Aspects of Domestic Living in the Mass-Media Society

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"[…] man is always, at every moment, living according to what the world is to him."[1]

Introduction

Among the many challenges that contemporary housing architecture has to face, the development of digital media seems less topical, although it is one of the defining features of our society. However, as this paper tries to show, the media society could bring important changes in the way we design dwellings in order to answer people's expectations from their homes — not luxury dwellings, but dwellings for the common inhabitant of the near future. The difficulty in tackling the estimated changes to housing comes from the fact that, not only each determining factor exerts an individual influence on the inhabited space, but rather it is their combination that triggers a series of changes, and their variations are innumerable.

It is obvious that the home and its defining features remain strongly dependent on complex social aspects, related to individual and group/family behavior, deeply rooted in human nature and which cannot be denied or underestimated. However, if considering them exclusively, the home would get a simplified image, far from the complex and complete construction it actually represents.

"In every epoch and every place, the form of inhabitation reflects the political, social, and cultural conditions that it generates and from which it is, in turn, created."[2]

Aware of these aspects, this paper proposes a series of reflections on the experience of home against the background of digital media society; far from aiming to redefine it or to exhaust the issue, it only tries to complete the meaning of the living space, in support of its contemporary complexity. These ideas are rather interrogations, deliberations on new aspects and visions coming from a perspective meant to take us out of the comfort zone of a repeated and already confirmed discourse. I believe that the hypotheses are mature enough to support such an approach at a moment defined by an ideological stalemate and, consequently, by the need to redefine current concepts that rather resort to past discourses. Discussing new concepts related to housing, but not entirely specific to the field of architecture can be questioned or even contested, yet it is precisely for their alterity that they could shine new lights on the issue and reveal new aspects.

Regarding the meaning of home, Alison Blunt and Bobyn Dowling give a comprehensive definition of the term that captures its dual aspect, physical and mental, but most importantly, they emphasize the *relation between the two*.[3] For them, the essence of home resides in the particular facets of this relation.

"[…] home is: a place/site, a set of feelings / cultural meanings, and the relations between the two."[4]

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1   José Ortega y Gasset, *Man and Crisis* (New York: The Norton Library, 1962), 35.

2   Space Caviar, *SQM, The Quantified Home* (Zürich: Lars Muller Publishers, 2014), 290.

3   Alison Blunt and Robin Downling, *Home* (New York: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, 2006).

4   Ibid., 2.

In a world that redefines the human relations through new media, a home will be especially regarded as a *relational space* within the family or any social group. But the term *family* has nowadays many meanings too, covering almost any possible kind of groups or social relational associations, from the conventional traditional family to roommates, and any kind of *domestic groups*,[5] and even to groups of lonely people with similar interests connected online — *media tribes*, as Jonas Ridderstrale and Kjell Nordstrom describe them.[6] Generally, we will refer to all social associations sharing the same home as *domestic groups*.

If until recently interpersonal communication did not need an intermediary, we can now notice that, at the level of the entire human society, a mediating factor — *mass media* — interferes in the relationship as an intermediary of social communication. This term is variously defined by different researchers, depending on the specific aspects under focus. In this paper, we will refer to *mass media* as including the components of *social media*. The major difference between mass media and social media is the relation with individuals. Mass media supposes the audience is a passive receptor; social media puts the audience at the center, with people being both the audience and the content creator and the individual at the same time receptor and speaker. Due to the large generality of such terms, we shall follow the definition given by the French historian Pierre Sorlin, according to whom the term *mass media* refers to a wide variety of communication components, thus including both the means by which the information is disseminated and the information itself.[7] The term also grasps the mediating relationship between a sender, the information and a receiver to which it is addressed; consequently, in Sorlin's opinion, it covers the social media too.

There is no sector of human activities that escapes the influence of this type of mediation which often becomes the main component of communication and the relations it establishes. The influence that it exerts —positive and negative alike — brings profound changes in all areas; and the home as a space for inter-family relationships is no exception. By the same reasoning, we can understand domestic space as playing an intermediary role in interpersonal relations — a kind of mediating medium of communication between its occupants.

If until recently the language in which individuals used to communicate was specific to them, regardless of whether it was non-verbal, spoken or written, the latest type of language, the digital one, becomes incomprehensible to humans, because it is machine-specific.[8] We need to decipher this type of communication mediated by a machine, we need a digital mass media terminal to be able to translate and make the message comprehensible, and only the digital technology that is gradually being inserted into our domestic space is able to play this role.

