

# Dwelling Means Cultivating Atmospheres

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**Abstract:** The paper addresses the issue of dwelling as a powerful way of cultivating atmospheric feelings without the risk of suffering their disturbing aggressiveness, and deals with inclusiveness or immersivity that true dwelling arouses. To avoid the widespread trend to consider every space a dwelling place, it proposes that only a really “lived” place, in so far it radiates a specific and particularly intense-authoritative atmosphere (in kinetic, synesthetic, felt-bodily sense) affecting the perceivers and finding in their body its precise sounding board, makes dwelling in the proper sense possible. Just as there are different types of atmosphere (prototypical, derivative, spurious), there are therefore different types of dwelling and inclusiveness. However, contrary to the today’s projectivist-constructionist explanation and globalized orientation, for a “pathic aesthetics” only a lifeworldly qualitative-emotional experience based on an atmosphere of intimacy-familiarity really turns a house into a home. | *Keywords: Dwelling, Atmospheres, Felt body, Inclusiveness, Intimacy*

## 1. A House is not a Home

A pathic-atmospherological aesthetics (Griffero, 2014a; 2017a; 2020a; 2021)<sup>1</sup> should be critical both of nostalgia and utopianism, focusing instead on presentness and in particular on dwelling presence. If it is true that one lives in the city, one really dwells, in an emotional and felt-bodily way, especially at home. Unfortunately, dwelling, including the cyclical mobility it implies (leaving and coming back home every day) has been forgotten and even stigmatised in recent decades by the postmodern allergy to every ‘border’. Instead, I think it calls for a renewed philosophical-aesthetical attention, not so much because we “must ever learn to dwell” (Heidegger, 1971, p. 159),<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Given the obvious impossibility of outlining my approach as a whole, it will suffice to point out that by ‘atmospheres’ I mean feelings poured out into lived spaces and thereby resonating into perceivers’ felt-bodily processes.

<sup>2</sup> That is, to take care of the Fourfold (earth, sky, gods, mortals).

or because we find our true essence only in dwelling (Bollnow, 2020), but simply because dwelling preserves us atmospherically from a foreign and (also affectively) hostile space.<sup>3</sup>

There is much phenomenological evidence of the affective centrality of dwelling. Being a homeless person, in fact, means not only having no roof over one's head, but feeling at home everywhere without ever needing that lived (non-Euclidean-anisotropic) and safe space (Griffero, 2014b) that makes an essential contribution to our identity in terms of intimacy and immunisation.<sup>4</sup> Significantly, saying "come over to mine" means saying "come to my house", that is, to "an organic unity, whose essence is some definite power" (van der Leeuw et al., 1955, p. 395) providing an atmospheric well-being and consisting in "inscribing the things and places of one's environment, neutral in their meaning, into a profile of personal meaning" (Hasse, 2008, p. 109).

Today's globalisation makes this identitarian dwelling look like the mnestic-nostalgic trace of past (only alleged) idyllic conditions.<sup>5</sup> All the more so if, frightened by the extreme media porosity of our modern homes (Anders, 1956, p. 17), one is convinced that only an older way of dwelling could provide a "psychic landscape". In the same line of thought, one might nostalgically complain that "in Paris there are no houses, and the inhabitants of the big city live in superimposed boxes",<sup>6</sup> or that it is impossible "to live" in a hotel or nomadically (so far we can agree), because true dwelling requires at least two people and a female presence (of this I am not so sure), so that the apartment of a bachelor or widower cannot ever become an intimate interior (Minkowski, 1954, p. 180 ff.; Bollnow, 2020, p. 179).

While the nostalgic certainly overestimates and eternalises the rather recent intimacy of dwelling privileged by bourgeois society, the globalised modernist seems almost morally obsessed by ergonomic minimalism and efficiency imperatives. However, anyone wishing to carefully avoid these two extremes has to wonder whether dwelling is still really a biotope and a psychotope. There are a few elements to suggest otherwise: a) in the early 20th century, home comfort turned from an existential principle into a conservative and psychically regressive alibi,<sup>7</sup> b) throughout the 20th century interior cosiness<sup>8</sup> turned into a pseudo-homeliness, based on the "horror of comfort" and

<sup>3</sup> As long as atmospherically dense things and the non-phobic lived space do not rigidly encapsulate us in a cement envelope, making us completely blind to the outside world.

