
Conclusion

Learning (from) 'Heidegger'

The legitimacy of the beginning cannot be established by the end, because the end is itself only the beginning. Thus, is the leap into the whole... all that is left? In that case, does the problem not become simply the factual issue of executing or re-executing the leap?

Certainly. But rightly understood this issue is in itself the question: What should man do as an existing being? *Where* does he stand that he should or should not make the leap and so become something other than man?

Where does man stand? Does he stand at all in such a way as to be able to determine his own standpoint and to fathom whether or not to *leave it behind*? Or perhaps man does not stand at all and is rather a transition? And is man as such a transition wholly incomparable, so that he would be driven *before being*, in order to comport himself, as the one who exists, toward beings as beings?

Can and should man as transition try to leap away from himself in order to leave himself behind as finite? Or is his essence not abandonment itself, in which alone what can be possessed becomes a possession?

Heidegger *Hegel's Phenomenology of the Spirit*

This thesis set itself up, through its abstract and the way the abstract was set out in the introduction, as learning the *essence* of learning. If learning has occurred *in the way that this thesis has claimed learning occurs* — as the institution of essences — then this designed setup will have been learned as an essential part of the way this thesis was learning learning, doing what it was saying: learning will have happened as the institution of essences, in this case, as the institution of the essence of learning as an anthropocentric *praxis*.

An essence inmixes¹ descriptives and prescriptives. An essence is what one learns about things, about the sameness that underlies their various differences. Such a learned essence as an essence will contain the suggestion that this is how things should be, at least at their best. In other words, what you learn something essentially is, also serves to teach you how that thing should be. Put the other way around, if an essence is prescribed, then the objective is to realise that essence to the point that it becomes merely descriptive of

what is the case. By learning, what is described becomes what can be prescribed and what is prescribed becomes what can be described.

This essentialising aspect of essences, captured in the double genitive of the phrase, 'the essence of learning', is what has been exploited in the way this thesis has been put forward. This thesis attempted to institute itself as describing the *essence* of learning in order to proleptically prescribe its content as the gathering together of the essence of learning.

This interrelation of descriptions and prescriptions can perhaps be understood as the teacherly nature of learning. It is evident on the one hand, in the belief that one of the best ways to learn is to teach – that is to say, to teach others, but thereby oneself – what there is to learn, formatively willing the to-be-learned into a necessity to be formatively willed; on the other hand, it would also explain that one of the best testimonies to learning's-having-happened is the ability of the learner to teach the learned, recasting what has been learned as what is necessary (for others) to learn. A thesis for instance, should demonstrate learning by converting that learning into a presentational form that can teach others. This thesis has been a variation on this institutional formula insofar as it has sought to learn by teaching (itself) a hypothesis about the essence of learning.

This thesis has attempted to accomplish this essential thesisic teaching-learning through 'Heidegger'. The performative strategy just outlined has attempted to constitute a framework in which the learning that Heidegger teaches, and that can be seen to be at work in the way Heidegger teaches, is of the essence of learning, or at least, learned in an essentialising way such that it becomes the essence of learning. In and with 'Heidegger' then, this thesis has learned that the essence of learning involves a leap that projects that 'here lies a necessary and essential to-be-learned'. This projection is then willed and worked, in a confrontation with what is already learned. The reflexivity of this action gathers its origin and end into a dynamic movement of transformation, a re-formation of all that is, including the one learning. Learning is thus a finitudinal constructivism, a conditioned institution of what thereby becomes essential.

If this is so, if all this can be said to be the essence of learning (with/in) 'Heidegger' *contra* the ways Heidegger is conventionally learnt, *and* if this is the mode of learning that has also managed to be employed by this thesis, then this 'Heidegger' *way* of learning will have been learned to be the essence of learning *beyond* 'Heidegger'.

For all its 'logic',² this remains a large claim, and one that can only be 'proved', like all formal indications, by the happening of learning, an event which the one intending cannot and should not seek to pre-determine. Such a predetermination (as opposed to a more relational directive) would fold this thesis's attempt at a *praxis* back into a *poiesis*, an economic venture with the pre-set outcome.

