TV and the Spaces of Everyday Life

3

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In 1958 the Radio Corporation of America (RCA) promoted its vision of television's future with an image of a stylishly modern home (Fig. 3.1). Equipped with a "picture frame" flat screen TV mounted on a wall near a huge picture window, the living room was overcome by the postwar dream of TV leisure where views of the outside world (gleaming through the window) were now competing with virtual views on the TV screen. Adding to the attractions of this domestic utopia are a "television control unit" and a mini-fridge on wheels so that the residents are spared the quotidian "challenges" of simply moving around. As the RCA promotional rhetoric suggests, television offers a new and thoroughly modern form of spectacular intimacy where the virtual and the material co-exist, and where the object world is easily manipulated through technical and architectural tricks that allow for (at least the fantasy of) mastery over the environment.

Despite its somewhat antiquated version of the future, today this RCA home is easily recognized as a media space, a space not just full of media, but rather created in part by it.

In this respect, television is part of a longer history of communication and transportation technologies (the train, the airplane, the telegraph, the telephone, radio, cinema, the computer) that have contributed to changes in the way people experience time and space, making the world *seem* both smaller in scale and more readily accessible at the stroke of a keyboard or touch of a switch. Not surprisingly, television, satellites, and media networks have been central to theories of postmodern geography. As David Harvey (1990) argues, the media have contributed to the "time-space compression" that paradoxically creates uneven development within a highly unified global economy composed of homogenous products and manufactured spaces across the advanced capitalist world. With a similar concern

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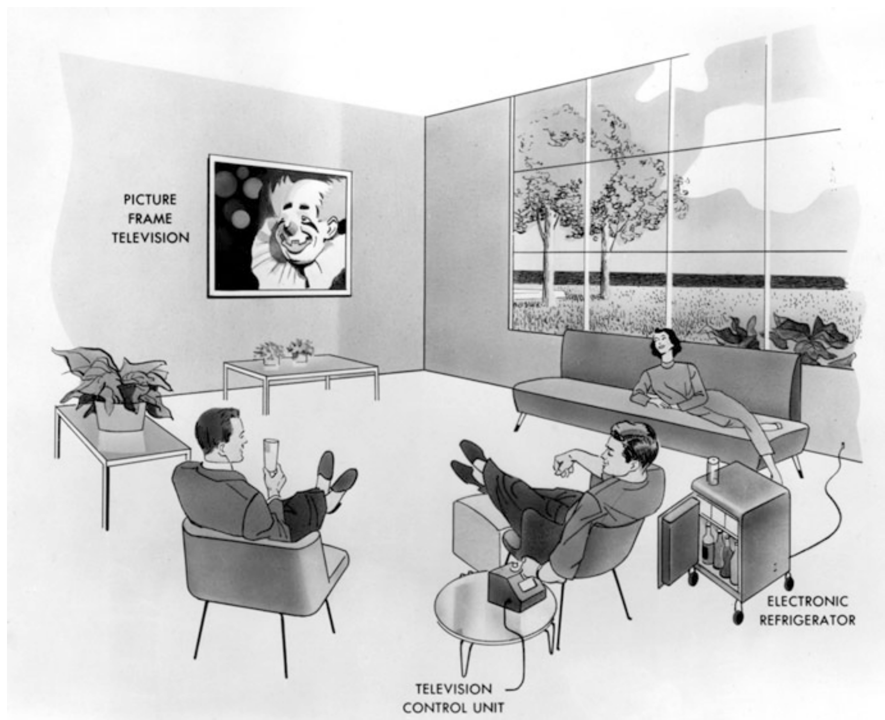

Fig. 3.1 Home of the future (RCA 1958)

for spatial homogenization, in his influential analysis of "supermodernity" Marc Augé (1995) claims that rather than a traditional anthropological sense of place, the networked consumer societies of the postindustrial world have constructed a series of "non-places"–supermarkets, air terminals, freeways–places we pass through rather than inhabit. On the one hand, television follows and even precipitates this pattern. Its live transmissions turn "there" into "here" on a daily basis while international franchises like *Survivor* or dubbed reruns like *Friends* circulate in places around the globe, and even on airplanes in between. On the other hand, television is, as David Morley (1991) puts it, both a global and a "sitting room" technology, so that forces of globalization and spatial homogenization must be conceptualized in relation to particular places and everyday experiences of home and homeland.

Here, I consider television's relation to the spatial geographies of everyday life, and in particular I explore the history of TV's impact on the relations between, and social construction of, private and public space. However obvious, it should be said at the outset that public and private are not essential givens but rather historical and geographically specific constructs (so that what is considered appropriate public or private behavior in one place or time may not be in another). So too, television

is implemented differently in diverse nations and locations. In the following pages, I mostly explore television in western industrialized contexts. I consider its technological incarnations (as domestic TV, mobile TV, and "jumbo" screens in urban centers) in relation to the increasingly "mediatized" spaces of everyday life. In offering this large-scale overview, I want to consider some common threads, as well as divergent claims, among different approaches to studying TV as a spatial apparatus.

One of the perplexing issues for anyone interested in television is its own status as a "migrant" object across the disciplines of the humanities and social sciences. TV has been a subject for communication theory; history (especially cultural history and the history of technology); visual/textual analysis (that often involves methods from film and literary studies); visual anthropology and ethnography; journalism (particularly with regard to documentary realism); feminist and queer theory; media sociology and institutional analysis; critical theories of simulation and virtuality; critical race theory; phenomenology and philosophical questions of ontology; critical geography and urban studies; and art and architecture history/theory. In the work I present here, methods of textual analysis, discourse analysis, industry analysis, ethnographic and qualitative research, oral history, archival research, and even autobiography are all central to research. Moreover, often approaches overlap, making TV a truly interdisciplinary object. While the subjects are certainly vast and the methods are often quite different, my overview is intended as a map through which to understand connections among different avenues of inquiry into television and the spaces of everyday life. The subjects as I divide them here crystallize around: (1). Television's arrival in homes after WWII and its continued place in domestic space; (2). Television's relation to suburbanization and its privatization of public amusements, especially the theater; (3). Television's centrality to what Raymond Williams (1975) called "mobile privatization" and to related fantasies of virtual travel; (4). Television's aesthetics of liveness and "telepresence"; and (5). Television's shift from a predominantly domestic medium to a mobile technology and "everywhere" cultural form. In dividing my attention across these subjects I hope in to demonstrate the contact points between television and the dynamics of public and private space in media cultures.

