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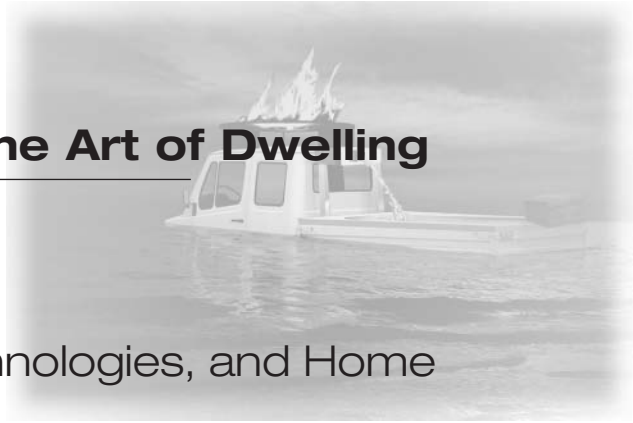
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Care and the Art of Dwelling



Bodies, Technologies, and Home

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Thinking about care practices entails a reflection concerning practices of space. Heidegger's notion of "dwelling as caring" addresses this relationship. In this vein we are interested in rethinking the concepts and practices of care in contemporary societies. This special issue focuses on diverse forms of spatialization in and through which care is performed, questioned and altered. Emerging forms of spatialization, we suggest, visualize care as an art of dwelling that constantly relates humans and nonhumans. Care as an art of dwelling, then, enacts being-at-home by reassembling bodies, emotions, technologies, and places in highly specific, complex ways and often fragile and precarious ways. What "care and the art of dwelling" means is certainly a pivotal issue that traverses all the collected texts. As we see, there is not a single answer to such a question. But this is precisely what relates the articles presented: Care and the art of dwelling preserve and save heterogeneity.

Dwelling means living in the midst of things. The philosopher Graham Harman opens this special issue and addresses the importance of things. Harman rethinks one of Heidegger's most interesting but also one of his most vague, questioned, and neglected concept: the fourfold. According to Heidegger, the thing as the fourfold is a mirror-play of earth, sky, gods, and mortals. To dwell means to let this fourfold be

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what it is. What makes Harman's groundbreaking rereading of the fourfold so interesting, though, is that he frees the static concept of the *Geviert* from another mere analytic of *Dasein* and offers a stunning object-centered theory with a dynamic fourfold at its core. Harman provides a complex theory of related and nonrelated heterogeneities. Through the fourfold dwelling preserves and saves heterogeneity, the fourfold cares about heterogeneity.

Rebecca Sims et al. echo the latter by stating that "our sense of being in the world and attachment to place arises from engagement with both the human and nonhuman (material and social) aspects of place." From their point of view, such an idea "highlights the intense and interdependent nature of the relationship between the home and caring practices" and "illustrates the bonds that exist between the inhabitants and the familiar objects and routines of the home." For Sims et al. this becomes most apparent precisely when the very feeling and being at home is utterly disrupted. Drawing on the summer floods of June 2007 in Hull, North East England, they analyze the "spatialities of care that are revealed, disrupted and produced by the dependencies and vulnerabilities associated with flood recovery" and visualize the close relationship between "emotional and physical landscapes of caring in the context of recovery." Through the analysis of the testimonies of flood victims, we can appreciate how in certain cases, dwelling is experienced as an activity that has to be accomplished not within the home as house, but in community life. It has been the disruption of the flooding which meant a "dis-assemblage of the bodies, emotions, objects, and technologies that constitute the very places in which care takes place, while at the same time creating new care practices." Care, then, refers to a fragile and precarious achievement, an emotion-laden process that which *in media res* is binding people together, intensifying the experiences of the socialness of human conduct.

Through a beautiful "close and thick" reading of Philip Larkin's poem "Mr Bleaney" Joanna Latimer and Rolland Munro also trouble a homeostatic understanding of home. Latimer and Munro address dwelling as a matter of relations that come into being by the way we are *keeping* things or alter our keepings. Being and feeling at home is an accomplishment (cf. Schillmeier & Heinlein, 2009). Latimer and Munro exemplify nicely how keeping—understood as a cultural means—is giving room to the heterogeneity of things and the relations of living that make up the complexities of self, identity, and belonging. According to Latimer and Munro, "it is never only 'things,' the materials of extension, which are switched or reordered. What are simultaneously moved around are 'attachments,' that is, feelings of longing and belonging are affected by 'keeping' the relations that are created and sustained by our giving or not giving room to things. There is an 'us-ness' as well as a 'there-ness' to a sense of dwelling and this has implications for the meaning of home as well as for understandings of self and identity." This takes them to underline that "dwelling is grounded not only within locales, but 'takes place' as *relations* are formed in the here and now."