<sup>4</sup> Especially in view of the increase in free wake time in our affluent societies (Sloterdijk, 2016).

<sup>5</sup> When, maybe, a person was as closely intertwined with their lived space as an animal with its territory.

<sup>6</sup> For Bachelard (1994, p. 26) they would thus be deprived of cellars (and therefore roots), heroic verticality (inhibited by the elevator) and cosmicity (due to detachment from nature), forced to live in an anti-dreamlike horizontality.

<sup>7</sup> Benjamin (2002, I, pp. 220, 19) talks about the Victorian individual as a "compass case" and the living room as a fictional "box in the theatre of the world".

<sup>8</sup> Whose perhaps incomparable version is the self-satisfied (nordic) hygge-ideal: see for example Bille (2021).

a “secretly vexatious” intimacy (Mitscherlich, 1965, pp. 11, 125), c) a previously safe interior could become an uncanny place holding secrets or hiding places<sup>9</sup> (e.g. haunted houses in literature and alienated memories),<sup>10</sup> d) postmodern architecture has gone so far as designing a non-accommodating way of life.

Indeed, no one wants to underestimate these trends. They are, however, more theoretical-literary exceptions than actual circumstances of everyday life. The metaphysical extraterritoriality, implicit in the super-terrestrial and ubiquitous orientation of the major monotheisms<sup>11</sup> and then secularised in the Enlightenment as well as in its technoscientific consequences, has in fact never really penetrated into the lifeworld.<sup>12</sup> On the contrary, the need for a privatised-subjective existence became so powerful as to demand a (far from obvious) architectural design starting from the interior and its digital devices, making the *flâneur*, the human type of the belle époque for whom the streets were ultimately equivalent to the four walls of a house, anachronistic. And the increasing externalisation of interiors, which were “transformed into an object of mass consumption” (Sparke, 2008, p. 55) able to guarantee even in public places an immersiveness similar to that hitherto only provided by private ones,<sup>13</sup> is a clear indication of the unchanged emotional centrality of dwelling – an intimacy that provides a “material score for sentimental events” Meisenheimer (2008, p. 43),<sup>14</sup> whose memories seem to belong not to us but to the places themselves and to survive even when we are gone.

Dwelling as an atmosphere (or *ambiance*) is given by “a constellation of things and of relational arrangements” but above all by an “overall context of meaning” (Hasse, 2009, p. 180) also made of environmental *Stimmungen*. As a domosphere it should be considered as an aesthesiological *Uphänomen* that symbolically links space-time and the affective sphere. According to Hermann Schmitz, for example – the true *spiritus rector* of my pathic-atmospherological aesthetics – dwelling is nothing but a form of culture-cultivation of feelings within a defined space<sup>15</sup> (be it a home, a church,

<sup>9</sup> An itinerary that reflected the “fundamental insecurity [of] a newly established class, not quite at home in its own home” (Vidler, 1992, pp. 3–4).

<sup>10</sup> “The discrepancy between the longevity of homes and the relative transience of their occupants” (Miller, 2001, p. 107) can arouse anxiety about materially inheriting a house, creating an uneasy sense of cohabiting with the past (the agency of left-behind and already “lived” materials) that requires new occupants to employ negotiation strategies and often produces situations that cannot be completely controlled. See Lipman (2014).

<sup>11</sup> For (especially) early monotheism the deity was never settled (as it was e.g. for the Greeks), so the faithful felt at home, paradoxically, only when they were elsewhere, for example in pilgrimage.

<sup>12</sup> The suggestion of nomadism seems today even more weakened by formerly dormant anxieties of identity and locality, which it would be absurd to disregard (if only to adequately deal with them).

<sup>13</sup> The so-called “homes away from home” (luxury shops and lobbies of big hotels, first-class carriages and clubs, today pedestrianised areas and shopping malls, etc.) aimed at providing an idealised replica of domestic spaces.

<sup>14</sup> This score is multi-layered: “moving, ordering, renovating, and changing furniture are activities that act and feedback intensely on our emotional state” (Funke, 2006, p. 20 f.).