In this context, it must be admitted that this thesis, in its performativity is risking precisely the *poietic technique* which it has sought to differentiate from the *praxis* of learning. Clearly this binary is contaminated and this thesis has argued that the whole point of learning within the project of 'Heidegger' concerns learning the *praxis* that always already empowers every *poiesis* in a concealed way. Nevertheless, there is at work in the design of this thesis a certain textual idealism.³ This thesis will only have been teaching about the essence of learning beyond 'Heidegger' if it is learned in the way that it intends to be learned.

In this context, I should perhaps indicate something of the learning that I believe has happened in my own case beyond my own intentions, that is, what I feel I have personally learned by attempting to teach this thesis but which is other than what I have been attempting to teach. I could begin by saying that I am reluctant to do this, since learning something other than what was projected to-be-learned would suggest that I have learned something *from* doing this thesis, something that merely by its existence undoes all that this thesis has been insisting about there only being 'the project of learning to'. What I have learned however I do not believe invalidates what has been the project of this thesis. In other words, whilst I have learned *from* this thesis that there is a 'learning from', this *factual* error, if it can be put this way, has not taught me not to believe that learning should still be learned more proactively and could be so learned by insisting that such a learning is the essential form of learning. In other words, whilst I have learned that the hypothesis of this thesis is at times descriptively incorrect, I have not yet learned the need to therefore abandon this thesis' more prescriptive project. Indeed, I would even insist that I would still have to actively undertake to unlearn learning as essentially active; having learned of descriptive mistakes, I am yet to learn *from* such mistakes the necessity of unlearning the thesis I have been teaching (myself).

For example, I have certainly learned from my research that 'Heidegger' does frequently advocate a non-anthropocentric receptive form of learning, beyond the finitudinal conditions which I sought to demonstrate necessarily accompany learning as a

praxis.⁴ However, I still believe that it is necessary to over-emphasise the anthropocentric and proactive aspects of learning ((with/in) 'Heidegger'). I believe that this is necessary because firstly, it maintains a deconstructive awareness that on all such occasions, when 'Heidegger' is teaching that we must receptively learn from things, he is still nevertheless teaching us this, something that we must in turn teach ourselves.⁵ Secondly, as I will take up shortly, I believe that the university has too easily taken up 'Heidegger' without having learned what is being taught there; it has managed to avoid being too troubled by what should be an ontological revolution because its pluralism has selectively sought out only those aspects of learning (with/in) 'Heidegger' that do not require an active project of change. Thirdly – though this is an instance of the second, but then again it is not just one instance amongst others – if what 'Heidegger' was teaching us concerned the Ph aspects of being ~~human~~, the continuation of a fundamentally unchanged humanism in the humanities indicates that we have not yet learned the otherwiseness that 'Heidegger' taught us we are (or that 'is there'), for such a learning entails being otherwise. I would therefore continue to insist upon the need for learning learning as a directional *praxis* of instituting essential change, since only such a radical constructivism makes and furthers our self-apprehension of, or at, our own wondrously terrifying *deinon*-ness.⁶ Proclaiming our anthropocentrically ontological power is perhaps the only thing that will teach us to be more responsible.

What I *have* perhaps learned is that there are severe limitations to undertaking this sort of learning through an exegesis of the texts of someone like 'Heidegger'. This thesis has, in my opinion lost itself or at least its momentum in 'Heidegger'. Certainly, I have most of the time feared my own hypothesis and felt the need to hide behind Heidegger's apron strings, feigning obedience. I am now left wondering if anything can ever be learned, actively or passively, from such a down-going, which is certainly no descent into worldly learning environments. I even suspect that such an attempt at 'scholarship' was the result of, and perhaps has enhanced, a certain unlearning of the ability to learn.

