

Chapter 4

The Meaning of Learning

Abstract Educators are guided in their work by more or less explicit theories of learning, which researchers have put considerable effort into constructing. Heidegger's challenge to education is thus an opportunity to critically reflect on theories of learning. Heidegger's philosophy suggests that human beings are prone to entanglement in the complexities of intellectual traditions and the distractions of contemporary life. But he also suggests ways in which human beings can disentangle themselves. Two basic concepts of learning are thus implied: the process of developing knowledge and skills in the everyday world (learning as entanglement), and learning as a critical reflection on and movement beyond all that is traditionally taken to be true by society (learning as disentanglement). In the light of these concepts and Heidegger's broader philosophy of human being, it is possible to analyse existing theories of learning. The chapter briefly examines key learning theories including behaviourism, cognitive theory, situated learning, and humanistic theory, highlighting ways in which each falls short of a full engagement with the picture of the human learner as it emerges from Heidegger's philosophy.

Keywords Learning theory • Behaviourism • Cognitive learning theory • Situated learning • Informal learning • Workplace learning • Transformative learning

Like most philosophers Heidegger does not elaborate an explicit theory of *learning*. Philosophers have traditionally addressed the general area of learning under the rubric of 'epistemology,' inquiry into the source and nature of knowledge. For Heidegger (2010), the traditional approach to epistemology is an artefact of the Tradition and a misrepresentation of knowing in the dynamics of being-in-the-world. Likewise, any 'humanistic' account of the development of Dasein (Heidegger 1998) which might also provide a conceptual base for inquiry into the nature of learning imposes a structure that would hamper understanding of phenomenon of learning.

Although Heidegger does not present a theory of learning as such, for educators, responding to Heidegger's challenge is partly a challenge to re-examine assumptions about learning. Educators are for the most part steeped in theories of

learning and their own understanding of human being may be mediated by these theories (Shulman 1987). The field of learning theory is also rife with debate about the ‘true’ nature of learning, with a growing number of alternative perspectives and accounts emerging. Researchers and educators can become strongly committed to particular sides of these debates and the development or adoption of learning theories often represents a highly personal stance on their part. Learning theories are thus important to educators, suggesting that a full engagement with Heidegger’s challenge to education can be facilitated by clarifying how Heidegger’s philosophy relates to learning theories. The purpose of this chapter is to tease out implications of Heidegger’s thought for the field of learning theory.

4.1 Learning and the Early Heidegger

Heidegger’s early philosophy offers a searching analysis of human being. In Chap. 1 it was explained that Heidegger’s early attempt to clarify the meaning of Being was tied to the question of the being of humans, or Dasein. His methodological argument was, briefly, that the being who can ask the question of the meaning of Being must possess some ‘pre-understanding’ of Being to be in a position to ask the question in the first place (Heidegger 2010, p. 7). To ask the question of the meaning of Being therefore entails clarifying Dasein’s pre-understanding of it. An important point for this methodology is that Dasein’s pre-understanding manifests itself in our everyday engagement with the world (2010, p. 3). It follows that to clarify Dasein’s pre-understanding of Being, an analysis will be required of our ordinary experiences and activities to reveal the deep structures that Heidegger believes underpin our understanding of Being.

Being and Time (2010) therefore presents a systematic investigation of Dasein’s everyday experience. Chapter 1 followed Heidegger’s investigation, focusing first on the holistic structure of Dasein’s being as expressed by the concept ‘being-in-the-world’. Dasein is pictured as always already in and inseparable from a ‘world’ (2010, p. 53). For Heidegger, ‘world’ has the special sense of a meaningful context or background of experience and action. It is indispensable if experience or action is to make sense (2010, p. 86). Dasein not only finds itself in the meaningful context of the world, but has a unique way of being Heidegger calls ‘existence’ which is revealed in Dasein’s continual projection of ways of being (2010, p. 42). As being-in-the-world, Dasein is conceptualised as outside itself in the ‘clearing’ of Being, the meaningful space of thinking, feeling and action constituted by the world. Dasein’s projective nature for the most part shows up in our understanding of things. Heidegger’s concept of projection or understanding is a matter of seeing and acting on things in terms of their possibilities (2010, p. 146). The primary focus of individual Dasein is its own possibilities. Through its projection of these, it envisions its own future. Heidegger argues that when Dasein projects the available possibilities sanctioned by the They, an ‘inauthentic’ existence ensues. If, however, Dasein understands its finitude and uniqueness, and projects its ‘ownmost’ possibilities, its mode of existence becomes ‘authentic’ (2010, p. 43).