<sup>15</sup> “The spatiality of feelings becomes so effective here that, again and again, people need these places of dwelling – rather than a simple safe accommodation – in order to capture their feelings, administer them and shape them on these places”. In short, “dwelling means having atmospheres at one’s disposal” (Schmitz, 1990, pp. 318, 320).

a garden, or a Japanese tea house), aimed at preventing the risk that these possibly aggressive-demonic feelings, as such floating freely,<sup>16</sup> may undermine our stability and self-control. The resulting “imaginary cartography of affective vital significations” (Hasse, 2008, pp. 109–110) generates in fact a temporary balance between emotionally letting oneself go and a rationalistic attitude.<sup>17</sup>

It is certainly not enough to have a “roof over our heads” to say that we are really dwelling. This condition implies a lived place that allows us to capture, cultivate and administer external atmospheres otherwise out of our control, i.e. to manage and filter the pathic “demonic” in a protected space and thus to give life to an intense and nuanced affective climate able to mitigate the external uncanny.<sup>18</sup> The resulting friendly and cosy familiarity relies on an *ad-hoc* felt-bodily communication between experiencer and environment whose atmospheric affordance must be considered “there”, in the environment itself,<sup>19</sup> and not only as the result of a subjective projection. This is proven by the fact that moving to a new house – and “if you don't dwell, you can't move either” (Hasse, 2020, p. 53)<sup>20</sup> – we typically “feel” the affective-identity of a piece of furniture, of colours, smells, sounds, etc., of some movement and affective synchronisations, in short, one senses some indispensable (or even shunned)<sup>21</sup> “vitalqualities” (Dürckheim, 2005, p. 39) that were previously indifferent to us or perhaps completely unnoticed. After all, it is unlikely that these vitalqualities can be reproduced elsewhere, that atmospheres can be packaged and transported as if they were furniture, or that their reproduction, with its performative and proxemic implications, may still make sense in a completely different place.

I would now like to apply my general ideal-typical distinction between prototypical, derivative and spurious atmospheres<sup>22</sup> to dwelling. a) When we have structural affordances,<sup>23</sup> we can speak of prototypical atmospheres,

<sup>16</sup> As many historical sources show, the sacred enclosure was precisely aimed at preventing local spatial deities from abandoning their residence and wandering outside their original dominion.

<sup>17</sup> However, if dwelling domesticates feelings, it is certainly not an invention of modern bourgeois intimism, but rather the essential tool through which to develop our fine sensoriality and to experience an atmospheric pathicity that cannot constantly live with experimentation.

<sup>18</sup> Imagine the lively creaking of wood in the fireplace in a country house or the maternal noise of dishes being handled for a child struggling to fall asleep, the tactile softness of a sofa or the half-shade generated by the interaction between the light and the shadows cast by the furniture, etc.

<sup>19</sup> For Bachelard (1994, p. 71), a feeling of intimacy is suggested by each piece of furniture.

<sup>20</sup> The very act of moving seems to be a precise indicator of the existential quality of our dwelling.

<sup>21</sup> Hasse (2020, p. 74) reminds us that dwelling means approaching pericorporeal things but also stepping back from them.

<sup>22</sup> A distinction (see Griffero, 2014a, p. 144) that was gradually expanded and clarified in all later works.

<sup>23</sup> Rooms linked to each other – what Hall (1966, p. 104) calls a “Grand Central Station atmosphere” – rooms placed around a corridor or atrium (whence a more stable domestic atmosphere), and finally rooms that have become large open spaces, with their (illusory) atmosphere of vastness and democratic transparency, trigger three different prototypical atmospheres.

because they are so objective that they completely involve us or push us (in vain) to resist them. b) When dealing with less impactful aesthetic choices, which can generate both residential satisfaction or undesirable atmospheres depending on the changing relationship between place and its users,<sup>24</sup> one should speak of derivative atmospheres. c) Finally, when the affective affordance and the atmospheric halo mainly depend on subjective projection,<sup>25</sup> one can even speak of spurious atmospheres. Needless to say that, in everyday experience, these three ideal-types are often intertwined or experienced in succession.<sup>26</sup>

The important thing to remember is that an atmospherically “right” dwelling comes with cultivating – by virtue of its motor-suggestions, synaesthetic characters and (relatively variable) affordances<sup>27</sup> – inner feelings of comfort but not to the detriment of socio-expressive needs addressed to the outside world. Dwelling needs not replicate the aesthetic utopia of the *Gesamtkunstwerk* or, as required by a certain poetic-oneiric-existentialist topophilia, act as a sophisticated and timeless miniature of the cosmos (nest, shell, cottage, crypt, etc.).<sup>28</sup> Even the recent “good (especially orosensory) atmospherisation”, in which psychotherapy saw (Tellenbach, 1968) the guarantee of a healthy psychic life, according to the principle that “being starts with well-being” (Bachelard, 1994, p. 104), does not at all imply a form of desperate segregation.