The cohabitation with the new systems is differently experienced by current generations; as such, we must consider it differently. Following the perspective of interaction between people and mass media technology, Pierre Sorlin distinguishes two types of generations living together presently: that of *information immigrants*, namely the generations born before the development of digital media technology, who are learning to communicate in this new way and *the informational natives*, those who were born after the development of the digital language.[9] For the individuals of the new generations the extreme speed of this language is their natural rhythm; it is the language in which they were born and raised; it is the way in which they were taught to live. Thus, we may speak of a third time model, specific to the digital world. It is different from both the modern(ist) rhythm – specific to the mechanical productive processes – and the pre-modern one – that of natural cyclical processes. This third time model is defined

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5   Term used by ethnologist Martine Segalen to describe a set of people sharing the same living-space. See Martine Segalen, *Historical Anthropology of the Family* (Cambridge University Press, 1986).

6   Jonas Ridderstrale and Kjell Nordstrom, *Karaoke capitalism. Management pentru omenire* [Karaoke Capitalism. Management for Mankind] (Bucharest: Publica, 2007), 77.

7   Pierre Sorlin, *Mass media* (Iași: Institutul European, 2002).

8   Roger Fidler, *Mediamorphosis. Să înțelegem noile media* [Mediamorphosis. Understanding new media] (Cluj: Idea Design & Print), 2004.

9   Sorlin, *Mass media*, 31.

by a much more accelerated rhythm, characteristic for digital processes and it establishes other meanings, specific to the network.

Along with the new speed, the informational natives experience their space in another way. In this speed, the visual sense naturally becomes the predominant way to experience space and reality. We live and perceive mainly visually, we live a culture of the visual, of the image, in which the time for seeing, understanding and acting accordingly is compressed to the bare minimum, while stimuli that address the sight are present everywhere, and screens transmit visual information at a huge speed. This speed is unusual for the informational immigrants, but the generations of informational natives feel it as their own. They are characterized by faster thinking processes, an ability to think and act concomitantly in several directions, sometimes divergent – they are multitasking. Implicitly, the downside is a certain superficiality and incoherence, along with the emergence of a feeling of boredom whenever the presence of external visual stimuli is diminished. We live in a world where respite is an exception since no one can be immune to the influence of the media.[10]

Emphasizing the influence of the media in an interview for the architecture and design website Dezeen, Rem Koolhaas states that digital technology represents the most important change in the architectural practice in the last hundred years. In his opinion, substantiated by various sociological, economic, political, and cultural studies, we undergo the effects of the digital technology which begins to occupy a position of power. Koolhaas also discloses the profound changes that have already occurred or are likely to occur in the near future. Even the main structure of contemporary society is deeply influenced by the development of media products, the technology they entail and the new information communication systems — in a word, by the new mass media culture. We live these transformations almost without noticing them and tend to assimilate them in our behavior, ultimately altering the very space in which we live. This ubiquity of media terminals triggers almost absolute control and ultimately leads — as the architect noticed — to a nearly total lack of privacy:

"Somehow we are almost perfectly happy to have no privacy anymore."[11]

The home seems to become a space in which the traditional principle of duality between individual privacy and family or group communication is no longer valid, at least in the previously known configuration. How could the intimacy of the living space be redefined when, physically, the homes become more secured, while virtually (and visually), they open their inner spaces through media communication on digital social networks? Paradoxically, the entire system of communication or control introduced inside our dwellings eventually leads to the loss of privacy, and the technological surveillance supposed to control and secure our privacy may entail permanent exposure, as a virtual panopticon.

Consequently, we shall designate the contemporary domestic space as *media-home*, following the transformations of the home brought about by the presence of media. It has to be underlined here that, although every one of us is already surrounded by digital media terminals (smartphones, smartwatches, laptops, tablets, screens, etc.), the influence of media does not necessarily require a specific object. Digital media can be suggested by the presence of media objects, but it also means the presence of information itself, in the absence of any support, because even if people refuse media objects, the way they live, communicate or socially interact is already deeply influenced by the informational shift still in progress.