So, what is ‘learning’ from the perspective of Heidegger’s early philosophy? To construct a response to this question, it will help to focus on a key feature of Dasein: that it is always already projecting plans and living toward them. Dasein is not a thing, substance or object, but is rather an entity that reveals itself as ‘existent’, as projecting itself out into the ‘clearing’ of the World. Because Dasein *is* through its projects, it cannot be thought of as having an abiding essence that it conforms to and that can be known in advance (Heidegger 2010, p. 223). But, as Heidegger’s (1998) critique of Sartre’s (1948) interpretation of human existence as radical freedom reminds us, Dasein’s existential mode of being entails projecting and living in terms of ways of being already taken as meaningful in Dasein’s social world. Dasein is always already ‘thrown’ into its situation by its projection (2010, p. 133).

Dasein thus reveals itself as a pre-committed entity, for at any given point in its everyday being Dasein is already embedded in some role or other, undertaking projects it is engrossed in. At the everyday level, Dasein’s projective nature has always already engaged individual Dasein in meaningful undertakings (2010, p. 148). Except in the wake of limit situations—such as confrontations with death or ‘moments of vision’, Dasein does not make explicit choices between different possibilities for itself, but is tied up in an enveloping commitment to certain roles, with other Dasein cast in particular roles, without necessarily being told the parts they are meant to play. Guided by moods peculiar to this or that form of being-in-the-world, entities, other people and activities are already imbued with significance. Heidegger’s analysis of Dasein as competent within its ‘thrown’ state reveals a being that must be highly knowledgeable and skilled.

4.2 Learning as Entanglement

In the light of Heidegger’s early philosophy, then, the concept of ‘learning’ has at least one obvious application. In the context of Dasein’s everyday engagement in the world, learning pertains to its developing understanding and ‘competence’ in roles and with respect to entities, other Dasein and itself (Dreyfus 1995). Projection is ‘futural’ (Heidegger 2010, p. 321) and has a sense of the purpose of a present activity in which things play a role. In terms of the ontology of the worldliness of the world, our circumspection assumes a dense web of significations within which things have individual and interrelated meaning aligned with the projected future (2010, p. 334). In the vocabulary of *Being and Time* (2010), Dasein ‘falls’ into the web of significances and ready-made roles and interpretations of entities. Heidegger regards falling as an existential feature of Dasein, but the question can be asked what does the *process* of falling entail for everyday Dasein? To get from the existent ahead-of-itself Dasein to the already committed Dasein of the individual, some *becoming competent* must take place. The significance of things, the use of equipment, the potential of others and our self, must all become familiar and meaningful at some point in life.

In a different context, Heidegger discusses the experience of encountering objects that are divested of their familiarity. His analysis of broken or unsuitable equipment highlights the possibility of a disruption of the significance structure of the World that leaves entities temporarily exposed in a relationless glare until Dasein moves on, picking up a different piece of equipment or entering into an alternative process (2010, p. 69). Heidegger's analysis of the experience of a break in the web of equipmental relations may be applied to understanding the challenges of learning to be competent in the world. Learning a new subject, language, job, game and so on entails involvement with objects, undertakings and roles whose significance or possible use may at first be unclear. They are initially suspended in an awkward, unfamiliar state until they mesh into a significant structure. Learning in this mode is thus a process of resolving the strange, objective presence of those unfamiliar things and roles whose potential significance can nevertheless be assured.

What these observations of Heidegger offer for the immediate question of how Dasein moves from strange, relationless objects to familiar, useable things is the suggestion that in its encounter with what is initially strange, Dasein is still itself embedded in significance structures. Given an assurance that other Dasein is able to resolve what is initially unfamiliar into skilled, productive activity, the learner has the potential to establish connections between significances it does grasp to significances that it does not. The process of learning here is a matter of illuminating unclear but possible significances in terms of already obvious significances. Given that Dasein for the most part learns to be competent in relation to the world of the They, the example of other Dasein engaged competently in roles offers a direct means of illuminating initially unclear significances.

4.3 Learning as Disentanglement

Learning in this first sense describes the 'fall' of Dasein into entanglement in the world and contributes to building and maintaining 'inauthentic' (yet skilled and knowledgeable) Dasein. But in the light of Dasein's unique mode of being, learning can also refer to the kind of change involved when Dasein breaks out, or is pushed out, of its everyday engagement when confronted by limit situations or by the strangeness of its own existence in a 'moment of vision'. Learning at this other level is tied up with individual Dasein finding out about its own potentiality for being, placing it before the ontologically creative dynamic of its own being. This second kind of learning puts individual Dasein in a situation for which "off-the-shelf" solutions are not available. Because these situations force Dasein to countenance its own possibilities, there are fewer or no templates, rules or concrete examples that can be brought over from the domain of the They to illuminate meaning making.

