

MA Defence: “The Dialectic of Open Technology” by Felix Lo

Vu Thuy Anh Phan

School of Communication
Simon Fraser University

Our dear colleague, Felix Lo, will defend his MA Thesis on Friday, April 1, 2016 at Harbour Centre, Room 1315 (12:00 pm - 2:00 pm). Here is the abstract of his thesis “The Dialectic of Open Technology”:

Abstract:

Abstract: This paper explores the concept of openness in the technology domain. In contrast to the common notion of openness as transparent access, I define the concept as the degree of liberation or suppression of potentiality. To develop a theory of openness as potentiality, I draw on the works of Gilbert Simondon and Umberto Eco. Simondon’s theory of individuation explains the potentiality of incompatible relations between disparate domains. Resolving the incompatibilities actualizes the underlying potentiality, which is the energy source of constant, ambivalent changes in the lifeworld. Eco suggests that the semantic codes in contemporary art are unstable. They constantly oscillate between the rejection and preservation of conventional systems. By appropriating Simondon’s and Eco’s theory to the realm of technology, I formulate a theory of openness in technology. I conclude with an inquiry on the significance of openness in practice and propose a design scheme for developing open technologies.

Keywords: Openness, Technology, Design, Ontogenesis, Individuation, Dialectic, Gilbert Simondon, Umberto Eco