

THE LOCATION OF AN AUTHOR

Everything starts in a location. You can call it ontology or just view it as a partial origin for every story told by material-semiotic story telling processes making up our space time continuum. In a theistic frame of reference there is always a master location to use as a point of reference. But God does not really regard Jürgen Habermas' book Theory of Communicative Action as his bible. God talks, or writes, in parables rather than use his omnipotence to make us understand his will. I use a male God construction because I cannot see God as a woman. A woman/mother would not do the things God do to his children. The western annexation of Iraq and the tragedy of 9/11 both had male locations.

The German Sociologist Max Weber critiqued rationality and the modern enlightenment process for its disenchantment processes (1991, p. 155). But in one sense modernity has a counter process of mystification and this process has to do with delocalization. Before the enlightenment, most persons in the western part of the world know why it was wrong to steal. It was wrong because God said it was. The location of wrongness was crystal clear. In one of Friedrich Nietzsche's well known aphorisms there is a crazy man rushing in to the market place shouting "God is Dead! God remains dead! And we have killed him"¹. The death of God means that humans have lost the location of meaning. This is a warning. First we invest everything that we are on a transcendent location for meaning. Then, when we are dependent of the flow of meaning from the God location, we kill the flow. No relocation, no reconstruction. Before it was meaning. Then it was not. The loss of meaning is the beginning of nihilism.

Nietzsche's story is in a way an opposite to Plato's metaphor "The Cave"². In Plato's cave, people are chained in front of a stone wall. The wall is like a projector screen showing the movie of life. But the audience can not turn around and look at the projector operator. They are trapped in an "audience position", looking directly at the screen, knowing nothing else, learning nothing else. But someday someone releases them from

1 Aphorism 125 in The Gay Science. (2001)

2 The Cave is one of the most famous of Plato's stories or metaphors. It is located in the book length dialogue THE REPUBLIC, available freely on the web (1881): <http://www.etestingcenter.com/library/BooksM-P/The%20Republic.pdf>, viewed: 2008-11-14.

their chains. They follow a passage leading up from the cave, against the light. The freedom when they reach the opening is more intellectual than corporeal. The opening to the light is the border between the situated, located and the universal place beyond all locations. The light is the place where the human becomes a half-god, a philosopher, a rational being with an objective view of reality. It has to be a coincidence that the movement upwards from the cave to the light resembles a lot of metaphors in christianity, and perhaps especially as in Dante's *THE DIVINE COMEDY*³.

A blog is a location and most blogs does not pretend to be anything else. Most blog posts are just reflection of their time and (social) space. The best of them let the reflection pass through the I behind the text, before it bounces into the vastness of cyberspace. A blog's name space, friend space, layout and literary style is its visual/rational location. Somewhere in this techno-social construction there is also a person. All blogs are a balance between a person and a conformity game.

Back to the dead authors. What if we view a particular blog as a comparison apparatus and send it back in time to compare authors to a (post)modern blogger. Would Plato throw it out from his Utopia together with the poets⁴? The poets were an irrational element in Plato's rational state and he throw them out to prevent passion to destroy the glass house of rationality. Would it have been possible to understand a single blog without the mirror world it belongs to? Is it constructive to compare a blog to the tradition of authors growing out of the works of Sophokles, Homer and Horatius. Is the tradition of a blog located in the tradition of the 'author'? In my licentiate thesis I used the concept Author 2.0 - a concept mirrored out of the blogosphere in the beginning of the distribution of the web 2.0 concept. I constructed the author 2.0 - web 2.0 - author as a new kind of author, as a development of the author role, or as a reconstruction of the author role contextualized in a new paradigm. I have never viewed web 2.0 as a paradigm, but author 2.0 seemed to reflect a new era in liberal democracy. But the concept is a location in the same way as modernism. You cannot use the term postmodernism without basing it on modernism. The term author has its location in the very long tradition of authors the western intelligentsia has constituted as belonging to the author tradition. But is a blogger really in that tradition? Has an author and a

3 Dant's *THE DIVINE COMEDY* is one of the best books to help you understand what kind of location the modern society is a reaction against, ie the christian knowledge hierarchy with God at the top. The book is freely available on the web(1895): <http://www.etestingcenter.com/library/BooksD-F/The%20Divine%20Comedy.pdf>, viewed: 2008-11-14.

4 This discussion is from Platos *The Repulic*. See a previous note.

blogger the same location?

Letting the comparison apparatus of the blogger sift through history I cannot really see it stopping somewhere for a serious comparison. I used to compare blogging to "the world of letters", a phrase located in the time we now call the Enlightenment⁵. In some sense it might be possible to view an enlightenment writer as Voltaire as a pre-blogger in the same sense as Nietzsche is viewed as a pre-postmodernist. The comparison would be based on the history of Voltaire as the famous person based on a name space commenting the contemporary politics in an extremely prolific manner in the form of letters sent out to his life world. Some bloggers would of course live up to a comparison to Voltaire, it is just that I have not met their work yet. But blogs and bloggers is not about originality. In some sense, the blogosphere is more like one big author, talking as one voice - I know, this is to generalize to the border of the extreme, and still...

The question I have discussed above could be formulated like this: what is the location of the blogger or a related kind of web 2.0 author? The location will strongly influence our view of the persons spinning the net of web 2.0. Are bloggers, for example, 'authors' or are they something new, something still to be named and understood.

End comment:

I might expand this text bit by writing about the historical process of moving the author location downwards from God to the person and then again expanding it in width instead of height.

⁵ The phrase "World of Letters" is widely used in the context of the enlightenment, see for example (Wolff, 1995). Some authors have also discussed this feeling of communicative freedom in relation to Web 2.0, Andrew Keen for example (specify page).

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