So, while learning in the first mode—the process of reconciling yet-to-be understood things, activities and roles to the background significance-structure of the world—can be facilitated by reference to explicit guidelines or direct

assistance from other Dasein through instruction and example, the second mode of learning throws Dasein wholly back on its own resources. The path to reintegrating the web of significances must be cleared by individual Dasein. The possibility remains for Dasein to withdraw from the challenge and sink back into the distractions of everydayness, but if Dasein is stirred sufficiently, it must think and experiment its way to a settlement that incorporates a new mode of being-in-the-world. Learning in this mode is a process that begins in the 'moment of vision' and leaves Dasein in a state of uncertainty that can only be resolved through considerable creative effort and insight on Dasein's part. This form of learning is not obviously amenable to formal educational endeavours, although presumably other authentic Dasein should be able to provide some form of support to the Dasein engaged in a struggle to disentangle itself.

4.4 Learning and the Later Heidegger

Among other things, the later Heidegger moves his methodological focus away from Dasein, no longer viewing the analysis of Dasein as *the* way to pursue the question of Being (Standish 2002). However, Dasein is still a central element in Heidegger's later philosophy and retains a special relationship with Being. Importantly, Dasein is cast into the role of a receiver of the 'gifts' of Being and therefore plays a singular part in working out ways of revealing ordained by Being but requiring Dasein to respond and enact appropriately (Heidegger 1977a). Dasein is portrayed by the later Heidegger as 'harkening' to being or receiving a 'gift' from being (e.g. Heidegger 1998). In the later Heidegger this gift turns out to be a particularly dangerous one. He represents the essence of technology or 'enframing' as itself a call from being that 'gathers' Dasein to the task of revealing being as resource (1977a, p. 20). A structural similarity can be proposed here between the 'falling' of Dasein into the inauthentic mode of being in the early Heidegger, and the active response to enframing in the later Heidegger that leads to the revelation of the world in terms of resources and the construction of Dasein as itself a type of resource. Again, just as Dasein possesses the capacity to transform inauthentic into authentic being in early Heidegger, in his later work Dasein harbours the power, constitutionally resistant to enframing, to comprehend the danger and seek out new ways of revealing.

From the perspective of the later Heidegger (1977a), in which falling under the spell of enframing as well as the possibility of understanding the essence and danger of enframing are both possibilities of Dasein, learning will have two basic modes. First, it will pertain to the process by which Dasein acquires the ability to identify, exploit, develop, inventorise, store, retrieve and deploy resources as well as to the application of this ability to other Dasein and itself. In this mode of learning, the basic mechanism discussed in relation to the process of falling in the early Heidegger appears relevant. That is, Dasein must become familiar with the process of enacting the demands of enframing, learning to see itself in roles of exploiter

and developer, and resolving the strange presence of yet-to-be familiar things, processes, activities and roles into serviceable, familiar resources. This mode of learning may be regarded as an extension of the concept of learning as falling that is suggested by the early Heidegger, but in the light of the later Heidegger's analysis of entanglement, a more specific set of skills are acquired that will allow Dasein to participate in the overarching project of enframing (cf. Gur-Ze'ev 2002).

A second mode of learning, parallel to learning as the emergence of authentic Dasein, is also discernible in the later Heidegger. In this other mode, the problems produced by enframing and the process of enframing itself become apparent to Dasein, triggering an awareness of the danger and the increasingly urgent need to find alternative ways of being-in-the-world. This second form of learning conceived from the perspective of the later Heidegger contrasts with the second form implied by his early philosophy in terms of what triggers it. In the early Heidegger, limit situations such as death shake Dasein out of the tranquilised life of the They and throw Dasein onto its own possibilities of being. In the later Heidegger, it is enframing that produces the conditions of learning, spoiling Dasein's 'affair' with technology (Lambier 2002) and prompting it to search for alternative ways of revealing. Heidegger (1966) suggests that 'thinking', which in Chap. 2 was characterised as a highly receptive state of 'letting be', opens the possibility of alternative ways of revealing. As indicated in the last chapter, thinking can be nurtured by those who have themselves broken out of the 'cave' of enframing and return, as teachers, to help those left behind (Thomson 2005). In the next chapter the role of teacher in promoting thinking will be considered.