In turn, the already mentioned circularity of dwelling<sup>29</sup> does not necessarily lead to a reflective pure *cogito* but first of all to felt-bodily well-being. It needs borders,<sup>30</sup> but especially a place so different from all others that all directions lead to it, a kind of home in the home (“centre of the centre”) that acts as an authentic quasi-altar<sup>31</sup> where one can truly be oneself,<sup>32</sup> thus being able to rely on a protective and safe condition (*Geborgenheit*).<sup>33</sup>

<sup>24</sup> Excessively elegant furniture may end up inhibiting conversation, too much domestic hygiene can turn into authentic fetishism, and a hall may be a disproportionate representative, as a “stately room with no castle behind it” (Mitscherlich, 1965, p. 138).

<sup>25</sup> That is, on autobiographical data, felt-body condition, dependence on retention and protention effects, etc.

<sup>26</sup> Thus providing a wide range of more nuanced, multi-layered and “nested” lifeworldly atmospheres.

<sup>27</sup> For an American and a German, for example, “whether the door is open or shut, it is not going to mean the same thing” (Hall, 1966, p. 137).

<sup>28</sup> For Bachelard, exemplarily, “a nest-house is never young”, and “to curl up belongs to the phenomenology of the verb to inhabit, and only those who have learned to do so can inhabit with intensity” (Bachelard, 1994, p. 99, xxxviii).

<sup>29</sup> Consisting in leaving home, putting on the social mask, but then coming back home, stripping it away and withdrawing to safe spaces and “transitional” objects.

<sup>30</sup> Hence the atmosphere of familiarity that is necessary for the human being to escape both nomadic uprooting or anonymous concrete-reinforced ant-hills. It requires setting boundaries, only to cross them cyclically.

<sup>31</sup> Identified, depending on the ages and cultures, in the fireplace or the kitchen, in the dining table or living room, in the bed (in which, not coincidentally, our days and even our lives begin and end) or in the pudically inaccessible so-called night-zone.

<sup>32</sup> As clearly shown by the almost sacrilegious thrill we feel when we walk into somebody else’s house unexpectedly.

<sup>33</sup> Dwelling clearly separates the inner-private “place” from the external-public “space”, in which, after all, one can relatively feel at home only if one has previously inhabited a “place tonalised by familiarity” (Hasse 2009, p. 25).

A pathic-phenomenological aesthetics therefore has the task of explaining what space (what set of affordances) triggers a special “residential” atmosphere, to what extent it may depend on intentional-rational planning, what dimensions of the lived space it is based on,<sup>34</sup> where and why it condenses its atmosphere (also into things) and with what authority.<sup>35</sup> But due to space limitations, here I will only deal with dwelling as an inclusive-immersive space.

## 2. Inclusiveness and Immersion

We feel that a certain room is oppressive or relaxing in a spatial but not local and physical-geometric (isotropic and allocentric) sense. This involves the “absolute” (lived, pre-dimensional, anisotropic) space which perceivers “pathically” correspond to thanks a felt-bodily resonance to cross-modal “ecological” suggestions or *qualia* (affordances) (Griffero, 2020b). Only in this kind of space, made up of absolute and non-relative localisations, somehow sprung from the felt body (*Leib*) as a true orientative zero-point (Husserl),<sup>36</sup> does it make sense to talk about inclusiveness. Only if we avoid any plane geometry and neuroscientific reductionism<sup>37</sup> and take the (often unaware) felt-bodily contact with atmospheres seriously (without stopping at sight-based frontality) (Mallgrave, 2013, p. 109),<sup>38</sup> can we come close to understanding the really qualitative topology needed here.

