class, in which the people that are connected share a spatial dimension that is generated by their presence on the same display, but they also share their personal space.[220] The choice of turning off one's camera is telling of what it really means for the body to be connected with others, perceiving others means we are being perceived in our own right. The decisions of whether or not to make oneself perceivable and of how to program the others' perception of oneself derive from the shame of being perceived. Cavaletti writes about the management of shame, as the impact of gaze on our body, through the use of devices such as smart watches.[221] The capability of monitoring one's own functions approximates control on the impression others have of us, which is as true of the use of smart watches as it is of screendwellings, which typically mediate the way our being for-the-self becomes for-others. The theme of retreating that is so tightly adherent to the use of screens is described by Casetti as follows:

> In the digital age, as Nanna Verhoeff suggests in her book Mobile Screens, the word "navigation" is ambivalent. It can designate either actual travel from place to place or the possibility of exploring the world virtually, putting the body at rest. When the first meaning turns upside down, and the physical transference becomes a stillness full of curiosity, not only do the spatial vectors change direction — things

[220] De Rosa, Miriam. "Abitare Con Le Immagini. Percorsi Tra Spazialità, Quotidiano e Cultura Visuale." Cit. P. 302

[221] Cavaletti, Federica. "Oltre la Vergogna. Lo Sguardo Sul Corpo tra Dispositivi Indossabili e Realtà Virtuale." *Immersioni Quotidiane: Vita Ordinaria, Cultura Visuale e Nuovi Media*, cit. Pp. 197-204

> come to us, instead of us going to them, and an hypertopic space replaces the heterotopic one — but also the senses of distance and proximity change their balance. We no longer reach the world, but, on the contrary, we retreat from it.[222]

The physical location of the subject no longer matters, the extent of their navigation virtually knows no bounds. The reality that is reached through the world of the screen is connected to the real, physical world, but the medium allows for it to be manipulated on either side of the screen. The multiplicity of locations that can be reached in the immediate surely has its effects on the real world just as evidently as it does on the world of the screendwelling.

The experience of dwelling can be summarized and completed by adopting the usual tables as a frame of reference. In this variation of the framework the depth of the screen's contents is presented as the empathic perception of the individuals on the other side of the screen, and in particular of their experience, recalling the concept of *Paarung*. The surface is regarded as the object necessarily intentioned by the subject and as the intermediary through which the subject intentions the actual objects of their observation. Lastly, motion is the category of activity and navigation.

Dwellings by identification	Phenomenology
content - tact	Intersubjectivity belongs to the subjects on the other side; intersubjectivity by proxy; the experience of the subjects on the other side is transferred to the subject. The subject is not seen.
surface - contact	The surface exists by virtue of its contents, it is only a means to see objects that are unknown and unexpected. There is no contact, the screen is intentioned from a distance.
motion - activity	Stillness, activity is restricted; limited navigation.

Table 8. Phenomenology of the screendwelling by identification

[222] Casetti, Francesco. *Screening Fears: On Protective Media*, cit. P. 115

Virtual dwellings	Phenomenology
contents - tact	Intersubjectivity is controlled by the subject; every subject's experience is seen in the way subjects deliberately plan for it to be. The subject is partially seen
surface - contact	The surface exists only by virtue of its contents that are known and manipulated or navigated to through the surface itself. The screen is intentioned as a touchable world.
motion - activity	The standard mode of approach is active; navigation is required.

Table 9. Phenomenology of the virtual screendwelling

Flow dwellings	Phenomenology
content - tact	Intersubjectivity has different shapes; some others are only seen through the traces of their experience. The subject can be seen if they so choose.
surface - contact	The surface exists only by virtue of its contents that are unknown and unexpected but navigated towards. The screen is intentioned as a touchable world.
motion - activity	Restricted motions that are required; navigation is possible in a single direction. Activity in interaction, passivity in observation.

Table 10. Phenomenology of the flow screendwelling.

12.3 Practical dwelling: an off-screen excursus

It is necessary to divert the eyes from the surface now, and step into the world outside of it, for the world of the screen relates to it and conditions it in a number of ways. The consequences of on-screen dwelling on the habits of the dweller have in part – and in other contexts – already been expounded in the present work. A reflection wholly dedicated to the themes of privacy, fashion, and nomadism in their spatial implications is called for, to say the least.