4.5 Two Modes of Learning in Heidegger

The modes of learning suggested by Heidegger's philosophy as a whole thus take two main forms, corresponding to different fundamental dispositions of Dasein. On the one hand, learning involves the process of becoming entangled. For Heidegger, this entanglement is twofold. In his early philosophy it is the process of becoming one of the They, revealed in competent life and work in the everyday world of Dasein. In the later Heidegger, entanglement is more specifically about finding our place in the world of technology and absorbing the ontotheological underpinnings of enframing.

The second form of learning implicit in Heidegger's philosophy involves disentangling from the They or enframing. In the early Heidegger, the occasion for this process is the unsettling anxiety of limit situations. The condition of this kind of learning is something that may appear at random in Dasein's life, but it may also be created by other Dasein. In the later Heidegger, the conditions of learning in the mode of disentanglement are more closely tied to the distinctive features of the contemporary epoch of enframing and sensing the danger inherent in it. The potential role of knowledgeable others in highlighting the danger of enframing is explicit in the later Heidegger (1998).

Heidegger's apparent disdain for entangled Dasein may deflect from the fact that becoming entangled is a long and intricate process that sees Dasein, individually and collectively, attain high levels of competence in the world. At the individual level, it takes years of learning in informal and formal settings to be able to function as one of the They. At the same time, the They continues to build up its immense repertoire of ways of being, replete with increasingly fine-grained knowledge of the world. Individual Dasein faces a substantial task in coming to grips with the growing body of significances that constitutes the They, and then as part of the They, contributing to the collective task of elaborating the repertoire. In terms of the processes and outcomes of learning in the mode of entanglement, the implication that becoming entangled in Heidegger's sense is ontologically disabling must be qualified. In terms of awareness of Being or of its own-most possibilities, entanglement seems disabling, but in terms of surviving and flourishing in a material sense, entanglement is a significant achievement. This interpretation of the differences between the two broad forms of learning foregrounded by Heidegger's philosophy suggests alternative paradigms of learning, each with their own conditions, processes, goals and theorisations.

4.6 Learning in Young Dasein

However, the situation is complicated by the relationship between entanglement and disentanglement at the existential and ontological levels. Existentially, although Heidegger does not dwell on the problem of the formation of *young* Dasein, the question can be posed whether entanglement is a condition of learning in the mode of disentanglement. To what extent does young Dasein require competence in the everyday practices and ontotheological assumptions of the They in order to discern the limits of inauthenticity or the dangers of enframing? Can young Dasein avoid the processes and outcomes of learning in the mode of entanglement, and go straight to authentic being or the state of letting-be? At another level, is the They necessary or is enframing unavoidable? Regarding inauthentic Dasein and the They, it would seem that at least some of the They's stock of effective ways of being is required before Dasein can be in a position to confront its own finitude. Comprehension of notions such as death and finitude, at some level of explicitness, are surely a condition of authentic Dasein. And the They is surely an indispensable correlate of this need to be established in some way before the They can be apprehended as a source of suffocating sameness.

In terms of enframing, Heidegger argues that it is actually a gift of Being and so hardly something Dasein can approach without a calling. He also points out that the saving power is nurtured by enframing exactly where it becomes most dangerous. It would appear, then, that something like a dialectical relationship obtains between learning in the two modes. In other words, learning in the mode of entanglement may be required before Dasein can be in a position to appreciate the need

for learning in the mode of disentanglement. To hark back to the Platonic image discussed in the last chapter, it seems we *must* start our journey within the cave in order to understand the significance of the light outside it.

4.7 Heidegger and Learning Theory

Educators draw on learning theory in their work (Shulman 1987). Their theory may be explicit or implicit and may have been learned in formal settings or indirectly. For educators responding to Heidegger's challenge, the implications of his philosophy are important to discern for the learning theories they know. In this part of the chapter some of these implications are considered. The attempt needs to reckon with the contemporary proliferation of learning theories. From the perspective of Heidegger's philosophy, learning theories may be grouped according to the modes of learning (entanglement and disentanglement) distinguished above. They can be further differentiated according to their respective emphasis on different parts of the structure of being-in-the-world. The relevance of the concept of being-in-the-world for learning theories has been remarked by researchers (Roth 1997), but a systematic analysis has not been undertaken. It is evident that most theories, or at least the major forms treated in textbooks, concern learning in the mode of entanglement. It was suggested that this mode of learning is the initial, probably necessary form for Dasein, and because learning theory has often focused on the learning of young people, it is unsurprising to find that learning theories have tended to address learning in the mode of entanglement.