Tonya Davidson's thought-provoking essay presents the house as both an object of memories and remembering subjects. Sustained in her lecture of Heidegger, but also in some other outstanding contributions from thinkers such as Gaston Bachelard, Michel de Certeau, and Mary Douglas, she develops the issue of the emergence of relations in the process of remembering. According to her, "the care and construction which produce houses as spaces of dwelling also produce houses as places that remember." This is not only to say that houses have mnemonic properties. For Davidson, "rather than simply triggering already registered memories, houses remember in their material and virtual properties." According to her, houses become "cumbersome companions," that is, "things that see, and second bodies that remember."

If we consider “care and the art of dwelling” as something that “takes place” as Munro and Latimer suggest, we may argue that being and feeling at home refers to practices mediated by cultural means that configure new forms of “home” and demand efforts of reconceptualization the very notion of home. Traditionally, we have thought on home as a closed space, limited by walls that keep us from outside. For us Westerners this is highly important. Still, home can be thought quite differently. As Schillmeier and Heinlein (2009) argued, “home relates not so much to a fixed and clearly bounded spatial ‘being’ but can be understood as a ‘becoming’: a moving achievement between feeling at home or not.” Daniel López and Tomás Sánchez follow such a line of thought and point out that “the Heideggerian notion of dwelling presupposes an understanding of the boundary not only as a closure but also as an opening.” In “Building Dwelling Thinking” Heidegger (1971) clarified the relation between space and boundary very lucidly: “A space is something that has been made room for, something that is cleared and free, namely within a boundary, Greek *peras*. A boundary is not that which something stops but, as the Greeks recognized, the boundary is that from which something begins its presencing” (p. 154). Being-at-home, then, certainly entails the delimitation of a border, not only to separate from outside otherness, but also to create the specificities of feeling-at-home. López and Sánchez illustrate this through a compelling analysis of technoscientific innovations within health care practices. They draw upon the wide effects of telecare devices in homes of elderly people. Following their argument, the incorporation of telecare devices entails a renegotiation of home’s border in such a way that some taken for granted distinctions such as “in” and “out” or private and public space stop being clear and seem to depend on what the users do with the devices. Telecare devices, then, reconfigure what it means to feel- and live-at-home because “installing a telecare device does not mean necessarily that it will be part of the home or that it will fit into the user’s everyday activities naturally just because it is placed in the house.”

Mike Michael and William Gaver show how technologies reconfigure the idea of home as house precisely in the Heideggerian sense of productive boundary mediating between life outside and inside the house: These technologies unravel a certain “poetry” of dwelling. Through what they call “threshold devices,” certain singular artifacts—such as the “video window,” the “local barometer,” and the “plane tracker”—are installed. They connect home with the outside world in strange modes in such a way that the spatiality of home is enriched and expanded by those complex and heterogeneous flows that are enabled to move through it. Allowing the strange traverse the home, “threshold devices” comprise “an opportunity to reflect upon such strangeness, to muse on the how home relates to the elsewhere, and to explore what it means to dwell in the context of such complex connectivity.” Dwelling, then, unravels the possibility “to be open to the unpredictable, the ambiguous, the ironic, the multiple, and the variegated that characterizes technonatures.”

Francisco Tirado, Blanca Callén, and Nizaiá Cassián’s round up the themed issue by exploring how home is reconfigured when dementia is utterly disrupting the sense of being- and feeling-at-home. They show how through technological devices the socialness, that is, the binding of human conduct is becoming possible again and can be stabilized by reassembling bodies, senses, emotions, and things. They explicate the importance gained for the neighborhood once people with dementia can move around thanks a device that locates them through satellite communication. Thus, if traditional ways to deal with dementia implied restrictive measures and a domestic space closed in upon itself, now, people with dementia can reconnect with their neighborhood and the entire social interchanges it implies. As Tirado et al. comment, “the scenario of

privacy and familiarity that was inherent in the ill person's return home from institutions has experienced a shift and extended to include broader networks and social spaces." The outcome is an idea of home that transcends the four walls of the house and the feeling of privacy linked to it.

This issue presents a set of essays shaping a very challenging and stimulating reflection and analysis that draws on processes of reassembling bodies, minds, emotions, technologies, and things that enact the specificities of the art of dwelling and related reconfigurations of space.

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