The relation between private and public has been of fundamental importance throughout my research, but it is much more rooted in the history of the recorded image than it appears to be. Specifically, it is important to notice the changes in the private sphere that occur between the nineteenth and the twentieth century, considerably associated with the state of gender roles and womanhood. Massey writes that the space of the city in the early modernist age is the space of man, who can wander and observe others. The gaze belongs to him, and the object of such gaze is the woman. Women can, indeed, not venture outside of their home's perimeter alone, which locates them in a very

precise place in the distinct division of private and public space.[223] From the privacy of their home women care for the children and household, and it is in that privacy that their relationship with photography starts; Pirandello describes the process of having professional family photos taken in an era in which photography takes time and children have to be held still, she writes that during that time "the figure of the «mother,» that is often also a woman, occupies a role of invisible support."[224] The confinement to the private sphere and to the privacy of their own family is one of the starting points for women's conquest of a voice when Kodak makes them the target of advertisement campaigns that effectively create a class of consumers. Pirandello emphasizes the two figures of *Kodak girl* and *Kodak mother*, one younger and fashionable, and the other – her evolution – a perfect housewife who collects familial memories with the aid of her camera. Both women are amatorial photographers and capture "intimate atmospheres" when not directly the home as a backdrop to their subject. The effect of these snapshots is partly self-reflexive, these photographers relate their experience to a model of life and family to which they can confirm their belonging and that they can perpetuate by creating additional images of it.[225] Their reality is screened, meaning that it is surveyed, protected and presented on the surface of the photographic film, and it is screened *by them*, through their voices and their eyes; a precedent is thus set and destined to secure the bond between woman and camera.

The subject of fashion – in the wide sense of presentation and in its more precise meaning of clothing matter – becomes fundamental to read the screendwelling's place in the world. Bruno dedicates many reflections to the theme of fashion throughout her

---

[223] Massey, Doreen B. *Space, Place, and Gender, cit.* Pp. 234-235

[224] Pirandello, Sofia. 'Una Storia Privata. La documentazione e l'archiviazione fotografica come pratica femminile.' *Immersioni Quotidiane: Vita Ordinaria, Culture Visuali, e Nuovi Media*, cit. P. 22. The word "mother" is between quotation marks because the author alludes to the wider category of people whom the care and education of children is delegated to. On the figure of the mother in relation to filmmaking, an important antecedent in the Italian context is Cati, Alice. "«Sorridi alla mamma!». Presenze materne nelle pratiche cine-amatoriali." in *COMUNICAZIONI SOCIALI - 2007 - 2. Genere e generi. Figure femminili nell'immaginario cinematografico italiano*. Vita e Pensiero, 2007.

[225] Pirandello, Sofia. "Una Storia Privata. La documentazione e l'archiviazione fotografica come pratica femminile*."* Cit. Pp. 33-36

books. Two chapters of her work are particularly important for these considerations: the discussion on the fashioning of cinema and of the surface in *Surface* and the concepts relating to the fashioning of space included in *Public Intimacy*. In the first of these works she equates cinema to patternmaking and the pictures in motion to the folding of cloth that is pleated to follow the pattern of the editing. Film, as "visual tailoring," enfolds the spectator in a fashioned space. The folds of clothing and the unfolding of time, along with the folds of dresses, constitute the fashion that activates cinema, becoming its "living fabric."[226] Throughout the book she refers to the Deleuzian theory of the fold: the texture of the images is the landscape of the surface, just like the face is a map made of wrinkles and cavities. In *Public Intimacy* the focus shifts to architecture, and when the subject is the home, the role of the woman and housewife is once again historically central. In the retelling of Dorothy Arzner's *Craig's Wife* the house of the main character is planned to provide her with definitive independence, there is an emphasis on the idea that she will gain her freedom through "possessing and controlling a room of her own." Fashion is used in the film to make the character of Harriet – Craig's wife, precisely – more glamorous and desirable than her counterpart who appears to be shocked by her unruly affirmations.[228] Shortly after another connection between architecture, film, fashion and women makes its appearance: in the work of Bruno Taut the woman is a creator of space, the one who gives shape to architecture, he also labels the house as a woman's dress. Bruno remarks that there is a haptic component that binds architecture, fashion, and film.[229] These connections are surely relevant to the situation of screendwellings as a whole. Besides screendwellings by identifications, like the films explored by Giuliana Bruno, the fashioning of the surface and the presence of private homes are ever-present in virtual dwellings and flow dwellings. Folds and textures are the panoramas of our nomadic and mobile dwellings. Whether the object of a post is human or not, it is a trace left to show a facet of one's identity. Like fashion our virtual dwellings are used to create an image, to construct an identity which – provided that it can never be fully laid out or completely truthful – is designed little by little. But fashion is also the object we intention