This atmospheric qualitative approach to the spatial environment, whether its resonance effects are located in proprioceptive sensations or in the (even less easy to locate) “isles” of the felt (and not organic) body (*Leib*),<sup>39</sup> is obviously hard to analyse, the lived space<sup>40</sup> being like “the darkness needed in the theatre to show up the performance” (Merleau-Ponty, 2002, p. 115). Only in a lived space one can actually say that a “lived distance” “measures the ‘scope’ of my life at every moment” (Merleau-Ponty, 2002, p. 333);<sup>41</sup> or – and this is

<sup>34</sup> For example on the ever-changing felt-bodily and affective integration between directional-vast space and relative-local space, as posited by Schmitz (1977, p. 237).

<sup>35</sup> Tents, windows, furnishing, polymodal warmth, chromatic choices, objects’ patina, order/disorder relationship, etc.

<sup>36</sup> This means recognising a “spectrum of spatiality [that] is much more extensive than what is suggested by the classical conceptualization in the philosophical and scientific field” (Schmitz, 1967, p. xvi).

<sup>37</sup> “To have a mind [...] requires more than a brain” (Noe, 2009, p. 10). See also Pérez-Gómez (2016, p. 22).

<sup>38</sup> The atmospherogenic charge should be aimed not so much at facades and Potemkin villages – in short, a banal orchestration of effects (cf. Leatherbarrow, 2015) – but, on the contrary, at enabling inclusion or exclusion thanks to different means such as things and colours, shapes and sounds.

<sup>39</sup> According to Schmitz’s approach (2011, pp. 8–12). See Griffero (2017a, pp. 55–77; 2017b; 2017c).

<sup>40</sup> For a brief history of the notion see Griffero (2014a, pp. 36–47; 2014b) and Hasse (2005, pp. 150–198).

<sup>41</sup> As such, the aqualitative-abstract local space is hardly inclusive in the proper sense. Only from a lived-atmospherical point of view can one say that there is not enough space, that we want our own space, that we need it, that there is too much of it so that we seek shelter in narrowness, that we can or cannot have it, that we can make it (thus creating a void that was not there before), and so forth.

what we are interested in here – that inclusiveness as a non- or pre-dimensional voluminousness is particularly well suited to confirm that “by feeling in a certain way, we feel in what space we find ourselves” (Böhme, 2006, p. 89).

Inclusiveness relies on the constant interweaving of three forms of spatiality. It presupposes the local space with its quasi-thingly *qualia*,<sup>42</sup> the “ecstatic” qualities atmospherically irradiated by the individual spatial points that dynamically tonalise our surroundings;<sup>43</sup> but also the directional space, whose kinesthetic and synaesthetic aspects make, for example, a certain dwelling more immersive than another, in the sense that it can welcome or reject us<sup>44</sup> through its directional-vectorial affordances (centrifugal, centripetal, omnilateral, undecided, etc.). Finally it also presupposes the original-surfaceless space of the vastness (corresponding to very general feelings like satisfaction, despair, etc.) expressed by the “here/now” of what Schmitz would call “primitive presence/present”. Given the transition from the semiotic-communicative (sender-message-receiver) paradigm to a performative and first-personal one (Jäkel, 2013, p. 32; Pérez-Gómez, 2016, p. 146), one should then ask what architectural and living “gestures” suggest inclusiveness more precisely – things and colours, shapes and sounds, more generally “orientations, kinetic suggestions, marks” (Böhme, 2006, p. 113)<sup>45</sup> understood as “frozen” gestures of perceivers’ anticipated kinetic reactions and movements.<sup>46</sup>

An inclusive atmosphere provides a spontaneous and hermeneutically circular interlacement between the repertoire of architectural gestures and users’ felt-bodily and kinesthetic experiences. The former either suggest (real or virtual) motor figures to users, or invite them to linger in that space (where they may be comfortable even without speaking) (Soentgen, 1998, p. 81), generally “tonalising” their whole subsequent experiential flow.<sup>47</sup> Inclusiveness here is the same as immersivity, provided that every densely atmospheric space, implying the full felt-bodily involvement of the percipient, is an immersive space.

Just relax on your armchair,<sup>48</sup> rather than lying down (full passivity) or

<sup>42</sup> For an introduction to the notion of “quasi-thing” I limit myself here to referring to Griffero (2017a).