There are many ways in which mass media exerts its influence on the domestic space, but we shall focus on three issues: (1) temporality and rhythm, (2) work and privacy, and (3) media objects.

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10 Ibid., 31.

11 Rem Koolhaas, interview by Amy Frearson, *DeZEEN*, May 27, 2015, accessed October 1, 2021, https://www.dezeen.com/2015/05/27/rem-koolhaas-interview-technology-smart-systems-peoples-eagerness-sacrifice-privacy-totally-astonishing/

Temporality and Rhythm

The presence of digital technology in the *media-home* brings transformations that are already visible in the personal space, primarily concerning the perception of time. Mass media produces an acceleration of all interpersonal activities and relations, which alter the perception and experience of space as well. Yet, for the contemporary home, even more important than the already emphasized acceleration of every aspect is one's perception of (and relation to) the past, the present, and the future. This idea can be traced back to the changes in meaning of the term "modern." Hilde Heynen identifies three meanings of the term *modern*, which suggest the idea that the perception of time and speed of communication have steadily increased: *the current, the new and the transient.*[12] The first meaning of modernity — *current* — points to a more direct relationship with the present. The second meaning — *new* — marks the first moment of breaking away with the past, by opposing what is new to the old. The third meaning — *the transient* — suggests an awareness of the permanence of change and thus, points to the future. It introduces the constant instability of relationships and continuous change, which are characteristics of contemporary society: one cannot be modern unless one accepts the meaning of a constant change.[13]

Hence, we can notice how the sense of the relationship between past, present and future changes, with the value that people ascribe to these ontological dimensions. The changes go from the pre-modern man's permanent call upon the past, to the importance given to the present as opposed to the past, in the first phases of modernity and, finally, to the orientation towards the future, towards change, even in the sense of constant change. And besides accentuated instability, constant change implies an increasing speed of change.

In the pre-modern world, the recourse to the past was defining and gave meaning to human existence. The past was perceived as an ideal to which individuals constantly referred. Domestic space acquired meaning through the presence of special places that reconnected the family with the past, with generations of ancestors, establishing a kind of communication with descending meaning, slowly traversing layers of joint memory and familiar recollections. This connection was gradually lost, as modernity has eclipsed the meaning of the past as an experiential vital reference for the present, and the future has become the main reference and concern of the present. Even if postmodernity tried to re-valorize the past and re-establish the lost connection, it succeeded but partially, mostly at the surface. For example, resorting to past architecture is rather heuristic or stylistic — reinterpretations of projects, in which the elements are recomposed in new configurations, seeking originality and playful effects. However, even in this fast-changing present where the past seems insignificant, there are architects who go against the current in a more substantial way. They are to be found especially in the phenomenological approaches to domestic space, which try to oppose or amend the modern rationality and accelerated rhythms. They recur to the past, yet to a timeless past, hosted in the depths of human mind. For them, this is the valid reference to a past characterized by a slow, static temporality and stability. In this respect, Pallasmaa describes the home as a keeper of relationships developed in a slow time, in a period of respite, of quiet contemplation.[14] The house is still a place of memory, of reverie, and reverie needs respite.

> "Architecture saves us from the embrace of the present and helps us to experience the slow and healing flow of time."[15]

However, despite this direction, for the vast majority of people, the state of mind specific only to Western space and culture that we name modernity develops at a more rapid pace and with

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12 Hilde Heynen, *Architecture and Modernity: A Critique* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1999), 9-10.

13 Ibid.

14 Ibid., 86.

15 Juhani Pallasmaa, *Privirea care atinge: arhitectura si simturile* [The eyes of the skin. Architecture and the senses] (Bucharest: Arhitext, 2015), 86.

different meanings, changing drastically *la longue durée* that characterized the architecture of the house.[16] The programmatic orientation towards the future, the accelerated rhythms and domestic mobility, have evolved hand in hand with the increase of individualism and the need of intimacy within the home, as well as with the independence of the individual from the family or social group. If, for a long period of time, family ensured the unity and stability of the group, modern life provided the individual with the possibility to detach from that unity. The ancestors are no longer an example to follow. The individual is now free to express his/her personality while at home, and his/her model of living is no longer the traditional family life.

Until recently, a family home used to accommodate several generations, thus becoming an anchor in time. Nowadays, more and more people live alone, using many locations throughout their lives. The orientation of life towards the future increased the dynamics, brought permanent transformation and movement, often by relocating and multiplying the house itself.