[226] Bruno, Giuliana. *Surface: Matters of Aesthetics, Materiality, and Media*, cit. Pp. 30-37

[228] Bruno, Giuliana. *Public Intimacy: Architecture and the Visual Arts.* The MIT Press, Cambridge MA 2007. P. 169

[229] Ibidem, pp. 173-175

through the screen, it tells a story of the person that wears it and is brough to us by our flow dwellings according to our own identity traits.[230] The present of the *Kodak girl* is undoubtedly the influencer, a profession generated by the use young women make of the Internet. She brings us inside of her private sphere, her house and her friends are usually not a mystery to us, her clothes tell us who she is. She is unarguably the most active subject of the flow dwelling, and her virtual dwelling resembles a villa, yet she makes herself the object of observation and discourse, she needs to know and understand all that happens online and she also needs to be perceived by the subjects *en masse*. The profile of the professional influencer must be the peak of intersubjective exchange because it is what gains her financial stability, she has tailored it and given it a texture we long to see; the physical house of the influencer is more than a room of her own, it is hers and it is ours, not only the virtual home is a dress she has made for herself, but it is her physical place that is controlled by her as well. In different capacities, this applies to every environment of the screendwelling, any post or page creates a particular feel, and when the algorithms work it is a feel that we like, one that we want more of. Moving from one home to the next – whether it is a virtual one or a physical house that emerges on our surfaces – is a situation we find ourselves in every day, and that has deep impacts on the way we think of space and on how we build ourselves. As the spaces of others and their items of fashion roll by on our surfaces, new environments and new clothes are worn by the dwellers on the other side, when the curated spaces disappear, they leave us the impression of a desirable identity, which is typical of fashion's mechanisms. Bruno writes about the need for novelty in clothing fashion:

> In some ways, fashion's constant search for novelty implies a sense of the ephemeral that skirts finitude and mortality. Its transient nature is a morbid affair. For Simmel, fashion carries death within itself. […] Benjamin also observes the fact that "to the living, fashion defends the right of the corpse." He notices that "clothing and jewellery are . . . as much at home with what is dead as . . . with living flesh."

[230] More broadly, on fashion and film, it is worth mentioning the recent research work by Marie-Aude Baronian; among many texts, please refer at least to Baronian, Marie-Aude. " Screenic fashion: horizontality, minimal materiality and manual operation." In *Journal of Visual Culture, 19(3). SAGE Journals, 2022.* Pp. 378-390.

> His conclusion is that death "appears in fashion as no less 'overcome' and precisely through the sex appeal of the inorganic, which is something generated by fashion."[231]

But if Benjamin lands on the conclusion that there is history in fashion because it is a form of remembrance, this is not true of most screendwellings, in which – owing to the great quantities of lifestyles presented, and to the tremendous rate at which contents are generated – fashion is more transient than it would be without them. Ephemerality is not just a characteristic of the screen's fashion, but it is its end, every space is made to be visited and left. As discussed throughout this dissertation, mobility is not only central on the screen but also in its environment: thanks to the fast communication granted by our monitors we can be almost anywhere while we relate to far away structures and spaces. This has enormous consequences on the time and space of work, that is now possible anywhere and everywhere, as noted in a study on digital nomadism.[232] The very figure of the digital nomad became relevant during the COVID-19 pandemic, which paradoxically reduced the mobility of the screen's dwellers and workers, liberating them from the obligation of a fixed workplace. They were hence inserted in an international environment in which, more than their finances, what matters is the freedom to travel that their passports and remote jobs guarantee.[233]

The screendwelling's influence on physical space and place makes it a wholly new spatial entity. If the space of the modern city is described by Massey as neatly divided and gendered, and the space of the postmodern city is represented by Soja as an Exopolis in which every place is present and everything is possible,[234] the screendwelling is a space for metamodernism: it contains and it comments all other spaces, it is a home, a house, a workplace and an opportunity for connection while not needing the status of place at all, it expands space beyond any imaginable depth while resting on the surface.