Domestic Space and Family Intimacy

Although its installation has been uneven around the globe, in the first two decades after WWII, the new medium posed immediate concerns with regard to the intimate spaces of home, its relation to public spaces, and related issues of gender and generation. Historical research on a range of national contexts (including the US, Britain, Sweden, Italy, West Germany, Russia, Australia, Argentina, and Austria) have detailed the hopes and fears (which circulated in both popular and scholarly venues) about television's effects on family life, gender roles, and domestic space (Spigel 1992; Boddy 2004; Smith 2012; Olofsson 2012; Penati 2013; Perry 2007; Roth-Ey 2007; Darian-Smith and Hamilton 2012; Varela 2005; Bernold and

Ellmeier 1997). While the national responses vary in intensity and orientation, some commonalities –as well as differences–emerge.[1]

In the 1950s commentators often predicted that television would reunite the war-torn families of the previous decade, and in this respect TV was often depicted as a spatial apparatus that brought families closer together. In the US and Britain, people referred to television as an electronic "hearth" linking it to the traditional centers of domestic life (Frith 1983; Tichi 1992; Spigel 1992; Morley 2000; Smith 2012). So, too, as I detail in my book *Make Room for TV*, US advertisements often showed television sets in family circle iconography with mom, dad, and kids huddled around the screen. Sociologists suggested families were indeed using television as a means of keeping families together. A mother from a Southern California study claimed, "Our boy was always watching television [at other people's houses], so we got him a set just to keep him home." A mother from a Georgia study similarly enthused, "We are closer together . . . Don and her boyfriend sit here, instead of going out" (McDonagh et al. 1956, p. 116; Stewart cited in Bogart 1956, p. 100).

To be sure, not everyone was convinced of television's unifying power over family life. Sociologists and popular critics just as often depicted television as a divisive force that would disrupt traditional forms of intimacy and especially the gendered spaces of the home. In the US, women's magazines spoke constantly of the family fights television caused and recommended ways to balance the ideals of family togetherness with the divided interests of individual family members. Everything from room dividers to earplugs served as means by which to carve out television places within common spaces of the home. Women's household labor has historically presented a special dilemma for these twin ideals of unity and division because women were (and still often are) expected to perform chores while still taking part in family leisure time pursuits. Ads for television sets often showed housewives doing both at once – serving snacks, cradling babies, or drying dishes while watching with the family group (Spigel 1992). Even when women were depicted in family scenes, they were often spatially remote from men or children in the room. For example, in the RCA ad with which I began, it is clear that despite their mutual occupation of living space, the men and woman in the room are divided in their interests. The woman appears to be sideways glancing at the clown on screen while the men are involved in conversation, ignoring both her and the TV set. (Nevertheless, one of the men has his finger on the TV remote, apparently still dominating his wife's TV pleasures.)

In addition to its role in articulating spatial arrangements of family unity and division, television is also a symbolic object in the home that communicates a message about the resident. In his study of television's arrival in Japanese homes

[1]Histories of television's installation in homes is a relatively recent phenomenon, and to date there is no single comparative historical study of this on a transnational level. My effort to do so here, therefore, is based on my preliminary attempts to merge some of these studies. I want to thank generous colleagues for either translating or sharing essays, findings, and resources, especially Mirta Varela, Cecile Panati, William Uricchio, and Judith Keilbach.

of the 1960s, Shunya Yoshimi (1999) observes that the color television set (along with the air conditioner and car) functioned as a symbol of what it meant to be a modern family. Historical research on British, US, Australian, Swedish, Italian, West German, and Austrian television similarly finds that the TV set functioned as powerful symbol of the modern family home and/or social mobility in the postwar period (O'Sullivan 1991; Spigel 1992; Darian-Smith and Hamilton 2012; Olofsson 2012; Penati 2013; Perry 2007; Ellmeier 1997). As Kristin Roth-Ey (2007) claims, even in the Soviet Union, "The symbolism of a television set in every Soviet apartment" functioned as "proof of socialism's ability to deliver the good life." She goes on to show that "many foreigners who visited the USSR in the first years after Iosif's Stalin's death were struck by the presence of television technology in a country evidently still struggling to provide the basics of food, clothing and shelter" (pp. 181–2).

That said, in some households television was (and still is) a site of shame rather than an object of conspicuous consumption. In their oral history of Australian homes, Darian and Hamilton (2012) find that despite its almost universal presence by the 1960s, "a minority of middle class families believed television was too popular and too crass" and refused to buy a TV set (p. 41). In the US, as television moved from being a rich man's toy (in the experimental period of the late 1930s and 1940s) to a mass medium (by 1960 almost 90 % of homes had a least one TV), its class status also changed; and in this respect the spaces that TV occupied had to be carefully managed. High-end designers (and even some of the more socially aspirant middle-class home magazines) called TV an eyesore and often advised hiding it from view (for example, behind a wall of more "highbrow" objects like books or paintings). Speaking of television's introduction into Swedish homes in the 1950s, Jennie Oloffson (2012) observes a similar dynamic. While early adapters often displayed their TV sets as a sign of prestige, "social elites in Sweden later on concealed the TV object in the closet, a move that occurred in conjunction with the increasing retail of the TV object to non-elites" (p. 14).

In qualitative studies reflecting trends from the 1980s to the present, researchers have shown that television continues to have a central relation to family life and domestic spaces, both in its symbolic and its practical dimensions. People often use the television set as a site of display for personal expressions of family history and cultural heritage (McCarthy 2000; Morley 2000; Leal 1990; Silverstone 1994; Gauntlett and Hill 1991; O'Sullivan 1991; Olofsson 2012; Ureta 2008). In her ethnographic study of television in Brazil, Ondina Fachel Leal (1990) examines how working-class suburban families make television meaningful within an "entourage" of objects around it (photos, plastic flowers, knickknacks, religious pictures, etc.). Exploring media in Iban society of Malaysian Borneo, John Postill (1998) finds that people place family photographs on top of the television set, which in turn serves a means of symbolically re-connecting the family to deceased relatives or to family members who have migrated away from home.

People also manage TV spaces (and more recently computer and gaming spaces) in ways that fit with household routines, gender roles, and/or taste preferences (Morley 1985; Lull 1990; Burke 2003; Lally 2002; Ureta 2008; Aslinger 2013;

Young 2007). In his path-breaking *Family Television* (1986), which looks at a group of working-class British families, David Morley observes that the power dynamics of gender are intimately related to TV watching (for example, men tended to dominate the remote control). Later in *Home Territories* (2000), Morley reports on his and other studies that show how people use television and other communication technologies to "negotiate difference" in the family (along lines of age and gender especially) and to demarcate space. More generally, David Gauntlet and Annette Hill (1991) observe, "Television… is often a primary determining factor in how British households organize their internal geography," and the majority of their respondents watched TV apart from other family members in what they call "routinized dispersion" (p. 38).

The movement of television from the central spaces of the home to more private rooms (especially bedrooms) is often accompanied by deeply felt cultural practices of social etiquette and boundary marking. In his ethnography of low income families in Santiago, Chile, Sabastian Ureta (2008) finds that the newest and largest TV set is typically located in the family's "ceremonial" central living space where it is used as a symbol of class status and family pride rather than being a functional machine. In fact, some families felt it improper to keep the living room television turned on when guests arrive. Instead, family members watch older and smaller screen TVs in bedrooms. He notes, however, that bedroom TV has its own perceived pitfalls so that, for example, women expressed concerns about its effects on intimacy between couples. Writing about media and "bedroom culture" in the UK, Sonia Livingston (2007) argues that children's and teenagers' use of television and related media in bedrooms is symptomatic of the larger risk society: as adults consider outside spaces more dangerous for young people, and as public alternatives become scarce, parents channel young people's pleasure into the perceived safe space of the home, and the "media-rich bedroom" plays a key role in keeping children inside. Although articulated in relation to personal spaces and mobile platforms, such strategies recall the tactics of the previously cited mothers at the dawn of the TV age, who also used TV to keep children and teenagers home.