Pushing the limits of this dynamic, we may no longer speak of a home in terms of one location or a single place; we must rather discuss of several different domestic spaces, in different locations that simultaneously form a home. As Ridderstrale put it:

> "The world is full of people who have left their old homes to seek their happiness elsewhere. These newcomers leave their past behind."[17]

Digital media input is important in this transformation; it creates the feeling that, being able to communicate with anyone, anywhere, anytime, you are actually connected with others permanently, even at great distances. Virtual connectivity has, to some extent, further severed family ties. Ultimately the home is the place that brings the family together, and when you have a virtually connected family, it seems that home can be anywhere.

Work and Privacy

Modernity has brought many structural or conjunctural changes — the secularization of the world, the faith in progress, the social, scientific, technological evolutions, the development of social rights, etc.— which all led to important transformations of domestic habits and expectations from a home. Throughout this period, domestic space has offered a growing degree of privacy for the family members. It occurred gradually, paralleled by growing individual freedom and individualism — the workplace became separated from the home, the family separated from its servants, the family members gained more independence from one another, and all these were mirrored in the interior distribution of the dwelling. It is possible to say that this tendency has relegated the dwelling to the realm of domestic intimacy and controlled social relations. However, even if separated from domestic space, the modern organization of the economic life continued to play a role in the domestic configuration.

Unlike the pre-modern cyclical time of the family house with its functional melting-pot, the linear, unidirectional time of modernity — the time of economic and labor efficiency — is reflected in the organization of domestic life, following the temporal trinomial 8/8/8. It is true that setting the working day at eight hours allows for more time (even if not all to be spent at home), but modernist homes divided their spaces into daytime and nighttime areas belonging to the two periods of the day spent at home — rest and leisure. This division has endured as the main design schema in housing architecture, to which we still refer to in design.

This functional separation through which the economic model was transferred in housing architecture became outdated. We can notice how the ubiquity of technology in our living space begins to transform the home. Yet, this time, the transformation comes from the inside. Although digital media is a consequence, it has gradually become an agent of radical change.

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16 Heynen, *Architecture and Modernity*, 9.

17 Ridderstrale, *Karaoke capitalism*, 283.

Its omnipresence offers permanently and anywhere the possibility to communicate, but also the possibility to work, reconnecting, but in a different way home and workplace. The two connected spheres — the domestic and the workspace — not only share the space of the home, but it's time as well. Now — when the internet network allows maximum flexibility — one can work anytime, day or night, at almost any pace. Yet, this apparent freedom comes at a cost: working anytime, one actually works permanently. The distinction between work and leisure (or repose) almost disappears, while the limit between them is permanently violated. The home thus becomes a space that loses its functional order.

For a long time, the home has been characterized by stability: the process of change was slow, following the gradual social and behavioral evolution of domestic groups. Due to these long intervals of time, the dwellers have always had the opportunity to assimilate certain special transformations and adapt to them, as a natural evolution. The first break in this process occurred with modernization, when a new system and organization of housing design was introduced in a relatively short period of time and through a top-down process, without society being fully able to change the relational behavior at home.

Due to these quick changes occurring on a scale never seen before, the modern(ist) home has never been fully accepted and assimilated. There were (and still are) many regions in the world living in a pre-modern time, unprepared for these transformations. The crisis of modernism in the 1970s had many causes, but some of them are due to the rapid and somewhat forced modifications of a way of life. It is in this sense that Ali Madanipour argues that postmodernism brought with it the transformation of housing back into a private space.[18] In his opinion, while the modernist open plan liberated space but, at the same time destroyed the home's intimacy by giving priority to the public space of the dwelling, postmodernism reclaims the private domain of the house.

It is worth mentioning that nowadays there is almost no home in the developed world that is not digitally connected. From this point of view, we can speak of a uniform access to digital information. Everyone can be in contact from his/her home with almost anybody from anywhere and share information at a global scale. The social and the intimate spheres of the home are intermingling.[19] The process is happening at a rapid pace, and the change comes from within, from individuals who have changed their behavior in the space of the home. The problem is that most architects seem to be less aware of it, as they are still thinking of projects in terms of the division into day and night areas or considering standard family models — a fact that we can observe in almost all projects for collective housing.