---

[231] Bruno, Giuliana. *Surface: Matters of Aesthetics, Materiality, and Media*, cit. P. 43

[232] Ehn, Karine, et al. "Digital Nomads and the Covid-19 Pandemic: Narratives About Relocation in a Time of Lockdowns and Reduced Mobility". *Social Media + Society*, vol. 8, no. 1, Jan. 2022. *SAGE Journals*. P. 40

[233] Thompson, Beverly Yuen. "The Digital Nomad Lifestyle: (Remote) Work/Leisure Balance, Privilege, and Constructed Community". In *International Journal of the Sociology of Leisure*, vol. 2, no. 1–2, Mar. 2019. Pp. 27–42.

[234] Soja, Edward, W. *Thirdspace: Journey to Los Angeles and Other Real-and-Imagined Places*, cit. Pp. 238-239

Final remarks

In the present research, at a crossroad between the study of visual cultures, space theory, and phenomenological philosophy, I have worked towards giving a comprehensive description of the screens in their particular spatial structure and of its effect on the subject operating or observing them. Screen space has been firstly analyzed in its basic characteristics: screens have been described as heterotopic nonplaces capable of hosting interpersonal exchanges and participating in memory and identity building. This peculiar status as a heterotopic nonplace capable of hosting interpersonal exchanges and participating in memory and identity building has been then articulated in its specifications through a framework that I built to encapsulate the general traits of screen space as well as their most salient distinctions. The framework consisted of a first distinction between dwelling types: the screens that are inhabited by means of identification were examined separately from those that are built to be dwelt in and can be furnished, the virtual dwellings, and from the running panorama of the flow dwelling. A further way to define the process of dwelling on and through the surface was to delineate a structure through which every type of screendwelling could be described: I introduced the categories of content, surface, and motion, which, along with the division in dwelling types, proved to be useful in the following chapters as well, demonstrating a certain adaptability of the framework to visual, spatial, and phenomenological categories alike. Case studies drawn from contemporary audiovisual production, ranging from popular television to social media, were used in the first chapter to interpret the visual and architectonic characteristics of the screen as a house.

In the second chapter the same case studies were used to understand the role of the notion of third place in the dwelling experience on screen, showing that screen spaces with any characteristics can be operated as third places or third-place-like contexts. This provided further spatial complications that implied the need for a unifying point of view, that had to be the one of the dweller in their lived experience.

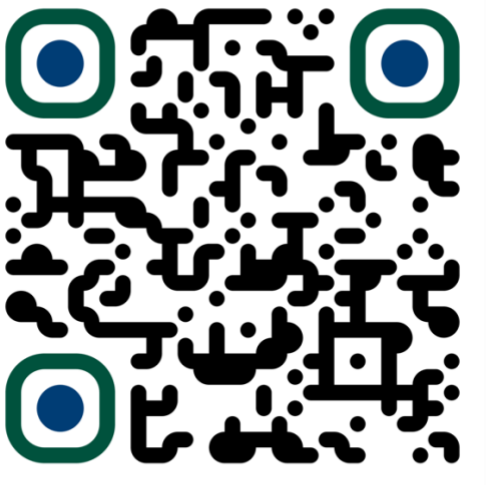
The third chapter required – especially in its more philosophical aspects – an approach that was more theoretically rigorous and less observational, nonetheless it was important to introduce the subject of the dwelling experience by looking at a particular instance that could be then be generalized in a more comprehensive theory. I decided to use my own

videoessay devoted to the concepts of home as a starting point, because it allowed me to explore both the side of the producer "behind" the screen and the one of the spectator "in front of" it. Finally, I provided some insights into the social implications of screendwelling to give the theory a concrete perspective on its practical significance.