<sup>43</sup> On “ecstasies” (as opposed to “properties”) cf. Böhme (2017, pp. 37–54).

<sup>44</sup> Cf. Pallasmaa (2005, p. 50).

<sup>45</sup> See also Zumthor (2006, pp. 33, 35).

<sup>46</sup> For example: a spatial felt-bodily resonance can invite percipients to distance themselves (bureaucratic-excluding coldness) or to immerse themselves, to walk through and inhabit a space telling them that they are safe and not alone!

<sup>47</sup> Relativism must be rejected here. If an angular building, for example (think, prototypically, of New York’s Flatiron skyscraper) powerfully excludes those who are outside (while including those inside) and can be certainly also perceived-felt a bit differently in a different (climatic, perspective, corporeal) context, it never suggests inclusiveness to outside observers, as it inevitably (and literally) “puts us in the corner” (Hasse, 2012, pp. 101–120).

<sup>48</sup> With its backrest and armrests, it comfortably wraps around our body, almost acting as an archetypal enclosure (and therefore as a dwelling), and with its position not in front of but to the side of other seats it avoids the promiscuity of glances, thus ensuring a “relaxed

standing (full attentional operation),<sup>49</sup> and close your eyes. Through a sort of “inside look” you will access an authentic “new world”, characterised by a vastness or an extradimensional vital spaciousness marked by orientations closely linked to the feelings that will visit you, to the symphony of “memories, needs, temptations, solicitations, delicate atmospheres, felt-bodily impulses”.<sup>50</sup>

An important role is also played by some specific kinetic (familiar) possibilities,<sup>51</sup> founded not on metric geometry but on “measuring distances in terms of ‘our hands and legs’” (Giordano, 1997, p. 18) and felt-bodily intentionality. That’s why the steps taken at home are so qualitatively specific that they cannot at all be added to those taken outside; that’s why only an inclusive dwelling allows for genuinely reversible (but not dysfunctional) directions;<sup>52</sup> and that’s why one can “lose oneself” at home without being either socially sanctioned or condemned to the marginal and aestheticising figure of the *flâneur*.

### 3. *Gemütlichkeit*?

In Germany, since the Biedermeier period, the culture-cultivation of atmospheric feelings in interior spaces – the “art of staying at home” fulfilling a need for both human contact and privacy – has acquired the name of *Gemütlichkeit*. This term, however, was increasingly stigmatised as a symptom of petit-bourgeois pharisaism, a typically German comforting surrogate that would confuse home fetishism with the lived experience of dwelling (Mitscherlich, 1965, p. 129 ff. and especially Schmidt-Lauber, 2003). But is it really like that? Does *Gemütlichkeit* really evoke only the stale set of family interests, through dressing gowns and slippers, good living rooms and geometric decorations,<sup>53</sup> ambient music and “communicative pieces of furniture” like the sofa (Warnke, 1979, p. 677)? Is it only about the live embalming and trivial choices that are inevitably colonised by marketing, thus suggesting that “the house is past” and that “dwelling, in the proper sense, is now impossible” (Adorno, 2005, p. 38)?

Let’s explore this a little further. The first thing to say is that the inclusive atmosphere of *Gemütlichkeit* is so fragile as to be threatened by any

social interaction which makes no demands, which is open-ended but above all open to play” (Baudrillard, 2002, p. 45).

<sup>49</sup> See Schmitz (1977, p. 207 ff.).

<sup>50</sup> Ibidem; cf. also Schmitz (2007, pp. 75–76).

<sup>51</sup> Just to give other examples: when a certain environment contains a table and an armchair (as opposed to a table alone) it leads me to stop and sit. If there is only one chair, placed on the longer side of a table, I would even be led to sit down to work and read, whereas many chairs in front of a single table suggest that I should sit only if I intend to attend the public event to be presumably held there. In other cases a ladder directs me upwards, of course, but it is “how” it does so that constitutes the inclusive (or not) atmospheric gesture that interests us here.

<sup>52</sup> In fact, only at home does one move without particular justifications from one room to another, using the same couch to sit or to lie down, perceptively moving in non-predetermined directions without excessively demanding (functional, psychological but also bodily) torsions.