After a long process through which the intimacy of family life has increased, separated from the rest of society and the public space, digital media networks interfere radically, disseminating on a global scale images, personal details, and relationships from within the personal and family space. Until now, even during maximum safety periods, the access in the home space was controlled, at least to a certain extent, and it was granted to the close ones — family members, close friends, and guests. At present, this type of control has almost completely disappeared, as far as media networks can instantly open any home to almost anyone. Under these conditions, the relevance of traditional divisions of the house into day and night, or public and private areas becomes debatable. Should the house be considered an element of resistance, opposed to the public outside world?

The Media Objects

The personal space generally involves a kind of attachment to the objects around us. As in the case of interpersonal relationships, this attachment of affective nature is characterized by a long duration in time. Due to the temporal acceleration and the consequences of digital media

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18 Ali Madanipour, *Public and Private Spaces of the City* (London: Routledge, 2005), 96.
19 Ibid., 102.

upon human behavior, this feature has changed as well, and attachment — both in terms of interpersonal relationships and related to space or objects — has become increasingly limited. The new generations need permanent changes and stimuli to keep relationships alive, the object must necessarily present a permanent attractiveness, offer new sensations and constant innovation, similar to a software update.

As the only objects able to satisfy this need are the digital media terminals, the home must integrate them. They become an important part of domestic space. Due to increasingly innovative software, they can change constantly, they can satisfy various requirements and they can be constantly *customized*. This type of permanent customization becomes a new characteristic of the living space. The personal home is no longer characterized by stability, but to the contrary, by accentuated dynamic, constant transformation and permanent customization. We can change the atmosphere as often as we want, almost all the attributes of our domestic ambiance — intensity of light, temperature, color, sound, and image. The naturally occurring changes due to seasons, days and nights flows, etc. are no longer enough.

At the same time, each room can and must be different, as the individuality of each member of the domestic group requires his/her own custom space. Every child has his/her own personal room, or even his/her personal apartment, composed of several spaces, as a little home. The child has now become a little full person, with the same rights and needs as a mature one, aspect that is also reflected in the composition of his/her personal space.[20]

Generally, personal objects, whose presence has always been a specific feature of domestic space, bear meanings and are often with us for long periods of time. Sometimes such objects are passed down from a generation to another. In this process, they enhance their meaning over time, often due either to an event or a person who previously owned them. Media objects do not follow this affective pattern, generating a different kind of attachment. At first glance, media objects are those devices used in transmitting information (phones, tablets, laptops, etc.), but their range is much wider, including many other home objects based on digital technology — as is the NunoErin's responsive furniture,[21] for example, whose interactive objects collect personal data with every human touch and connect thus with their users. However, no matter their variety, the technological progress outdates them rapidly and they must soon be replaced.

Their difference from the traditional home objects may cast doubts on their capacity to establish a meaningful relation with their users, an attachment bond. When tackling the attachment to technological objects, Neil Leach spotlights the new type of meanings they can bear.[22] In this, he opposes Heidegger, according to whom the presence of technological objects destroys the relations that a person establishes with objects through manuality — by means of the natural gesture of handling an object when using it. Leach agrees that technology intervenes in this relationship and gradually separates the action from the meaning of human gesture, simplifying and diminishing the direct relation, yet he maintains that this is not the proper way to understand the relation with media objects. He argues that while digital media objects do make sense for the contemporary individual, this fact endows them with certain meanings.

The way we handle things, tactility itself, has changed constantly. The manipulation of smart phones or tablets is based on another kind of contact, a mediated, less material contact, but which gradually becomes a usual habit. For instance, the smooth tactility with which we got accustomed by means of touch screens became customary and is being transmitted to the manipulation of any other object. The handling of taps in bathrooms, for example, has evolved from the movement of two taps, to the movement of a lever and to the presence of a sensor that triggers the tap without touching. This kind of "immaterial manuality" is now used for almost

20 Ridderstrale, *Karaoke capitalism*.

21 https://nunoerin.com/, accessed October 1, 2021.

22 Neil Leach, *Uitaţi-l pe Heidegger* [Forget Heidegger], transl. Magda Teodorescu & Dana Vais (Bucharest: Paideia, 2006).

all the objects in the house, as we can see touch screens almost everywhere: switches, induction hubs, microwaves, washing machines, tv screens, etc.