Given the vast quantity of considerations the research question opened to and the variety of the material, further considerations on the themes developed are potentially infinite. Firstly, I would like to address the prospective of using the suggested framework to observe media that ambiguously exist on the border between types of screendwellings. The field of advertisement comes to mind: spaces in which characters dwell for a short amount of time continuously replace one another, interspersed with graphics that can be understood as virtual dwellings, must make an interesting item to study within the theory. In the sphere of media and sociology, the implications of using the third place as that provided by screens on real, virtual, and mixed communities could be studied more in depth, as it would have been dispersive to do so in this context. In particular it would be interesting to study the difference between the ways the privileged and the marginalized dwell on the screen, if there is any. The concept of intersubjectivity, which I mainly studied philosophically, could be seen from a number of other points of view: how can we understand the way subjects imagine the others when they cannot directly see them? What about the many comments and reactions punctuating our social media feeds, that appear mostly as traces left by faceless entities? Further interesting questions relate to the perception of the other and the self: how do screen intervene, if they do at all, into the processes of body normalization and control? What are the psychological and philosophical implications of this?

Screendwelling, as all homes, is built by and around people, which makes its study a colossal feat but an incredibly fascinating and fruitful one, it is an immensely polyhedric space, capable of holding any sort of realities within itself. Because we are surrounded by them and we live in a culture that favours and pushed us as active agents of placemaking, however, the attempt seems to be worth the try. Screens change dwelling in that we dwell inside of them, and they change the way we dwell because we dwell with them, they are space that modifies space.

Appendix: *Home*



Home, 2023

Bibliography

13. Books

Augé, Marc. *Nonluoghi*. Elèuthera, Milano 1993.

Adams, Paul C. "Television as Gathering Place." In *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, vol. 82, no. 1, Mar. 1992, pp. 117–35.

Bachelard, Gaston. *The Poetics of Space*. Penguin, New York 1964.

Benesch, Klaus, editor. *Space in America: Theory, History, Culture*. Rodopi, Amsterdam 2005.

Leeker, Martina. "Dancing the Digital: American and European Visions of Digital Bodies in Digital Spaces." In *Space in America: Theory, History, Culture*

Blumenberg, Hans. *Shipwreck with Spectator: Paradigm of a Metaphor for Existence Studies in Contemporary German Social Thought*. MIT Press, Cambridge MA 1997.

Bril, Marijn Josephien. "*Performatively Archiving the Early Web: One Terabyte of Kilobyte Age."* In *VIEW Journal of European Television History and Culture*, vol. 12, no. 23, Sept. 2023, pp. 69–85.

Bruno, Giuliana. *Atlas of Emotion: Journeys in Art, Architecture, and Film*. Verso, New York 2007.

Bruno, Giuliana. *Public Intimacy: Architecture and the Visual Arts.* The MIT Press, Cambridge MA 2007.

Bruno, Giuliana. *Surface: Matters of Aesthetics, Materiality, and Media*. University of Chicago Press, Chicago 2014.

Butler, Alison. *Displacements: Reading Space and Time in Moving Image Installations.* Pallgrave Macmillan, London 2019.

Casetti, Francesco. *Screening Fears: On Protective Media*. Zone Books, New York 2023.

Castells, Manuel. “Grassrooting the Space of Flow.” In *Urban Geography*, vol. 20, no. 4, May 1999, pp. 294–302.

Cavaletti, Federica, et al. *Immersioni Quotidiane: Vita Ordinaria, Cultura Visuale e Nuovi Media*. Meltemi, Milano 2023.

Cavaletti, Federica. “Oltre la Vergogna. Lo Sguardo Sul Corpo tra Dispositivi Indossabili e Realtà Virtuale.” In *Immersioni Quotidiane: Vita Ordinaria, Cultura Visuale e Nuovi Media*.

Costella, Alessandro. “Forare La Superficie. Storia e Archeologia Dell’interfaccia Trasparente.” In *Immersioni Quotidiane: Vita Ordinaria, Cultura Visuale e Nuovi Media*.