Today, particularly for people with broadband and mobile devices, the status of television as the symbolic center of the home is certainly in transition. However, the transitions are marked by ambivalences and paradoxes that suggest the complexity of interpreting trends. For example, in 2010 the Pew Research Center's nationwide Social and Demographic Trends Project reported a sharp decline in the number of people in the US who thought TV was a household necessity—from 64 % in 2006 to 42 % in 2010. And of younger adults, fewer than three-in-ten (29 %) "said they needed a television set." Nevertheless, the study also reported that the perception of need did not actually match up with purchasing behavior. "Even as fewer Americans say they consider the TV set to be a necessity of life, more Americans than ever are stocking up on them. In 2009, the average American home had more television sets than people" (Taylor and Wang 2010, p. 1).

This overabundance of TV correlates with the industry's push toward "personal TV" and related time-shifting and place-shifting technologies through which people can watch media (on numerous platforms) in any room of the house or on mobile

technologies away from home. Television's convergence with the Internet allows for social interactions with networks of people outside the home; for example, now many people "tweet" TV as it happens, sharing comments on TV news coverage or responses to fiction shows. That said, even while Net-enhanced "smart television" makes it possible to interact in a more immediate way, such interactions are not entirely revolutionary. Even in the past, people often chatted about television programs on the telephone or at the water cooler (at work) or through fanzines so that private viewing was often turned into occasions for social exchange outside the family context. Rather than an absolute break with the past, today television is a hybrid spatial experience; people encounter and use TV a number of ways and in a variety of places. Even now, despite the push toward personal viewing, manufacturers are still also marketing TV as a collective household ritual through home theater technologies that have been part of the spatial imagination for television since its inception.

Home Theaters and Suburban Towns

The development of television as a domestic device occurred in the context of broader geographical shifts that influenced both its object form and the programs that emanated from its screen. In the US, Australia, and Britain, historians have considered television in the context of suburban expansion and new forms of postwar community, consumerism, and communication (Haralovich 1991; Lipsitz 1992; Spigel 1992; Hartley 1999; Darian-Smith and Hamilton 2012). In his account of television in everyday life, Roger Silverstone (1994) suggests that television is not just related to particular suburban histories, "but is itself suburbanizing "and has been central to the "suburbanization of the public sphere." Television, he claims, "is suburban in expression and reinforcement of the particular balance of isolation and integration, uniformity and variety, global and parochial identifies and cultures, that are, indeed, the hallmark of suburban existence" (pp. 55–57). Silverstone's insights into spatial hybridity and the balance of contradictory social categories are useful ways to think about how television negotiates the spatial conditions of everyday life in the modern world. Nevertheless, television is always also a site-specific spatial practice so that its relation to particular suburbs, cities, or rural towns may well result in important differences. For example, in her study of Italian television, Penati (2013) shows that the communications infrastructure, which was located in cities, made early television a predominantly urban phenomenon. But even in nations that did undergo massive suburbanization, the particular histories of space (both at the level of actual location but also in terms of broader issues of spatial justice) clearly make a difference in the ways in which different populations have experienced television (and newer media).

The spatial dislocations and re-orientations that accompanied television's rise in the US suburbs suggest how television was related, for example, to the history of racist geographies entailed in US migrations. Faced with a severe housing shortage in US cities, people migrated to new mass-produced suburbs that sprang

up at enormous speed after WWII. Signaling the centrality of television to these new suburban homes, in 1952 (even before most Americans had a television set) Levittown (one of the first and most famous suburban developments of its time) offered a house with a television set built into its living room wall. But because these new developments were built with government financing that sanctioned racial exclusions (through zoning laws) suburban spaces were notoriously homogeneous, so much so that migration to the suburbs was known as "white flight." The suburban sitcoms that proliferated on early US television, with their all white nuclear families, reified and helped to naturalize the exclusionary geographies of suburban towns.[2] But in a more general sense, as a medium, television provided a kind of "antiseptic electrical space" that filtered out as much as it brought into the home. Programs with titles like *Admiral Broadway Revue* or *TV Dinner Date* offered new suburbanites simulated forms of urban entertainments, devoid of actual social contact with the more heterogeneous crowds in the city.

Perhaps the most blatant expression of television's relation to America's racist geographies came in the words of sociologist Raymond Stewart who claimed that television would be a boon for "Southern Negros who are . . . barred from public entertainments" (cited in Bogart, p. 98). Stewart cited one African American man who observed that television and radio allowed him to bypass the degradation experienced in ball parks or theaters that "require that we be segregated and occupy the least desirable seats" (cited in Bogart 1956, p. 98). Rather than seeing television as a symptom of the longer history of segregation that produced this kind of spatial humiliation for African Americans, Stewart saw television a technological cure. In a similar way sociologist David Riesman (1954) claimed that the "television set is exactly the compensation for substandard housing the [slum] family can best appreciate – and in the case of Negroes or poorly dressed people, or the sick, an escape from being embarrassed in public amusement places" (p. 23). This concept of television as compensation for social/spatial/housing inequality was, then, the flip side of television's link to suburban expansion and the white privilege entailed in white flight.

More generally, the rise of television in various regions of the U.S. correlated with a general slump in spectator amusements, especially movie attendance but also in baseball, hockey, theater, and concert admissions. (*Fortune* editors, 1956). Even before the postwar period, the concept of the "home theater" was a dominant metaphor in the popular imagination. In 1912, the mass periodical *The Independent* ran an article titled "The Future Home Theater" in which "talking pictures" were transported through the ether into the home where residents could see "vistas of reality" channeled into their living space (Gilfillan 1912). By the 1950s advertisers

[2]For an excellent analysis of the rise of the suburban family sitcom see Haralovich (1992). Note, however, that television programs, including family sitcoms, also offered more critical perspectives via allegories of suburban alienation, racism, and isolation for women. See for example, Chapter 4 ("Static and Stasis") in Sconce (2004) and Chapter 4 ("From Domestic Space to Outer Space: The 1960s Fantastic Family Sitcom") in Spigel (2001).

referred to television as a "home theater," "armchair theater," "family theater," and so forth. Advertisers promised that the new home theaters would provide women at least an imaginary escape from the isolating role of housewife. Ads showed couples dressed in ballroom gowns and tuxedoes while watching TV in their living rooms, as if they were out for a night on the town. Ironically, sociological studies revealed that women feared television's isolating effects on their lives, and articles in women's magazines discussed television as a potential threat to romance that would compete for their husband's attention (Spigel 1992). As one woman complained, "I would like to go for a drive in the evening, but my husband has been out all day and would prefer to watch a wrestling match on television" (McDonough et al. 1956, p. 119).