Major theories such as behaviourism, cognitive theory, and situated learning all attend to processes of becoming competent in the ways and understandings of the They. Some humanist theories, in contrast, relate more clearly to the process of disentanglement. So-called 'transformative' learning (Mezirow 1991), for instance, may be interpreted in Heideggerian terms as becoming aware of ways the They shape Dasein and forging new ways of being more consciously appropriated. The metaphysical assumptions of learning theories also serve to differentiate the field. The ontotheological tradition accounts for the assumptions of these learning theories, with more recent 'epochs' of this tradition (Thomson 2005) predominant.

4.8 Behaviourism

Behavioural learning theory (e.g. Watson 1998; Skinner 2011) is marked by its commitment to a particular interpretation of scientific method that encourages researchers and educators to restrict their attention to the observable aspects of learning. But such a restricted phenomenological field means that most of

the structure of being-in-the-world is blocked out, with only directly observable influences on individual Dasein and immediate responses admitted to the scope of investigation. The significance-structure of the world cannot be registered in a behavioural analysis of learning, nor modes of being-in, being-with and being-a-self. Only immediately observable, public events (stimuli, responses) can be admitted as real for the analysis, leaving handiness and Dasein as such out of the picture. Behavioural analysis is left to propose and test law-like relationships between observable events and the manipulation of the environment of Dasein by researchers and educators. Any regularities that underpin these events—which for Heidegger lie in the totality of being-in-the-world—must be inferred, but using a phenomenologically narrowed analytic process. From a Heideggerian perspective, behavioural accounts of learning are highly restricted in terms of their phenomenological basis, compounded by a stance on the being of entities that blocks out being-in-the-world and handiness, leaving only objective presence in play.

The metaphysical assumptions of behavioural learning theory can be inferred from its openly avowed adherence to scientific method (Watson 1998; Skinner 2011). The early Heidegger argued that the disengaged ‘theoretical attitude’ of scientific research served to ‘de-world’ the entities of its inquiries, stripping them of their significances (2010, p. 344). In the mode of pure presence they become objects with properties that may be studied in their own right. Scientific research is also characterised by a gaze that fixes its objects, privileging the visible and inaugurating the ‘hegemony of vision’ (Levin 1993). Behaviourism may be understood in terms of the early Heidegger’s analysis of the theoretical attitude. The suggestion that behavioural theory is unable to comprehend more than a small slice of being-in-the-world can be interpreted as an artefact of the de-worlding process of the theoretical attitude brought to bear on human learning. The privileged status of the visible for the theoretical attitude is inscribed in the restriction of phenomena for behavioural research to observable behaviour.

The later Heidegger builds significantly on the analysis of science offered in *Being and Time* (2010). Heidegger’s analysis of the pre-history of the metaphysics of technology highlights the significance of the development of natural science for enframing:

[enframing] concerns nature, above all, as the chief storehouse of the standing energy reserve. Accordingly, man’s ordering attitude and behavior display themselves first in the rise of modern physics as an exact science. Modern science’s way of representing pursues and entraps nature as a calculable coherence of forces. Modern physics is not experimental physics because it applies apparatus to the questioning of nature. Rather, the reverse is true. Because physics, indeed already as pure theory, sets nature up to exhibit itself as a coherence of forces calculable in advance, it therefore orders its experiments precisely for the purpose of asking whether and how nature reports itself when set up this way (1977a, p. 21).

Natural science projects the being of nature in a way that forces it to be revealed as ‘a coherence of forces calculable in advance.’ Behaviourism commits to this project, taking the ‘natural’ phenomenon of learning as its empirical focus. It is noteworthy that behaviourism is content to seek and test its laws in a variety of organisms that exhibit learning, including dogs, pigeons and rats as well as

humans. Humans may be more complicated, but as part of nature they are constituted by common elements in a 'coherence of forces' that remains intrinsically calculable.