Jean Nouvel's project "Lumière" for Corian is an example of absence of materiality and integration of new technology.[23] Light, images and projections are recreating the interior space. The materiality is reduced to a light and sterile surface that lives just in the presence of the atmosphere recreated by media mediators and tactility is reduced to its minimum. Another example is the intelligent kitchen with interactive touchscreen cooktop created by Whirlpool,[24] which allows the connection to internet and can display all social media programs, recipes, news, and also a permanent communication. No home space escaped *uncontaminated* by the media presence. The shower cabins, for instance, since relaxation has become their prevalent purpose, are one of the most used spaces of the house, where is clear how the presence of screens, sound, and light, slightly transformed an expeditious hygienic function into a complex delight — as in Smart Media Shower.[25]

In fact, the main feature of domestic media objects is the combination between the domestic function and the new media; almost all contemporary home objects acquired the ability to respond and to transmit information, to mediate communication. Thus, they become partners for each of us, which can imbue them with meaning.

For instance, nowadays, the information held in a mobile phone allows us to connect to the global network, thus to new media groups, who can be seen as the extended family of the contemporary individual.[26] Yet, this can also help to personalize a space, creating character and transporting meaning. Once in a new space (e.g., in a hotel room or a new home) one can recreate the personalized atmosphere by connecting to the network, thus attaining some kind of familiarity and, within certain limits, remaking a personal space wherever in the world.

Augmented reality, a combination of a real space with smart media features as images, sounds and light, also becomes a definite presence of the new living space, a means to reproduce identically the internal physical parameters desired (humidity, temperature, light intensity, sound, etc.). It goes without saying that this is not enough to define and recreate the real sense of a place, but they can at least create the hypotheses for certain feelings of belonging or familiarity. For instance, Thinkbig Factory, a Spanish architecture and design consultancy office, has developed Openarch, a prototype project that proposes a space for housing which allow the connection of each surface of the house to the internet by means of an incorporated media layer. The digital layer called D.OS (domestic operating system) instantly connects the individual to the global network, which can establish connections, receive information and generate discussions at any time and in any place.

Alongside all these projects, the smart home technology currently allows the control of almost all internal parameters of the house. The actual house is full of technology, discretely inserted; a touch of the screen can change the inside parameters, can monitor the space remotely.

Conclusions

As we have shown, modernity has constantly intensified the dynamic of everyone's lives. It is the very period that established a sense of continuous change, thus emphasizing a feeling of instability that became a specific feature of contemporary life. In its turn, digital media has introduced this dynamic in social relations and communication. To some extent, one can say that the contemporary living space has lost both intimacy and stability. However, this reality is

23 https://jeannouveldesign.fr/scenographies/corian-nouvel-lumieres/, accessed October 1, 2021.
24 CES 2014, https://www.theverge.com/2014/1/7/5285250/whirlpool-touchscreen-stovetop-concept, accessed October 1, 2021.
25 https://www.yankodesign.com/2012/08/22/smart-media-shower/, accessed October 1, 2021.
26 Ridderstrale, *Karaoke capitalism*.

present in projects in two paradoxical ways, both being the results of the way in which media shapes society. There are some who, in the presence of media technology, turn to past, more permanent, and stable presences, and there are others, for whom only the constant presence of the media provides gratification.

In the case of the former, we can see the mechanisms and methods that have given architecture stability, the rediscovery of natural, heavy materiality, precisely to recreate the lost sensation of temporal persistence and durability. This direction can be seen in several contemporary housing projects. It recommends, among others, the use of old techniques and natural materials whose aging confers stability and adds a new value. This is a revaluation of the traditional feeling of home that has no direct connection with style; instead, the project relies on certain construction techniques, materials and seeks to generate a timeless atmosphere.

In the case of the latter, projects embrace the continuous dynamic and search for new possibilities derived from the digital technology. Corporeality is given by newly created materials that do not age. In this type of projects, the materials used has an alternative role — what is important is the image given by the atmosphere of the space. The emphasis is rather placed on spatial relationships, on constantly changing sensations, than on materials and textures. The atmosphere is permanently recreated through media possibilities and instruments — light, color, sound, and their dynamics answer the expectations of a home. It is not relevant to ask which of these two directions is correct or not. What matters is the fact that they coexist and that both must be considered.