<sup>53</sup> Whose relaxing effects are maybe due to the fact that “the beholder is involuntarily affected by the slow, calm mode of production” (Sparke, 2008, p. 99).

unexpected event, while being really perceptible only when it feels threatened. The comfortable intimacy it triggers pathically individualises-ritualises things, places and gestures that are otherwise relatively indifferent to us: in particular it encourages small talk, discourses devoid of controversial edges and cuddles (with people and/or pets); it is favoured by moderate heat and soft light, avoiding “cruel” close-ups,<sup>54</sup> and by a smellscape and soundscape that do not prevent concentration (be it for reading, prayer or dialogue), etc.

But any codification of this atmospheric inclusiveness easily risks sounding ridiculous or marked by affectation.<sup>55</sup> Albeit stigmatised by any stylistic-political avant-gardism as regressive, late-Romantic, provincial, petit-bourgeois and *ipso facto* reality-denying, the atmosphere of inclusiveness and *Gemütlichkeit* instead proves to be completely unavoidable, not least because it makes a risk-free but rich emotional life possible. Cultivating atmospheric feelings actually means giving life to an embodied affective scaffolding that, alone, allows our feelings to emerge or at least to become more precise, irrespective of what the generating centres of the affordance of intimacy might be,<sup>56</sup> and given a certain condition of (sociopolitical and corporeal) “normality”.<sup>57</sup>

In my terms, you can therefore find, within an increasingly subjective range, a prototypical inclusiveness, a derivative one and finally a spurious-idiosyncratic one.<sup>58</sup> “Normally” there are phenomenally attestable invariants that, despite coexisting with more critical-ambivalent areas (thresholds, roofs, windows, walls, etc.) that generate a peculiar “anguish of the border” (Schmitz, 1977, pp. 229–232, 241), prevent us from perceiving inclusiveness everywhere.

#### 4. Conclusion

There are obviously many open issues that can only be touched on here.

I’ll give just a few examples. Is the most intimate-inclusive dwelling the place of maximum familiarity and maximum comfort (as in the case of harsh climatic conditions),<sup>59</sup> or of an epiphanic otherness? Can dwelling intentionally trigger an atmosphere of inclusiveness or is it simply its

<sup>54</sup> For the atmospheric potential of dimmed light cf. Griffero (2017a, pp. 103–112).

<sup>55</sup> Both because “certain” things may not generate the necessary wellness, but, above all, because atmospheric inclusiveness can neither be entirely observed in the third person nor survive a reflexive analysis of its components. Also, it cannot be intentionally produced, since its spontaneous and involuntary character is clearly an indispensable component of the effect it arouses.

<sup>56</sup> But some of its objective catalysts can never be missing, like (mild) temperature, acoustic insulation, chiaroscuro lighting and architectural solutions (in the broader sense).

<sup>57</sup> In fact, in the case of obvious and contingent divergence, for example, between excessive housing comfort and a serious external socio-political situation, or in the case of tension due to a guest’s awkward remark, even the best-planned atmosphere could fail, or at least be felt as inappropriate.

<sup>58</sup> Some may even feel included and protected by crowded city streets! Only in this projective-spurious case does the thesis apply that there is not a space in the world which cannot be intimate-inclusive for somebody.

<sup>59</sup> Cf. Baudelaire (1996, p. 114), for whom winter adds to the poetry of a house. It needs “as much snow, hail, and frost as the sky could possibly deliver. [Those who live there] must have a Canadian winter or a Russian one”.

condition of possibility, given that its maniacal and mechanical planning probably produces just the opposite effect? Does this pathic-atmospherological approach to dwelling sacrifice any political implication, or is it thoroughly “political” by referring to the affective segmentation of the lifeworld and to how to (even normatively) deal with atmospheres’ authority (Griffero, 2014c)? And so forth.

The important thing, however, is to not throw the baby out with the bathwater: not to identify the unavoidable atmosphere of dwelling intimacy with alienated-fetishistic pseudo-familiarity for the sake of a hypothetical (utopian?) dwelling. Nomadism, that sort of global hotel that makes us feel at home nowhere and anaesthetises our dwelling, is certainly not a solution: as Balzac put it, the “privilege of being everywhere at home is the prerogative of kings, courtesans, and thieves.”

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