Behavioural learning theory thus conforms to the natural science paradigm, and because of this prior commitment, the rise of technology that puts the results of natural scientific research to work finds in the behavioural body of knowledge a ready-made source of principles. The development of 'educational technology' in the first half of the 20th century bears witness to the affinities between behavioural learning theory and the imperatives of enframing. In particular, those aspects of enframing concerned with specifying, developing and inventorying human resources find in the behavioural body of knowledge effective tools such as methods for coding behaviour (e.g. behavioural objectives principles) and for modifying behaviour to match specifications determined in advance (e.g. reinforcement schedules). However, the latter part of the 20th century saw some limitations of the utility of behavioural theory, particularly in regard to more subtle yet valuable capacities of human resources. Despite efforts such as those of Skinner (2011) to elaborate a comprehensive behavioural program geared to exploiting subtle capacities, other theories of learning such as cognitive theory promise to facilitate a deeper penetration of the regime of enframing into the human realm.

4.9 Cognitive Learning Theory

Cognitive theories of learning (e.g. Piaget 1969; Anderson 2009) are also committed to scientific method, but adopt the position that cognitive processes are accessible to research and can be rigorously studied. Cognitive theory thus approaches a phenomenal field wider than that of behaviourism, taking into account aspects of being-in, being-with and being-a-self comprising Dasein's structure. However, what is revealed as real for study and explanation in cognitive theory remains close to the ontotheological assumptions of behaviourism. For cognitive as well as behavioural learning theory, the focus is objectively present entities, overlooking the ontologically distinct forms of being peculiar to Dasein and handiness. This stance means that although cognitive theory envisages a broader phenomenological field, it is restricted in terms of what it can find in the domain of the psyche. There it finds present representations of sensory and conceptual material. For example, the 'information-processing' approach to cognitive entities that dominates cognitive learning research and theory (Geissler et al. 1992) views the mental life of Dasein as one of circulations of discrete pieces of information flowing into and between different containers set within the larger container of the mind, modified through different processes and stored for later retrieval prompted by external 'cues'. Heidegger's (1977b) critique of representational thinking applies to the explanations of cognition proffered by cognitive learning theory. That is, cognitive approaches are trapped in a metaphysics of mind that renders invisible the projective nature of Dasein and the locus of consciousness in the clearing disclosed by being-in-the-world.

Since cognitive learning theory adheres to the scientific paradigm it, like behaviourism, adopts the theoretical attitude examined by the early Heidegger (2010). As such, despite the comparatively wider phenomenal field of cognitive theory that allows it to admit cognitive processes into the scope of its enquiry, it methodologically de-worlds its phenomena to reveal an isolated psyche with objective properties. The projective nature of Dasein and the clearing of being-in-the-world is lost to view, leaving only distorted and partial activities that are forced to conform to the template of objectivity. The significance-structure of worldliness is likewise reduced to local circulations of information. The later Heidegger's analysis of the essence of technology suggests an extended reading of cognitive learning theory's allegiance to the scientific paradigm. Since cognitive theory penetrates deeper into the nature of human learning than behaviourism, it opens vistas of exploitation and control not afforded enframing by behaviourism. Cognitive theory presents the human mind as a virtual machine with interconnected information processing modules such as a sensory register and working and long-term memories (Geissler et al. 1992). Applied cognitive learning theory reveals ways that human resource development challenges can be addressed as 'instructional design problems' which can be surmounted through information processing analyses of types of learning embedded in immediate problems of exploitation, development and storage (Smith and Ragan 2005). The apparatus of cognitive theory-inspired educational technology gives enframing direct access to the cognitive technology of the mind. In addition, cognitive theory has brought to light the mechanisms of self-exploitation and control in the form of 'meta-cognition' (Flavell 1979) and the theory of cognitive strategies. Enframed Dasein is thus able to actively participate in the production of itself as a resource, promising unprecedented efficiencies in the refinement and stockpiling of this particular resource.

4.10 Situated Learning Theory

Situated learning theory (Lave and Wenger 1991) represents an alternative understanding of learning which, from the perspective of Heidegger's philosophy, is more attuned to the structure of being-in-the-world than behavioural or cognitive theory. Situated learning theory emphasises the role of social practices in learning. Learning is the process of becoming a competent participant in a social practice. The notion of social practices addresses the discrete activities of the They centred on enterprises such as an occupation. Situated learning theory describes the formation of individual Dasein on the basis of the understandings, doings and roles specific to a social practice. More than either behavioural or cognitive learning theory, situated learning theory addresses the entanglement of Dasein in the They and acknowledges the being-with and being-in elements of the structure of being-in-the-world. But partly because of the rhetorical foundation of situated learning theory as a viable alternative to traditional psychological theories of learning, those who promote this alternative deny scope for Dasein's existential character. As a consequence, Dasein's projective nature is not adequately apprehended and

analysed. Situated learning theory thus comes to grips with the phenomenological scope of being-in-the-world, but is constrained methodologically so that any individual Dasein's efforts to disentangle itself from social practices are ignored. However, some research (Fuller 2007) identifies the need to consider learning 'across' social practices, while Hodge (2014) has attempted to clarify the transformative potential of movement between social practices.