More than just a US phenomenon, historical research on television's innovation in a number of national contexts indicates that, for better or worse, television served as a kind of threshold technology between public and private space that mediated and helped produce new forms of sociality. In her oral history of 1950s Italian television, Penati finds that her interviewees fondly recall the collective viewing rituals that took place in the few homes in rural villages that were equipped with TV. Conversely, US, British, Swedish, and Australian histories demonstrate that collective TV could also induce the opposite reaction: people who were the first on the block to buy a new TV complained about the influx of unwanted guests eager to watch programs (O'Sullivan 1991; Olofsson 2012; Spigel 1992; Darian-Smith and Hamilton 2012). In her research on Argentina, Mirta Varela (2005) shows that while 1950s discourses on television in popular magazines often followed (and even directly translated) the US predications (for example, television was often called a "hearth" and discussed as a family medium), the actual situation was quite different. Public/political meetings, attendance at theaters and sporting events, and other forms of public culture thrived during of this period of political transition. In this regard, she argues, regardless of the similarities at the level of popular discourse, television did not serve as a replacement for public culture to the degree that it did in the US. As these competing historical findings suggest, television's relation to the spaces of everyday life depends on broader geographies and shared assumptions about the production of social space.

Beyond the practical concerns regarding neighbors and social contact, television's integration into the home was accompanied by more fantastic fears regarding privacy and surveillance. In the US, commentators often used military metaphors, picturing television as an "invader" of domestic territory. In 1957 *The New York Times* reported that a "clanking army of television sets... has entered the American home" (Reif 1957). Military metaphors of being "blasted," "detonated," or "bombarded" by TV (and the "noise" it produced) were common (Spigel 2009). Architects and interior designers also used military metaphors. In 1951, the trade journal *Interiors* ran an article titled "Cyclops," which observed, "Television attacks the American eye, and the American eye, to our military way of thinking, is something for the designer to worry about" (Allen 1951, p. 62). In his study of West German TV, Joe Perry (2007) finds similar language, citing one prominent critic who called TV "the invader in the living room."

While hyperbolic, the use of military metaphors had a very real association for people who were familiar with the use of radio and television as reconnaissance and surveillance technologies during wartime. Even while commercial broadcasting was designed for one-way communication in the home (with no capabilities for monitoring residents), people often treated TV as if it were a surveillance medium that could look into living rooms and spy on residents. In addition to the Cyclops analogy, commentators called TV a “prying eye,” a “hypnotic eye,” and even a “Peeping Tom.” In this last configuration, the military trope of invasion was coupled with eroticized accounts of television’s voyeuristic gaze. Writing for *Architectural Forum*, one critic worried that “making love in front of in front of television… [would be the same thing as] making love in the same room with an interested hypnotist” (“Television, Its Hypnotic Screen,” 1948, p. 119). In her study of Italian TV, Penati (2013) discusses a cartoon from the popular press that shows a naked woman in her bedroom watching a man on TV. Afraid that the actor on screen will see her, she hides behind a dressing screen.[3] In this and other cases, turning the home into a home theater winds up putting the resident in the spotlight. Rather than a spectator, the woman is an object of spectatorship beyond her control.

Despite its disputed value, the home theater remains a dominant fantasy and a powerful marketing ploy for television and related media. Today, the home theater has morphed into gigantic 50+ inch flat screen displays that, at their most extreme, promise residents not just a simulated night out on the town but rather a complete immersive audio-visual environment. Magazines like *Electronic House* and *Home Theater* feature rooms designed to look like silent era movie palaces, sports bars, arcades, and the like. Just as skyline or ocean views drive up the price of the housing market, the views offered by wide screen home theaters have become a kind of virtual real estate. For example, in 2013 homeowners in an upscale community of Naples, Florida built a patio theater with an 80-in. TV screen that competes with a view of the ocean as residents relax in a nearby hot tub. According to *Electronic House*, “While the homeowner prefers the outdoor AV experience on most days, sometimes it rains. For those moments the home also includes an indoor theater with a 100-in. retractable screen” (Clauser 2013). While luxury home theaters are designed for the “viewing elite,” average homeowners can find more affordable versions in big box stores or online sites. Recalling the theater date and family circle logic of early TV theaters, Samsung’s website tells prospective consumers, “Your home entertainment centre can make a night at home just as much fun as an expensive night out. Get the family together for movies, sporting events, games, and more.”[4]

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[3]Note that such confusions between material space and media space, and the jokes about this, were not new to television. As Carolyn Marvin (1988) observes, these kind of jokes circulated in the trade journals of electrical engineers, who often specifically poked fun at children, women, and people of color who they depicted as “technical illiterates” who were unable to distinguish material from electrical spaces.

[4]See www.samsung.com/ae/consumer/tv-audio-video/home-theatre. Retrieved June 1, 2010.

As in these cases, the promotion and design of home theaters typically emphasize what Barbara Klinger (2006) calls a "fortress" mentality in which the propertied classes attempt to enclose themselves in the safe space of the home and which corresponds to the rise of gated communities and private security systems. Often home theaters are sold as part of a more general "smart" home automation package that bundles together the twin ideals of middle-class home ownership—privacy and security on the one hand, and luxury and comfort on the other. Smart homes are part of the post-Fordist service economy where residents rely on private sector wireless services to make their homes communicate. (For example, your internet-connected smart fridge can email you to let you know when you run out of tuna or you can use your iPhone to turn on your sprinklers.). In this context, TV is linked to DVRS and interactive streaming video services that make home theaters more insular in their ability to receive media on demand (without going anywhere to get it). Yet at the same time the home becomes more vulnerable to market research forces that, for example, record your media choices and sell this data to other corporations. The home has become a central site for monitoring and motion sensing technologies that present themselves as everyday conveniences but which ultimately hook occupants into elaborate systems of feedback and control (Andrejevic 2007; Allon 2004; Heckman 2008; Spigel 2005). So ironically, while smart home automation is marketed as a form of insular luxury, it is nevertheless also feared as a violation of personal privacy. As the *Wall Street Journal* reports, everything from mundane mechanisms like Internet enabled heaters to uncanny contraptions like "smart" toilets are now a risk of being hacked by people who can make "technology do terrible things." As might be expected, the television set is also a prime target. The *Journal* reports that hackers can "make a new Samsung TV set—which features a camera—watch you" even "when you think the TV is turned off." (Yadron 2013) So, as the new medium of smart TV develops, the old fears of surveillance return.

Mobile Privatization and Virtual Travel

As the case of the hacked TV suggests, even while historically linked to bourgeois ideals of domestic havens, television is also a product of social forces outside the home. Since the late nineteenth century, communication technologies have been intimately connected to the patterns of commerce, community, and mobility that shape the industrial and post-industrial world. Considering the history of telecommunications in these terms, Raymond Williams (1975) coined the term "mobile privatization," a phenomenon he tied to the simultaneous rise of privatized suburban housing and mobile urban industrial centers in the latter decades of the nineteenth century. The advent of telecommunications, Williams argues, offered people the ability to maintain ideals of privacy while providing the mobility required by industrialization, and broadcasting in particular held out the promise of bringing the public world indoors (pp. 26–8). In this respect, while labor-saving technologies (like washing machines or refrigerators) were marketed as private

luxuries that reduced the need *physically* to travel to public spaces (like public laundries or markets), media technologies like radio and television offer the ability to *imaginatively* travel to distant locales (and to commune with virtual strangers) while ensconced in the safe space of the home.