Even against the background of changes brought about by modernity, architecture succeeded in offering spaces suitable for various types of social needs and behaviors. Although conservative and slow, domestic architecture has never opposed these structural changes; to the contrary, it managed to incorporate them naturally. Intensifying the dynamic character of modernity, the recent and permanent presence of digital media technology in our lives triggers many phenomena in progress. One of them is the ubiquity of information which penetrate each home. Each home space is equipped with objects that interact, communicate, and mediate the internal relations in the home and the relations with the outside world as well. The home is no longer a private space, or in any case not private in the traditional sense. Not only that domestic architecture hosts new technology, but it is more subtly exposed to the presence of media, with effects on the living experience. The shape of the house or the style are almost irrelevant in this respect; more important is that, ultimately, the omnipresence of digital media redefines the intimacy of the home, the inside relations, and its functionality.

The home is no longer an enclosed, protected space, a private sphere. Mapping platforms, as Google Maps, already fully expose the exterior of houses; in general, technology allows us to explore the surroundings of almost each house in two or three dimensions; internet platforms, like Pinterest and almost all social networks, have opened the interior of our homes to the entire world. Yet, it is important to understand that contrary exposure of the exterior of the house, this display of the most intimate interior space is a voluntary action of each of us. Just as we feel as sharing images of us and our families or of the objects we own, we also feel the need to show the spaces of the house. The exposure is now complete, continuous, and extremely dynamic.

At the same time, the system of relationships we establish and maintain by means of digital media and the speed of communication seem to result in more superficial ways we experience our homes. The usual attachment bonds with our homes and domestic objects no longer seem based on stability and long duration. Digital media has accustomed us with a permanent upgrade and update. It seems that the house follows the same pattern.

We need look no further than the current pandemic situation that has imposed isolation at home on medium and long term — it is a showcase. Mass media technology has allowed certain types of social and professional relationships to continue, while it has decisively catalyzed series of changes in social behavior. It is assumed that, to some extent, these relationships facilitated by media communication will remain an important part of everyone's

life, even after the end of the present crisis. The living space will have to adapt to this new *modus vivendi* and behavior, it will have to offer adequate spaces for activities that require specific spaces. Despite following a previously born trend, accentuated by the state of pandemic isolation, the home and the workspace were reconnected in media-home.

Throughout history, a home has been described in the first place as a protective space, as a retreat from the outside world. Its positive qualities derived primarily from this resistance to the exterior — the home was a personal space of the family, protective and relatively independent from the whole society. It seems that precisely this aspect is vanishing or, at least, is drastically changing with the contemporary media development and its overarching globalization.

Maybe we, as architects, should look at the space of the home in a different way, not only as an enclosed space of the domestic group or as a piece of resistance that opposes globalization, but to the contrary, as an open resource, with still unsatisfied valences. As Madanipour states, home is the place where private and public spheres are connected, even if in different moments, one or the other sphere was dominant. Which is dominant nowadays?

One can say that, in the current conditions, the technology infused into the home through digital media becomes a *pharmakon*[27] — it facilitates the integration of the individual through a dual relationship with technology, where resistance and acceptance of the contemporary society meet and negotiate. It is from this dual relationship that the germs of the new directions of modeling the inhabited space can evolve. According to Bernard Stiegler, the presence of a pharmakon, a "transitional object" (as defined by Donald Winnicot[28]) has the capacity to form a space of relations. This transitional space can have a real or virtual character, but its importance lies in how it gives meaning to a new reality. In the end, it makes life worth living.

Architecture has permanently been able to change, while keeping its relevant characteristics, to redefine itself in the points where it was necessary to respond to a different type of social behavior. When the social behavior changes to a significant extent, the living space will adapt to this new situation. Finally, whether we criticize certain aspects of the present societal changes or try to respond to them, our answers concerning the living space cannot avoid the challenges brought about by the presence and dynamic of digital media — we must take them into consideration, no matter how we choose to cope with them.

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27 Term proposed by Bernard Stiegler, defining an element with a pharmaceutical role, healing a certain state of affairs.

28 Donald Woods Winnicott, "Le destin de l'objet transitionnel" [The fate of the transitional object], transl. J.-B. Desveaux and E. Galiana, *Journal de la psychanalyse de l'enfant* 1, vol. 6 (2016): 17-24.