De Rosa, Miriam. “Abitare Con Le Immagini. Percorsi Tra Spazialità, Quotidiano e Cultura Visuale.” In *Immersioni Quotidiane: Vita Ordinaria, Cultura Visuale e Nuovi Media*.

Pirandello, Sofia. *“*Una Storia Privata. La documentazione e l’archiviazione fotografica come pratica femminile*.”* In *Immersioni Quotidiane: Vita Ordinaria, Cultura Visuale e Nuovi Media*.

Chen, Long, et al. “Social Network Behavior and Public Opinion Manipulation.” In *Journal of Information Security and Application*, vol. 64, Feb. 2022.

Cooley, Heidi Rae. “It’s All about the Fit: The Hand, the Mobile Screenic Device and Tactile Vision.” In *Journal of Visual Culture*, vol. 3, no. 2, Aug. 2004. Pp. 133–55.

Couldry, Nick and Anna McCarthy. *Media Space: Place, Scale and Culture in a Media Age.* Routledge, London 2003.

Costa, Vincenzo, et al. *La Fenomenologia*. Einaudi, 2014. https://books.apple.com/it/book/la-fenomenologia/id906588283?l=en-GB

Crary, Jonathan. *Techniques of the Observer*. Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge MA 1990.

De Certeau, Michel. *The Practice of Everyday Life*. University of California Press, Los Angeles 1984.

Dehaene, Michiel, et al., editors. *Heterotopia and the City: Public Space in a Postcivil Society ; [the European Association of Architectural Education (EAAE) Colloquium, The Rise of Heterotopia, Held on 26 - 28 May 2005, Leuven, Belgium]*. Transferred to digital print, Routledge, 2009.

Foucault, Michel. "Of Other Spaces." In *Heterotopia and the City: Public Space in a Postcivil Society.*

Deleuze, Gilles. *Negotiations, 1972-1990*. Columbia University Press, New York 1995.

Deleuze, Gilles, and Felix Guattari. *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. University of Minnesota Press ed., vol. 19, Minneapolis 1989.

De Rosa, Miriam. *Cinema e Postmedia. I Territori del filmico nel Contemporaneo. Postmedia books,* Milano 2013.

De Rosa, Miriam and Fowler, Catherine. "Making conjunctions: thinking topologically with contemporary artists' moving images." in *Screen*, vol. 62, issue 4, winter 2021. Pp. 512–532,

De Rosa, Miriam and Strauven, Wanda. "Screenic (Re)orientations: Desktop, Tabletop, Tablet, Booklet, Touchscreen, Etc.." in *Screen Space Reconfigured*, Amsterdam University Press, Amsterdam 2020.

Ducheneaut, Nicolas, et al. "Virtual "Third Places": A Case Study of Sociability in Massively Multiplayer Games." In *Computer Supported Cooperative Work (CSCW)*, vol. 16, no. 1–2, Apr. 2007, pp. 129–66.

Duffy, Brooke Erin, and Becca Schwartz. “Digital “Women’s Work?”: Job Recruitment Ads and the Feminization of Social Media Employment.” In *New Media & Society*, vol. 20, no. 8, Aug. 2018, pp. 2972–89.

Ehn, Karine, et al. “Digital Nomads and the Covid-19 Pandemic: Narratives About Relocation in a Time of Lockdowns and Reduced Mobility.” In *Social Media + Society*, vol. 8, no. 1, Jan. 2022. *SAGE Journals*.

Firdaus, Rima, et al. “The Influence of POV Trend as a Branding Image Content Creator on TikTok.” In *International Journal of Innovative Science and Research Technology*, vol. 8, Sept. 2023, pp. 102–07.

Flaxman, Gregory, editor. *The Brain Is the Screen: Deleuze and the Philosophy of Cinema*. University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis 2001.

Lambert, Gregg. “Cinema and the Outside.” In *The Brain Is the Screen: Deleuze and the Philosophy of Cinema*.

Flusser, Vilém. *Into the Universe of Technical Images*. University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis 2011.

Gotved, Stine. “Spatial Dimensions in Online Communities.” In *Space and Culture*, vol. 5, no. 4, Nov. 2002. Pp. 405–14.