The dream of virtual travel has been central to the promotional rhetoric surrounding television. In the 1940s and 1950s, advertisers placed TV sets against exotic backdrops of spectacular nature or cosmopolitan landmarks like the Eiffel Tower or Big Ben (Spigel 1992). Similarly, in Germany, an ad for Shaub-Lorenz television sets promised to turn "your home into a peaceful island of relaxation [with] enticing voyages of exploration of world events" (cited in Perry, p. 586). Even more thrilling in its premise of armchair travel, a 1956 ad for Germany's Philips TV showed a housewife sitting in a modern-styled chair watching TV against a background that displayed a futuristic car driving down a bridge in a city of tomorrow.[5] The ideals of modern mobility and virtual contact with the outside world continue with the global marketing for widescreen TV. In its 2010 advertising campaign, Samsung displayed exotic peacocks, Alaskan huskies, and breathtaking views of the sea emanating from its "Galaxy" flat screen TV.[6] In 1996, the Indian company Videocon marketed its "double wide window" TV that was, according to the ad, "bringing the world to India" (Kumar 1996, p. 80).

As in the Videocon example, the touristic pleasures of television have often been conceptualized within utopian ideals of global connectivity. Even before Marshall McLuhan (1962) predicted that television and satellite technologies would offer a "global village," NBC President Sylvester "Pat" Weaver promised that television would make the "entire world into a small town, instantly available . . . to all." But Weaver's concept of the small town was indeed a very small place, as he went on to describe broadcasters' need to keep all television programming within the "areas of American agreement" and to make television the "shining center of the home" (Weaver 1954). Here as elsewhere, the utopian ideal of global connectivity was tied to hegemonic practices of nation building and logics of center-periphery. At the level of policy (particularly with regard to the history of satellites), this mentality resulted in uneven flows of global communication. But, at the level of everyday practices, Weaver's formulation harked back to earlier cultural fantasies about virtual travel applied to telegraphy, telephony, and radio. As Susan Douglas (1987) and Carolyn Marvin (1988) demonstrate, intellectuals, technical experts, and popular critics of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century variously claimed that long distance telecommunications, whether across the oceans or just across town, offered a way to convene with strangers while avoiding the perceived threat of actual contact with unfamiliar people and contexts.

At the dawn of the television age, popular fantasies of virtual travel often took on specifically colonialist tones. In 1944, even before the massive adaptation of

[5]For the ad see http://www.tvhistory.tv/1950s-Siemens-TV-Ad-Germany.JPG. Retrieved May 1, 2010.

[6]For the ad see http://www.samsung.com/us/2013-smart-tv/#smart-tv-4. Retrieved June 1, 2010.

television in US homes, an ad for Dumont TV sets told future consumers, "You'll be an armchair Columbus!" and "sail with television through vanishing horizons in exciting new worlds."[7] Contemporary lifestyle television programs like *House Hunters International* and globetrotting TV chefs like Anthony Bourdain continue to promote this experience of armchair tourism, often with rhetoric that associates distant locals with exoticism.[8] *Survivor*, for example, turns the traditional travelogue into a parlor game (complete with tribes and a ritual tribunal), literally bringing the exotic back home. But as the tribe scenario suggests, the dream of virtual travel through television also depends on the colonialist fantasy of static populations cut off from (western notions of) mobility and progress.

Considering tele-travel from the point of view of media ontology and phenomenological questions of experience, Paul Virilio (1989) argues that audiovisual media are "the last vehicle," the endgame of modernity's promise of progress through technological manipulations of time and space. Comparing audiovisual media to a Japanese swimming machine that requires no actual destination (just endless laps in place), Virlio claims that television and related media are the ultimate form of "stasis," promoting a "sedentary" culture of "domestic inertia" (p. 109). The logical extension is the automated smart home, "the cadaver-like inertia of the interactive dwelling . . . whose most important furniture is the seat, the ergonomic armchair . . . " (p. 119).

While I agree that television and interactive media do often leave you exactly where you are (both physically and mentally), Virilio's argument nevertheless falls into a genre of anti-domestic rhetoric that has historically connected the home to passivity while equating mobility and public space with tropes of activity. As Rita Felski (1999) argues, the seminal philosophies of modernity privileged mobility and the city street (a space historically dominated by men) as a site for action and resistance, often neglecting or else denigrating the home and women's lives there.[9]

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[7]For the ad see http://library.duke.edu/digitalcollections/adaccess_TV0445/. Retrieved July 19, 2013.

[8]For analysis of cooking shows along these lines see Strange (1998) and Bell and Hollows (2007). There is also a growing body of literature on television's depictions of places that considers, for example, the racial dynamics of TV cities in dramatic programs like *The Wire* or the identity politics of regional location. See, for example Lipsitz (2011) and Johnson (2008).

[9]Felski also observes that feminist theorists (she names, for example, Betty Friedan) have also often denigrated the home as have classic writers on everyday life such as Henri Lefebvre. Regarding the latter, it is also the case that while I am generally drawing on Lefebvre's (1991) important insights about the social production of space, and while his volumes on everyday life are central to any consideration of the topic, he saw television in negative terms as a source of alienation. Particularly apropos to my discussion here, see his 1958 Introduction to the first volume of *Critique of Everyday Life* where he calls television as "leisure machine" that is part of a more general conversion of "spontaneous" social needs into a form of "social organization" that modifies and directs those needs. In the same passage his also uses the phrase "armchair reading" negatively with regard to "escapist" mass culture items like "travel books" or "reader's digests," and he especially names "images" in "films . . . which are as far from *real life* as possible." (Lefebvre 1958; reprinted 1991, pp. 32–33, emphasis his).

In its association with the home (and with mass culture[10]), television came to have a key place in this anti-domestic, anti-feminine discourse—so much so that the classic image of a spectator is the "couch potato" (usually a slovenly overweight man half asleep on his sofa or "lazy boy" chair). Symptomatically here, at its misogynist extreme, television has been configured (or explicitly called) an "emasculating" and "feminizing" machine (Spigel 1992).[11] Yet, the home cannot really be reduced to a place of stasis, and the notion of "armchair tourism" does not capture the myriad experiences that television affords.

Comparing studies from a variety of national contexts (from the Australian Outback to own his research project in the UK) Morley (2000) shows how, for example, satellite television encourages people to rethink the boundaries between home, homeland, and elsewhere, and can allow people to reorient themselves in the world.[12] For people living in the Diaspora, television can provide a link between host country and homeland yet can also serve as a flash point for generational conflict as younger people use TV to break with parental/ethnic traditions associated with the homeland (Gillespie 1995; Morley 2000). Television can also provoke the re-imagination or reconfiguration of gender relations in a variety of national and transnational contexts (Mankekar 1999; Gillespie 1995; Ang 1995, 2004; Morley 2000; Abu-Lughod 2004).

With a specific focus on public and private space, Ratiba Hadj-Moussa (2010) shows how the introduction of satellites in Argentina is both symptomatic of but also transformative for the traditional ideological divides between (male) public and (female) private space. Satellite television has encouraged men to migrate from the neighborhood to the home where they dominate the television set and police women's access to French programs that men think will have a bad influence. Nevertheless, women do gain access to the television space and while they often prefer Arabic–language soaps, they also like French programs that promote western sensibilities. And (like the men) they watch global news on the Al-Jazeera network. Here, as elsewhere, satellite TV does not on its own change politics or social relations but rather intervenes in everyday experiences as people rethink and re-arrange entrenched social practices and beliefs.

