

Turning Homeward: Art, Technology, and Dwelling in Later Heidegger¹

Andreja Novakovic
Columbia University

Although homelessness is one of Heidegger's preoccupations throughout his career, it assumes a specifically technological character in his later writings. According to Heidegger, our unique homelessness is an aftermath of technological disclosure and takes the form of a forced familiarity that disables us from inhabiting our world attentively. In this paper I argue that Heidegger sees the work of art as a disturbance to our familiarity, permitting a free relationship to technology, which Heidegger calls dwelling. In drawing the connections between technology, art, and dwelling, I show that they constitute a dialectic structure in which dwelling is a kind of freedom. My central claim is that, despite its dangers, technology itself prepares us for dwelling in a new way, and that for this reason Heidegger's vision of dwelling should not be reduced to a reactionary call for a retreat from the technological world.

Key words: Heidegger, technology, art, dwelling, freedom

I.

Martin Heidegger concludes his essay "Building Dwelling Thinking" with the following remark: "[As] soon as man gives thought to his homelessness, it is a misery no longer. Rightly considered and kept well in mind, it is the sole summons that calls mortals into their

¹ This article is a revision of a paper first presented at the Humanities and Technology Association Conference, held at the Borough of Manhattan Community College of the City University of New York, October 5th - 8th, 2006.

Subject or Fourfold? On the Politics of Turning Homeward¹

Andreas Michel
Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology

The later Heidegger replaces the concept of the subject with the notion of the fourfold, a horizon of meaning framed by earth and sky, mortals and divinities. In this horizon, based on Heidegger's re-interpretation of spatiality, Being is said to be truly at home, allowing mankind to dwell in less alienated fashion than during the era of the Subject (modernity). By contrast, this article argues that espousing the fourfold represents a proto-religious turn that modernity should not take. The concept of the subject therefore needs to be maintained, albeit one that can demonstrate a greater response-ability to the dimensions of contemporary life.

Key words: Heidegger, space, modernity, subject, fourfold, response, homelessness, autochthony

Heidegger's essay "Building Dwelling Thinking" is fascinating for a number of reasons (1971). The one that attracted me is his unorthodox approach to spatiality, and the important role this notion of space plays with regard to a non-exploitative attitude towards the world. As we will see, Heidegger's alternative delineation of space is decisive for mankind's genuine dwelling—a way of being that is

¹ This paper is a revised version of my presentation at the 30th annual Humanities and Technology Association meeting in Manhattan in October 2006.

Making the City Inhabitable: London's Sewer System¹

George Sochan
Bowie State University

In the middle of the nineteenth century London was the world's most populous city and the capital of the great British Empire. It also was a metropolis beset by critical problems, wherein millions of residents wallowed in the city's own sewage and tens of thousands died of cholera. Finally, the nauseating experience of the Great Stink incited certain persons to cleanse the city of its deadly filth. This article tells the story of how London became mired in its own excrement and how Sir Joseph Bazalgette and Dr. John Snow saved the city from choking on it.

Key words: Great Stink, cholera, Bazalgette, Snow

Introduction

In June 1858 London was a very prominent city with an illustrious history and in many ways the world's center. As the capital of Britain, it was also the center of the world's largest empire that spread across five continents. It was in 1858 that the Indian mutineers surrendered to British forces, with much of the rebellion suppressed by June, so that Britain was able to establish its Raj in India (James, 1997, pp. 268-274). Moreover, as the capital of Britain, London was part of the country's phenomenal industrial power and, as recently as 1851, had

¹ I made a conference presentation of this topic, entitled "Making the City Inhabitable: the London under London," at the Humanities and Technology Association Conference in New York City on 8 October 2006.

Ethics Online: A Plea for Open Source¹

Don Berkich
Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi

Our ability to shape online learning communities in the humanities is, I argue, needlessly constrained by commercial course management systems. I explain how using alternative Open Source Software to create an online environment for actively learning the principles of moral deliberation afforded novel opportunities to unobtrusively manipulate the environment and thereby improve community members' interactions. Given the effectiveness of these changes, I conclude that the Humanities must be careful to observe an important distinction between the relatively inferior autonomy gained from *using* technology and the vastly greater autonomy of *controlling* technology, a distinction which can be acknowledged by embracing Open Source Software.

Key words: Ethics, moral deliberation, asynchronous discussion, Open Source Software, course management system, online learning community.

Introduction

Despite impressive improvements in functionality, the proprietary nature of popular course management systems like WebCT and Blackboard requires that their underlying formula be kept a closely guarded secret. The result is something of a cookie-cutter approach to

¹ An early version of this paper was given at the 2004 Symposium on Pedagogy & Learning in Postsecondary Education in San Antonio, TX under the title "Online Learning Communities: Encouraging Discussion by Preserving Anonymity." I want to thank my colleagues Andrew Piker and Stefan Sencerz for their encouragement and advice. Readers interested in browsing the results of the efforts described in this article are invited to visit <http://gec.tamucc.edu> and <http://ethics.tamucc.edu>. For contact information and information about our program, please visit <http://philosophy.tamucc.edu>.

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**“Secure, anonymous, unregulated:”
Cryptonomicon and the Transnational
Data Haven**

Philip Leonard
Nottingham Trent University, UK

This essay considers how Neal Stephenson’s 1999 epic novel *Cryptonomicon* engages with the long-standing and complex relationship between cryptology and national/transnational identity. *Cryptonomicon’s* layered and disjointed structure allows it to explore the impact of cryptography and cryptanalysis in the Second World War (as well as their impact on the consequent rewriting of the international political stage), to reflect on the place of technology in the recent history of cryptology, and to consider how emergent (and supposedly secure) data storage technologies not only open up planetary-wide communication traffic but also unsettle the protocols of national and international law. The essay is informed by recent work on cryptology, data havens, globalization, transnationalism, and postcoloniality, as well as Derrida’s work on archives and technology.

Key words: cryptology, *Cryptonomicon*, data havens, Derrida, nationality, Stephenson, technology

Introduction

Credited by some as a more compelling and engaged response to the information age than the other heavyweights that tend to dominate postmodernity’s novelistic horizons (Garner, 1999), Neal Stephenson’s 1999 novel *Cryptonomicon* works on an epic scale that resists easy synopsis. Its geographical landscape is a global one, with characters ranging across China, Japan, the Philippines, Sweden, the UK, and the USA. Its sense of history is elaborately bifurcated; shuttling between the Second World War and the 1990s, it traces the roots of the dotcom era to the information war of the 1940s. Its cast of dramatis personae is a lengthy one, although much of the narrative moves (with a logic that

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