Heidegger, Martin. *Poetry, Language, Thought*. Harper & Row Publishers, New York 2009.

Heidegger, Martin. *Building, Dwelling, Thinking*. In *Poetry, Language, Thought.*

Kracauer, Siegfried, and Thomas Y. Levin. *The Mass Ornament: Weimar Essays*. Harvard University Press, Cambridge MA 1995.

Lacalle, Charo, et al. “Friends or Just Fans? Parasocial Relationships in Online Television Fiction Communities.” In *Communication & Society*, vol. 34, no. 3, May 2021, pp. 61–76.

Lefebvre, Henri. *The Production of Space*. Blackwell Publishers, Inc., Hoboken 1991.

Massey, Doreen B. *Space, Place, and Gender*. University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis 1994.

Metz, Christian. *Cinema e Psicanalisi*. Marsilio, Venezia 2006.

Morisson, Arnault. "A Typology of Places in the Knowledge Economy: Towards the Fourth Place." In *SSRN Electronic Journal*, 2017.

Nakamura, Takashi. "The Action of Looking at a Mobile Phone Display as Nonverbal Behavior/Communication: A Theoretical Perspective." In *Computers in Human Behavior*, vol. 43, Feb. 2015, pp. 68–75.

Oh, Uran, and Leah Findlater. "The Challenges and Potential of End-User Gesture Customization." In *Proceedings of the SIGCHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems*, ACM, 2013, pp. 1129–38.

Oldenburg, Ramon, and Dennis Brissett. "The Third Place." In *Qualitative Sociology*, no. 5, 1982, pp. 265–84.

Oldenburg, Ray. *The Great Good Place: Cafés, Coffee Shops, Community Centers, Beauty Parlors, General Stores, Bars, Hangouts, and How They Get You through the Day*. Paragon House, New York 1989.

Papacharissi, Zizi. "The Presentation of Self in Virtual Life: Characteristics of Personal Homepages*."* In *J&MC Quarterly*, vol. 79, no. 3, 2002.

Purnell, David. "Expanding Oldenburg: Homes as Third Places." In *Journal of Place Management and Development*, vol. 8, no. 1, Mar. 2015.

Rapoport, Amos. *House, Form and Culture*. Prentice-Hall, Inc., Hoboken 1969.

Reeves, Byron, et al. "The Effects of Screen Size and Message Content on Attention and Arousal." In *Media Psychology - MEDIA PSYCHOL*, vol. 1, Mar. 1999, pp. 49–67.

Rogers, Richard. “Doing Web History with the Internet Archive: Screencast Documentaries.” In *Internet Histories*, vol. 1, no. 1–2, Jan. 2017, pp. 160–72.

Siegert, Bernhard. *(Not) in Place: The Grid, or, Cultural Techniques of Ruling Spaces*. In *Cultural Techniques: Grids, Filters, Doors, and Other Articulations of the Real*, Fordham University Press, New York 2015.

Silk, Michael, et al. “(Re-)Thinking Digital Leisure.” In *Leisure Studies*, vol. 35, no. 6, Nov. 2016, pp. 712–23.

Silverstone, Roger. *Television and Everyday Life*. Routledge, Abingdon 2003.

Soja, Edward, W. *Thirdspace: Journey to Los Angeles and Other Real-and-Imagined Places*. Blackwell Publishers, Inc., Oxford 1996.

Soukup, Charles. “Computer-Mediated Communication as a Virtual Third Place: Building Oldenburg’s Great Good Places on the World Wide Web.” In *New Media & Society*, vol. 8, no. 3, June 2006, pp. 421–40.

Stonard, John-Paul. “Pop in the Age of Boom: Richard Hamilton’s “Just What Is It That Makes Today’s Homes so Different, so Appealing?”” In *The Burlington Magazine*, vol. 149, no. 1254, 2007, pp. 607–20.

Strauven, Wanda. *Touch Screen Archaeology: Tracing Histories of Hands-On Media Practices*. Meson Press Eg, Lüneburg 2021.