[10]For a classic discussion of mass culture's association with tropes of femininity and passivity see Andreas Huyssen's chapter "Mass Culture as Woman: Modernism's Other" in Huyssen (1986).

[11]It's also important to point out however, that feminists have also often objected to television and seen it as a source of boredom or an outright tool of patriarchy for women's domestic confinement and role as consumer. Outright attacks on the medium especially ran through feminist writing of the early second wave, such as Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* (1963) and specifically in a series of articles published in *TV Guide* (Friedan 1964). By the late 1970s, and especially with the rise of feminist film theory and cultural studies, feminists developed a much more varied literature that (while still holding onto a negative critique) also understood television's relation to women's pleasure and to their everyday lives in more diverse and complex ways. For a bibliography see Brunsdon and Spigel (2007).

[12]Morley draws especially on Moore (1997) and Green (1998).

So too, television can serve as an important source of information and fantasy for people who do not want to live in the hetero-normative family spaces that suburban architects have historically designed. In their intriguing attempt to fathom a house as a queer space, Moon et al. (1994) discuss television and "entertainment/information centers" as "points of contact . . . between the protected realm of home and the world at large, through which unsanctioned information may find its way into the house." "Just like the closet (which they call a space of "transgression" for finding hidden secrets), media centers "are the sites to which the adolescent goes to uncover information about sexuality" (p. 36). Remembering his childhood fondness for the 1960s sitcom *That Girl* (about a fashionable suburban twenty-something single girl who moves to Manhattan with dreams of becoming an actress), architect/theorist Ernest Pascucci (1997) recalls the sitcom's importance to his sense of queer identity. Or as he puts, the program offered the possibility of "cross-identification—these overwhelming urges to be *That Girl*" (p. 52). Accordingly, he claims, despite the popular conception of sitcoms as mere trivial pursuits, the program offered him and other gay men of his generation a profound space in which to imagine lifestyles and identities that were markedly different from those encouraged by his hetero-normative suburban home.

Liveness, Telepresence, and Spatial De-realization

In its capacity to bridge the near and the far, television promotes the experience of "telepresence" –a sense of being on the scene of presentation that is produced through what media scholars typically refer to as TV's aesthetics of "liveness"– its sense of immediacy, simultaneity, and intimacy (Bourdon 2004; Feuer 1983; Scannell 1996; Moore 2004; Boddy 1989). Television executives and producers have historically capitalized on TV's ability to transmit sounds and images live through network feeds by deploying audio-visual techniques designed to make people feel as if they are present at live events. These strategies include: (1). Direct address (when, for example, a news presenter speaks into the camera directly at the viewers); (2). The use of studio audiences or canned laughter (which encourage viewers to feel as if they are participating in a real-time social event); (3). Self-reflexivity (for example, when news programs display TV cameras, making viewers feel they are privy to backstage insider knowledge in the TV studio; (4). The presentation of everyday people (as in game shows or reality TV); (5). Performance conventions and acting styles that create a sense of sincerity and ordinariness; and (6). Continuity editing and sound fidelity, which create a sense of real time and space. These aesthetic features are most apparent in live originated program formats such as news, sports, or special events, but they also have come to define the more general aesthetic features of television, even in recorded fare. Taped daytime soaps, for example, promote a sense of presence and simultaneity by having characters celebrate holidays in real time while filmed or taped sitcoms are famous for their laugh tracks that make viewers believe they are chuckling along with a crowd.

In "Television and Modern Life" Paddy Scannell (1996) examines how broadcasting's aesthetics of liveness produced new ways of addressing citizens in the privacy of their homes, and in the process helped change the nature of public life in Britain. Scannell writes, "It is not just that radio and television compress time and space. They create new possibilities of being: of being in two places at once, or two times at once" (p. 9). The event unfolds where it occurs in material space and in the space in which people watch it on TV. The ability for people to watch a public event via television (he uses the 1953 coronation of Queen Elizabeth II as a case in point) means that the event can be witnessed through all sorts of demeanors (for example, people can watch while drinking in bars or at home in pajamas). The public no longer has to perform the outward show of social etiquette and respect traditionally required of such events; and broadcasters (who know this) are especially careful to orchestrate events in ways that take account of the cameras.

While Scannell focuses on the new form of sociality and publicness that broadcast liveness enabled, liveness has even more often been analyzed for its alienating effects. Along these lines, in one of the best accounts, Margaret Morse (1991) argues that television should be seen in relation to the other dominant spaces of postwar everyday life—the freeway and the mall. This historical conjuncture of spatial arrangements, she claims, has produced new forms of simulated social life based on distraction. So for example, television news programs simulate interpersonal communication through modes of direct address, creating models of talk (but not actual feedback) between the audience and news presenter. Morse connects television to the "nonspace" of freeways that cut through local communities (often destroying them) to produce (for the driver) a sense of space divorced from context. Finally, she analyzes television's simulated universe in relation to the mall – a world in miniature that promotes distracted, disengaged forms of social relations based on consumption rather than community.

Certainly, Morse's picture of spatial distraction is bleak. Although she does draw on Michel de-Certeau's seminal "Walking in the City" (1984) in order to speculate on the possibilities for human agency within the highly controlled non-spaces she investigates, Morse too readily overlooks the social communities, sense of place, and site specific differences that do arise in consumer-oriented mediatized environments – whether this be the TV and new media fan communities that Jenkins (1992) has analyzed; the differences among malls and the uses women shoppers make of them (Morris 1998); or the more unfortunate social relations of road rage that take place on freeways. Nor does Morse consider television's own depictions of place or the investment people have in televised places as exemplified by viewers' pilgrimages to locations where TV shows are shot (Couldry 2000) or people's charged memories of imaginary TV settings (as with Pascucci's memories of *That Girl's* Manhattan locale). Nevertheless, Morse provides a powerful critique of television as a mode of spatial engineering that encourages "spatial de-realization." With television, as with freeways and with malls, you are often not where you think you are.

From Mobile to Everywhere TV

The experience of spatial de-realization has been central to the promotion of mobile television and its predecessor, the portable TV. By the late 1950s, in their attempts to sell people a second TV, advertisers for portable sets promised consumers that TV was not just a window on the world, but also a way to extend one's private life into public spaces. Unlike the 1950s console model, which was typically placed in a central area of the family home, ads for portable receivers often showed people on the move, carrying their tote-able TV sets to beaches, picnics, and even, in one humorous 1967 Sony ad, nudist colonies. Rather than homebodies gathered around the family tube, now spectators were presented as adventurous heroes toting portables on motorcycles or else as liberated women wearing mini-skirts accessorized by mini-TVs that looked like purses. In this respect, the advent of portable media inverted the experience of "mobile privatization" that Williams first associated with the rise of telecommunications. Instead, portable television offered people a fantasy of "privatized mobility" (Spigel 2001). Although market research showed that most people did not even move their portable TVs around the house (no less take it outdoors), the fantasy of privatized mobility had a power of its own.