The appeal to social practices to account for the nature of learning and learner identity that characterises situated learning theory is shared among disciplines that have distanced themselves from the paradigm of the natural sciences. According to Schatzki (2001), the 'turn' to *practice* as an explanatory model in social theory can be attributed to the influence of philosophers such as Wittgenstein and Heidegger. Both thinkers rejected the philosophy of Descartes with its dichotomy of thinking and extended substances, and each was critical of any attempt to overcome dualism by recourse to models of natural science. For Schatzki, 'social practices' is a concept that captures the insights of these philosophers. Heidegger's notion of being-in-the-world paves the way to social practice accounts by locating the individual in a rich context generative of identity, community and competence. From the perspective of the early Heidegger then, the explanation offered by situated learning theory already resonates with insights spawned by the analysis of Dasein. However, from the standpoint of the later Heidegger, overcoming the methodological limitations of the theoretical attitude is not enough to equip a learning theory to engage critically with the essence of technology. Indeed, as Wenger's later work (Wenger et al. 2002) demonstrates, the theoretical innovations of situated learning are themselves readily appropriated and deployed as a technology of human resource exploitation and development. Thus we witness the appropriation of the concept of 'communities of practice' by management consultants and theorists, abetted by authorities such as Wenger himself, to engineer social practices to generate self-controlling and self-developing communities for commercial goals.

4.11 Learning in Everyday Contents

Related developments in learning theory include approaches that emphasise learning in everyday contexts. Situated learning theory (Lave and Wenger 1991) made a strong case for regarding learning as a process triggered by any engagement by an individual in social practices. For Lave and Wenger, institutional education promotes a special and potentially dysfunctional form of learning insofar as it often attempts to inculcate formal systems of knowledge divorced from the processes of participation in social practices. Formal learning involves learning *about* the bodies of knowledge and skills developed and possessed by social practices and is unlikely to equip learners for competent participation in practices. Marsick and Watkins (1990) made a similar point with their concept of 'informal learning' which they suggest is a more or less accidental by-product of other activities.

Billett (2001) elaborated a theory of ‘workplace learning’ that critically builds on the insights of situated learning theory and the concept of informal learning. Billett (2002) is specifically critical of the ideological and methodological assumptions of situated learning theory which downplay the agency of the individual learner in the process of becoming competent in a social practice. With his emphasis on individual activity in the context of social practices, Billett makes way for the full structure of being-in-the-world to enter the scope of learning theory research. However, from a Heideggerian perspective, Billett’s (2002) conceptualisation of the ‘agency’ of individual learners remains hamstrung by cognitivist assumptions about human being, reducing learning to ‘co-construction’ within ‘inter-psychological’ processes. This approach is metaphysically committed to viewing learners and their interactions as objectively present entities in which learning itself is a matter of the manipulation of representations of the world in the psyche of learners. The ontologically projective structure constitutive of Dasein cannot be acknowledged in Billett’s picture even if his phenomenological scope is adequate to the structure of being-in-the-world.

Interest in workplace, work-based and work-related learning generated by researchers such as Marsick and Watkins (1990), Lave and Wenger (1991) and Billett (2001) has produced a large body of literature that includes contributions by Heidegger scholars. For example, Gibbs (2008) employed Heidegger’s early philosophy to understand the workplace and the learning within it. He applied the concept of handiness (the type of being possessed by equipment and things which may be put to use such as tools and materials) to analyse the workplace context. Gibbs also drew on Heidegger’s account of ‘circumspective concern’ (active practical thinking) to understand the activity of skilled workers dwelling in these environments. Gibbs described the significance-structure of worldliness that constitutes the horizon of workplace activities as well as the existential structure of being-with that underpins our relationships at work. Against the background of the phenomenology of work and the workplace, Gibbs attempts to outline the nature of learning itself. He identifies learning with the disclosure of the workplace for skilled workers, an experience of *alethia* through which significances and possibilities of Dasein are revealed. However, Gibbs does not offer a detailed account of this process. He indicates that Dreyfus and Dreyfus’s five-stage model of the development of expertise is relevant to understanding this process (2008, p. 431) but does not explain how, nor how disclosure—which has both ontological and optical dimensions—is to be understood in the context of workplace learning.