Thompson, Beverly Yuen. “The Digital Nomad Lifestyle: (Remote) Work/Leisure Balance, Privilege, and Constructed Community.” In *International Journal of the Sociology of Leisure*, vol. 2, no. 1–2, Mar. 2019, pp. 27–42.

Verhoeff, Nanna. *Mobile Screens: The Visual Regime of Navigation*. Amsterdam University Press, Amsterdam 2012.

Warf, Barney, and Santa Arias. *The Spatial Turn: Interdisciplinary Perspectives*. Routledge, Abingdon 2008.

Gilbert, Pamela K. “Sex and The Modern City: English Studies and The Spatial Turn.” In *The Spatial Turn: Interdisciplinary Perspectives*.

Resina, Joan Ramon. “Documentary as a Space of Intuition: Luis Buñuel’s a Land Without Bread.” In *The Spatial Turn: Interdisciplinary Perspectives*.

Warf, Barney. “From Surfaces to Networks.” In *The Spatial Turn: Interdisciplinary Perspectives*.

Weber, Samuel. *Mass Mediauras: Form, Technics, Media*. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, Redwood City 1996.

14. Sitography

Biggest Social Media Platforms 2023. *Statista*, https://www.statista.com/statistics/272014/global-social-networks-ranked-by-number-of-users/. Accessed 26 Dec. 2023.

Bohnett, David, and John Rezner. *GeoCities*. 2009 1994.

Bril, Marijn Josephien. *Performatively Archiving the Early Web: One Terabyte of Kilobyte Age*. *VIEW Journal of European Television History and Culture*, vol. 12, no. 23, Sept. 2023, pp. 69–85.

Ceci, Laura. *Number of Global TikTok Users 2025*. *Statista*, https://www.statista.com/statistics/1327116/number-of-global-tiktok-users/. Accessed 15 Nov. 2023.

Digital 2023 October Global Statshot Report. *DataReportal – Global Digital Insights*, 19 Oct. 2023, https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2023-october-global-statshot

Dixon, Stacy J. *Facebook Users by Country 2023*. *Statista*, https://www.statista.com/statistics/268136/top-15-countries-based-on-number-of-facebook-users/. Accessed 9 Nov. 2023.

Dom, Pieter. *Twin Peaks Maps*. *Welcome to Twin Peaks*, 10 Aug. 2011, https://welcometotwinpeaks.com/locations/twin-peaks-maps/.

Lialina, Olia, and Dragan Espenschied. *One Terabyte of Kilobyte Age | Digging through the Geocities Torrent*. https://blog.geocities.institute/. Accessed 1 Nov. 2023.

Scott J., 2023, *Archive Team*. https://wiki.archiveteam.org/. Accessed 25/09/2023

Twin Peaks | Snoqualmie, WA. https://www.snoqualmiewa.gov/379/Twin-Peaks. Accessed 29 Dec. 2023.

"Un Posto al Sole" Supera i Due Milioni Di Telespettatori. *RAI Ufficio Stampa*, https://www.rai.it/ufficiostampa/articoli/2023/06/Un-Posto-al-Sole-supera-i-due-milioni-di-telespettatori-b503136f-23e5-47c4-bcff-05e6d6da0a57.html. Accessed 30 Dec. 2023.

15. Media

Home. Directed by Benedetta Andreasi, Desktop documentary, 2023.

Krieger, Mike and Systrom, Kevin. *Instagram*. https://www.instagram.com/. Accessed 30 Dec. 2023.

Twin Peaks. Directed by David Lynch and Mark Frost, serial drama, ABC Network, 1991 1990.

Twin Peaks: The Return. Directed by David Lynch and Mark Frost, serial drama, Showtime, 2017.

Un Posto Al Sole. Directed by Wayne Doyle et al., soap opera, Rai 3, present 1996.

Un posto al sole - Serie 26 - Stagione 2022-2023. *RaiPlay*, directed by Wayne Doyle et al., 6310, 3 Nov. 2023, https://www.raiplay.it/programmi/unpostoalsole.

Workers Leaving The Lumiere Factory - Lumiere Brothers 1895. 2015. *YouTube*, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yvC_xrDqB3s.

Zhang, Yiming. *TikTok*. https://www.tiktok.com/it-IT/. Accessed 15 Nov. 2023.