Today, mobile communications (like PDAs, lap tops, iPhones, iPods, etc.) promise new forms of privatized mobility by allowing people to store and carry their private lives around with them on an ever-expanding array of handheld devices. Media are being relocated to the public sphere so that people increasingly experience being at home while in public. Speaking specifically of the mobile phone, Thomlinson (2001) argues that mobiles should be seen as "technologies of the hearth . . . by which people try to maintain something of the security of cultural location" (p. 17). In her interview-based study of mobile phone use in Morocco, Maya Kriem (2009) found that people who felt increasingly alienated in urban environments used the mobile phone to connect back to home and family. Writing about the mobile phone in Denmark, Toke Hunstrup Christensen (2009) similarly finds that family members who are separated in physical space use the device as a mode of "connected presence."

Considering this from the point of view of public culture, Michael Bull (2004) talks about the disturbing consequences of the "private bubbles" that people inhabit when they use cell phones and mobile sound devices (from the Sony Walkman to the iPod). "As we become more and more immersed in our mobile media sound bubbles of communication, so then those spaces we habitually pass through in our daily lives increasingly lose significance and progressively turn into the 'non-spaces' of daily lives which we try, through the self-same technologies, to transcend" (p. 290). While Bull's concept of "private bubbles" captures the strange new forms of social life brought on by mobile media, his declination narrative regarding public space may well be hasty. Alienation had been the core problematic for critical philosophies of modernity and urban space way before the introduction of mobiles (and Bull draws on this literature in the essay). So in that sense, it seems to me, Bull's argument fits into the genre conventions of a well-established discursive trope that

has a powerful rhetorical sway, but which may not really capture the variety of experiences mobiles offer. For example, in their contemporary uses, mobiles have also become instruments for social congregation, helping to organize flash mobs or to capture and disseminate footage of political demonstrations, as in the case of the Arab Spring (Abaza 2013).

So too, even while mobile devices can afford everyday forms of virtual solitude, the spatial experience they help produce is less a complete tuning out of the material environment than a melding of telepresence with physical embodiment as a preferred mode of experiencing place. In other words, rather than total alienation, mobiles allow people to go in and out of virtual and physical worlds, and thereby to control (or at least have a fantasy of control over) the environments of daily life. Just as John Thomlinson (2007) observes how young people often prefer to be in online worlds and actually feel "at home" in them (he points to the case of teenagers sitting side by side in the library but choosing to email back and forth on computers), the spaces of mobile telepresence need not just be about alienation or disconnection. Instead, as Tomlinson argues, we should think about "telepresence . . . as a distinctive existential mode of presencing." "Telepresence," he continues, "should not be regarded and evaluated as a shortfall from the 'definitive' existential mode of embodiment" in physical space (Thomlinson 2007, Chapter 5, Section 6, par. 6).

Although Tomlinson is referring to interpersonal communication via the Internet and mobile phones, mobile TV offers similar forms of place-shifting, virtual connectivity, and "presencing." Like early TV before it, mobile TV services capitalize on liveness and telepresence, offering people virtual attendance at exclusive live events like the World Cup. In this sense, even while mobile TV is (like the iPod) a system of digital storage on which you can download TV programs you might also watch at home, mobile services trade on the currency of publicness. Rather than connecting people back home (as in the case of the cell phone), advertisers promote mobile television as a means of disconnecting viewers from it. Making this point crystal clear, the website for "Mobi-TV" (a mobile TV service company) claims that whereas TV had once been "locked in the living room," today it is an "everywhere" technology that offers people "flexible" modalities of use.[13]

In his study of advertising for mobile TV, Max Dawson (2007) shows how early ads for mobile TV services, which were targeted at affluent men aged 18–34, linked this anti-domestic rhetoric to a gendered conception of home. Showing men romping through urban spaces (or else humorously chained to old living-room TV sets and dragging them, like balls and chains, through the streets), the ads promoted mobile TV as "an escape [from] the social and spatial constraints of the home—as well as the feminine connotations of domestic viewing—for more interactive (and presumably masculine) forms of perambulatory leisure." Nevertheless (as with portable television before it), Dawson observes that people actually use the mobile devices most often in the home (p. 233).

[13] See http://www.mobitv.com. Retrieved August 4, 2013.

Mobile television is just one among many devices and services that have turned television from a place-bound medium into a ubiquitous technology and cultural form that people encounter in a range of times and places. In this respect, television is so central to daily routines inside and outside the home that it often fades into the background forming what Anna McCarthy (2000) calls a mode of "ambient" experience. To be sure, since the 1930s and continuing through the twentieth century, television could be found in public places—from factories to shops to bars to classrooms to fairs to museums to hospitals to drive-in churches (Allen 1983; McCarthy 2000; Olsson 2004; Acland 2009; Spigel 2009; Feuqua 2012; Robles 2012; Bernold and Ellmeier 1997). And television's public uses were historically tied to political agendas for gathering citizens *en masse*, as in the case of Nazi Germany (Uricchio 1989) or President Juan Perón's 1951 plan to distribute TV sets to Peronist locales in Argentina where he hoped people would gather for his daily broadcasts (Varela 2014). But today, as it converges with digital technologies, television is part of a more general "screening" of public space.

Paradoxically, as mobile screens get smaller and more portable, the built environment in large cosmopolitan centers is constructed through gigantic screens that flash everything from news updates to sporting events to stock market reports to advertisements to snippets of Viennese opera or Broadway shows. Global cities often invest in giant screens to signify their place on the map of progress, but at the same time (in a more positive sense) urban planners also hope to provide forms of public access to events (as in the case of the "Big Screen" HD TVs set up in cities across the UK for the 2012 London Olympics). Whatever their intended uses, screens can serve as a means of herding the movements and capturing the attention of large populations. Media conglomerates like Viacom, CBS, NBC, and Microsoft are investing in digital "out of home" ads that track consumers along the routes of their daily itineraries. At the supermarket interactive digital screens on shopping carts can advise you what to buy and track your purchases for market research; "Adwalkers" wander the streets wearing interactive digital displays; and large screen digital billboards target individuals via location mapping technology that senses pedestrians' movements and emits "personalized" messages about what movies to see or products to buy (Boddy 2011). Tracing the history of multiscreen environments, architecture historian Beatriz Colomina (2001) suggests we are "enclosed by images" that compete for our attention and leave us in a state of perceptual distraction (markedly different, she thinks, from the "critical distraction" Walter Benjamin (1936) theorized at the dawn of cinema and consumer culture).

