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SCREENS AND THE DIGITAL MEDIASCAPE
(IN PANDEMIC TIMES)

The Projection/Protection complex: Screens, Enclosures, Bubbles



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Screen-based media create a recurring pattern for the settings in which they operate. As we can see in an early instantiation like the Phantasmagoria, the screen is matched by a physical enclosure in which the audience gathers. As the enclosure severs the audience from the external reality, the screen provides an opening towards the reality spectators left outside, as well as towards otherwise inaccessible worlds. While apparently decoupling media and space, recent screen-based media like laptops, tablets, and smartphones create a sort of individual bubble that includes the peri-personal space of their users. Users find a shelter in this bubble even when they are in public. The lecture will trace a potential lineage from the physical enclosure of the early screen based dispositives to the bubble elicited by electronic media, and will argue that both of these optical-spatial arrangements are part of what we can call the projection/protection complex, i.e. the convergence of sensorial deprivation and safe access to new worlds. By uncovering the connections with other “complexes” like the “exhibitionary complex” analyzed by Bennett, this archeology will ultimately bear witness of the variety and trends of media environments.

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