4.12 Humanist Learning Theory

Humanist learning theory (e.g. Knowles 1981; Mezirow 1991) can be distinguished from the bulk of theories just discussed by its consideration of the broadly existential dimensions of Dasein. For theorists and educators working in this tradition, the human personality is the locus of the dynamics of learning. In contrast

with cognitive theories, humanist learning theory does not account for learning in terms of mental processes but focuses instead on processes of meaning-making, transformation and self-actualisation. The phenomenal scope of humanist theories is thus Dasein in its world, both as active appropriator of the practices of the They and as the critical individual who potentially disengages from the They. Drawing from inner resources, the transformative learner is envisaged as consciously assuming and modifying roles. Of the learning theories considered so far, the humanist is most attuned to the phenomenon of learning in the mode of disentanglement. However, like the humanism criticised by Heidegger (1998), humanist learning theory overlays its understanding of the processes of human change with an image of the human that serves to distort the way these theories regard the sources and ends of learning. While formally apprehending the learning of Dasein as a matter of extrication from the restrictive practices of the They, humanist learning theory does not clearly register the implications of disentanglement from the ontotheological tradition. Instead, humanist learning theory may leave unacknowledged the binds of the tradition even while promoting the process of transformation.

Despite the emancipatory vision of learning promoted by humanist learning theory, appropriation of humanist insights for instrumental goals is possible even if such attempts discover that humanist principles are not as congenial as those of behavioural and cognitive learning theory. For instance, a literature has grown up around the potential for harnessing the principles of Mezirow's (1991) theory of transformative learning for professional, higher and remedial education purposes. To illustrate, an edited volume by Morris and Faulk (2012) for nurse educators promotes transformative learning as an 'innovative pedagogy' for professional learning. Chapters include 'The Road to Professionalism: Transformative Learning for Professional Role Development' (Morris and Faulk 2012), 'Using the Transformative Process for Student Success' (Freeman and Lazenby 2012) and 'Self-Regulation through Transformative Learning' (Morris et al. 2012). The volume is pervaded by a sense of the quixotic nature of transformative learning, which makes it among the more difficult approaches to apply as a technology of human resource exploitation. However, the thrust of the chapters is unmistakable, demonstrating that humanist learning theory is vulnerable to enframing despite its fundamental attunement to learning in the mode of disengagement.

4.13 Conclusion

Part of Heidegger's challenge to education is an invitation to reconsider assumptions and theories about learning. The early Heidegger's philosophy of human being is especially rich in implications for understanding learning. In this chapter a Heideggerian interpretation of learning was sketched that presented learning as the movement from an encounter with things, symbols, ideas and roles experienced as bereft of meaningful reference to the world of the learner to the disclosure of these same entities as usable and meaningful. Heidegger's distinction

between inauthentic Dasein (bound up with the They) and authentic Dasein (consciously projecting one's own possibilities of being) was also employed to distinguish learning in the mode of entanglement and learning as disentanglement respectively. The later Heidegger's thought gives a different meaning to learning as entanglement. Here, learning is a matter of developing facility in enframing the world, that is, the skills and knowledge for developing and exploiting resources. Disentanglement is then the mode of learning that involves awareness of the dangers of enframing and seeks new ways of revealing consistent with the approach of 'thinking'.

Some well-known theories of learning were appraised against the background of Heidegger's ideas. Existing theories were mostly found wanting in a few key dimensions. Against the holistic structure of being-in-the-world, existing learning theories were shown to have a more or less restricted view of what human being involves. Behavioural theory restricts itself to observable phenomena immediately related to the learner's activity whereas situated learning theory assumes that learners are embedded in social practices offering an approach to learning more consistent with the scope of being-in-the-world. Yet these theories predominantly describe and theorise learning in the mode of entanglement. Humanistic theories address the vicissitudes of disentanglement but remain committed to presuppositions about human being that limit their analysis. This limitation is revealed in the potential of humanistic theories to be co-opted for programs of human resource development.

The chapter suggests that the implications of Heidegger's thought for understanding learners and learning are yet to be clarified. But the complex, holistic structure of being-in-the-world presents a yardstick for assessing the phenomenological scope of learning theories, that comprehending the nature of Dasein's projective, existential being rather than viewing it as one object among others is necessary for understanding what happens in and as a result of learning, and finally that entanglement and disentanglement present two basic modes of learning each with their own processes and significance. Acknowledging these two modes of learning does present the challenge of how the two relate and the extent to which entanglement is necessary for disentanglement. These are among the implications of Heidegger's philosophy for understanding learning.

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