Meanwhile, in popular culture, the ubiquity of screens has given rise to a whole genre of media dystopias, and television has historically assumed a privileged role here. To be sure, TV dystopias can be found well before the present-day proliferation of screens. Think, for example, of Fritz Lang's *Metropolis* (1927) with its fascist industrialist controlling workers via his futuristic TV phone; or Charlie Chaplin's *Modern Times* (1936) with its evil boss monitoring Charlie on the factory's large screen bathroom TV; or George Orwell's *1984* (first published in 1949) with its fears of Big Brother. But in more recent decades these TV nightmares are not just about surveillance and mind control per se. Instead, television is now also a

rhetorical figure in tales about the total ontological confusion between virtual and physical universes. Perhaps the "urtext" of this genre is Philip K. Dick's science fiction masterpiece *Ubik* (1969) that renders a world of spatial simulation and annihilation through a potent mix of TV advertising jingles, insolent smart homes (that make you pay to open the door), and ghostly half-dead bodies speaking "live" on TV from wireless coffins. Playing with similar tropes of ontological confusion, but presenting this in more accessible stories that maintain (for spectators if not for the heroes) the distinction between simulated and real worlds, popular films from *Poltergeist* (1982) to *The Truman Show* (1998) to *Pleasantville* (1999) revolve around characters trapped in TV. Premièring in 2011, the British television series *Black Mirror* (described by Channel Four as "a twisted parable for the twitter age") offered its share TV nightmares. Season One's "15 Million Merits," for example, follows a hero who lives in a media controlled eco-system where people have to peddle energy-producing bicycles in order to earn "merits" to pay for daily goods, all the while forced to watch mindless TV shows, pornography, and ads flickering on screens everywhere around them. The only chance of escape from this toxic combination of dreary peddling and force-fed TV comes with a chance to star on a reality TV show (and this, as might be expected, results in only more spatial entrapment and misery). Meanwhile, actual reality TV shows like *Big Brother* turn these nightmarish visions into a ludic sport. Even video games have now chosen TV as a source of narrative intrigue. *Persona 4* (Atlus 2008) features a Japanese town in which bodies are found dangling from television antennas. As the game progresses we learn that TVs turn into portals that can pull people into a nightmarish world that eventually kills them. The sheer amount of these TV dystopias (as well as the proliferating tales of computer nightmares in cyberfiction) shows that the media are themselves entirely self-reflexive about their own social and spatial ubiquity. On the one hand, these stories promote the more general anti-TV rhetoric that has for many years admonished TV as a "vast wasteland," "boob tube," or "plug-in drug."[14] On the other hand, they can also provide what Constance Penley (1991) calls a "critical dystopia," a form of negative thinking in science fiction doomsday narratives that nevertheless can serve a productive function for contemplating alternatives.

In a similar sense, the new large screen installations in public spaces might be used to provide productive estrangement and defamilarization from mundane routines. Along these lines, just as with the longer history of happenings, video, performance, and/or installation art, media artists and activists use public screens as sites for artistic interventions (McCarthy 2000; Harbord and Dillon 2013). And just as de Certeau's "Walking in the City" (1994) theorizes the possibility that people can navigate their own routes within the planned grids and dominant maps of modernity, it seems likely that people can articulate their own experiences as they

[14]Itself a spatial metaphor, the term "vast wasteland" (which was coined in 1961 by Newton Minow, the Chair of the Federal Communications Commission) uses the title of T.S. Elliot's poem to encapsulate the ruinous (and over-commercialized) state of US TV in that period. For his full speech see Minow (1961).

move through screened and networked cities. Considering the more positive group dynamics that can result, Cubitt et al. (2008) argue that large urban screens should be conceptualized less as individual modes of subjectivity and distraction than as forms of "transient media" that confront physically mobile people and offer new possibilities for spontaneous social situations. While acknowledging that screens are often carefully planned for the control and management of populations, the authors nevertheless follow the trajectory of Guy DeBord's concept of the "situation" to imagine an "ecology" and "ethics" of screens that might promote dialogues among crowds (and, I presume, less alienating ways of occupying public places).

Locating TV Studies

Whether in popular media or media scholarship, the ubiquity of television in everyday life raises fundamental questions about space and place as we attempt to figure out where we are and how to proceed. If corporations have historically offered domestic utopias (as in RCA's TV future with which I began), television has provoked a much more complex spatial imaginary, and people engage TV through a much more diverse set of spatial practices. Rather than the utopian spaces of corporate futurism or dystopian nightmares of spatial entrapment and annihilation, at its best the critical inquiry into television's spatial geographies has opened up an important agenda for understanding how people live with and through media in everyday life. Whether it is the research on domesticity, privacy, and public space on which I have primarily focused here, or the equally important scholarship on television's relation to nationalism and global flows of culture, the scholarship on television's material histories and geographies demonstrates that TV is never one thing going in one direction (whether that be euphoria or doom). Like all technologies, television affords possibilities that are differently articulated at different times in different locations.

In that sense, the study of television should not just be the study of troubling encounters with non-places and nowheres. Instead, both as a material object and as a transmission medium, television helps to produce the "somewheres" in which daily life takes place. Finding a way to theorize "somewheres" in a mediatized world is, it seems to me, one of the main contributions of television studies. As an audio-visual device, television merges material spaces with virtual "presence," a spatial phenomenon that has, with digital media, become an increasingly dominant way in which space and place are constructed and experienced. Being here and there, home and elsewhere, near and far, is the quintessential TV state of mind.

To understand these hybrid mergers requires something more robust than cultural pessimism about the loss of authentic anthropological places and related grand theories of social decline. Even if television is often rightly taken to task for forms of social injustice, its relation to social life is much more varied than the "negative influence," "spatial annihilation," or "escape" paradigms suggest. Rather than asking just what TV does to some idealized form of a priori "real" space (in the technological determinist sense), the point is to consider how television helps

people assemble social worlds. In evoking Bruno Latour's *Reassembling the Social* (2005) and Actor Network Theory, I am suggesting that we think of television as part of a feedback loop of activities and actions among humans and artifacts that help to produce social environments. Media spaces are not "unreal" in the sense of a technological or aesthetic illusion; yet they do allow people to dwell in places accessed and designed through technical means. Rather than replacing anthropological space (as with Augé's theory of non-place), media spaces are both human and non-human, places where we form relationships not just with people but also with things (interfaces, sensors, and voices like Siri's). Thinking about the possibilities that media spaces offer, as well as the human contact they sometimes shut down, should be central to the goals of media ecology. TV scholarship has been crucial to opening up these more thoughtful debates about the increasingly mediatized worlds in which we live.

That said, among television scholars—and media scholars more broadly—there is often disagreement over appropriate methods, subjects, and perspectives. In that sense, while I have presented a synthetic overview, it's important to remember that the scholarship on television comes from numerous domains of social scientific and humanistic research, and even within those broad paradigms there is often conflict about how to approach television (or even if this so called "lowbrow" medium is worth studying in the first place). In my view, there has been an unfortunate implicit assumption among media theorists that small-scale studies—for example, narrative analysis of a TV program, the historical case study, or the empirical analysis of a local practice–are somehow less important than large-scale philosophies of media ontology, the macro-politics of globalization, or blanket statements of cultural judgment. In other words, and perhaps because of its ubiquity in daily life, people have often wanted "Big Bang" theories of television's effects –and in a hurry (or at least in time to sell data to a government think tanks or corporations). Resisting the urge for grand theories does not, however, reduce the use value of our findings. As Morley (2000) argues, we should not mistake scale (the macro-politics of the global vs. the micro-politics of the local) for significance.[15] The "somewhere" of media studies helps to illuminate the contradictions, ambivalences, differences, and often the utter messiness and unpredictability of television in everyday life. Studies of TV and related media will, I hope, follow this road to somewhere, even if the complexity involved means that this will take some time.

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[15] In making this observation Morley draws upon Massey (1997).

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