By way of concluding then, I would like to re-present the thesis of this thesis about the nature of what is called learning in two final ways that at least gesture beyond the context of 'Heidegger', though both are in fact contexts that have learned *from* 'Heidegger'. The aim is to elaborate some contexts in which what this thesis has been teaching about learning can and should be relearned. The first is another way of describing the institutional essence of learning – design – and the second is an emergent aspect of the

world – sustainability – which is prescribing the need for the sort of learning so described. These are not contexts that 'prove' what this thesis has been putting forward about learning, but contexts in which learning needs to be learned as it has been learned in this thesis.

These will therefore be formal indications, in the sense of very schematic sketch-outlines that thus necessitate further elaboration. In this way, these concluding remarks should serve as *ways* through which this thesis' project of learning learning can be sustained beyond this thesis. This conclusion will therefore attempt to abstract something from what has been learned in this thesis, not in order to make it available for being-taken-and-used-without-having-been-learned, but in order to further the *praxis* of learning learning.

Proscribing Pluralism

Before setting out these two contexts, I should mention that what follows is perhaps going to seem unfashionable, insofar as abstracting prescriptions from humanities research seems to be a withdrawing phenomenon. Much work in the humanities these days is content to conclude by offering a few things at the end of a presentation that could be considered to have been learnt by the research-writer. Ending an essay or a dissertation with strong assertions about what has been learned *and* about the *necessity* for what has been learned to be learned by others, appears to be increasingly rare. The humanities are perhaps in this regard distancing themselves from the more technical disciplines which do still draw prescriptions from descriptive research; however even in these more applied professions, in a way that reflects the prevalence of pluralism, these sorts of 'results' are more and more toned down to mere recommendations. I see this situation as symptomatic of the withdrawal of learning, one in which the projection of the necessity of what is to be learned must be developed independently and often even in spite of what is merely reported if anything is to be authentically learned. This conclusion will therefore attempt to exhort the essentiality of its conclusions, setting out contexts in which it is necessary to learn further what has been described in this thesis.

'Heidegger' is often misread as a justification for the refusal of making prescriptions. There are for instance Heidegger's famous dicta: "1 Thinking does not bring knowledge as do the sciences. 2 Thinking does not produce usable practical wisdom. 3 Thinking does not solve cosmic riddles. 4 Thinking does not endow us directly with the power to act."

(WCT 159) This is confirmed by all the citations given in Chapter One where 'Heidegger' foregrounds the inapplicability of authentic philosophising. As was suggested in the last chapter, a crucial point in the nature of Heidegger's 'turn' after *Nietzsche* results from the conclusion that "There are 'results' only when there is reckoning and calculation." (N4 48)

Further, it is felt that making and acting on prescriptions is precisely what we should be learning *from* Heidegger, given the circumstances of his own attempts to fulfill the consequences of his early work. In all the accounts – the 1945 "Facts and Thoughts" essay, the 1966 *Spiegel* interview and the 1969 television interview – Heidegger indicates that his assumption of the rectorship was putting into action what was taught/learned in, at the least, the 1929 "What is Metaphysics?" It is thus felt that the failure of his 'experiment' with the application of his teachings/learnings turned Heidegger from that point on against even the possibility of such applications. The *Spiegel* interview, for this very reason known by the phrase "Only a God Can Save Us", seems exemplary in this regard. Repeatedly pushed by the interviewer in regard to how his philosophy describes society and what it consequently prescribes to society, Heidegger consistently refuses: "If I may answer quickly and perhaps somewhat vehemently, but from long reflection: Philosophy will not be able to bring about a direct change of the present state of the world... No! I know of no path toward a direct change of the present state of the world, assuming that such a change is at all humanly possible... As far as I can see, an individual is incapable of comprehending the world as a whole through thinking to the extent that he could give practical instructions." (SI 56-7, 60, 64)

However, a couple of qualifications must be made. Firstly, all of Heidegger's pronouncements, in the *Spiegel* interview for instance, are still prescriptives resulting from certain learned descriptions of society. 'Heidegger' is certainly aware that, in giving a public interview, he is in a position of inescapable practical application.⁷ Refusing to prescribe in this setting therefore has a powerful *educational* effect. It reflexively foregrounds that it is through learning that descriptions and prescriptions come to acquire agency: it ensures that these descriptions and prescriptions are not merely taken-as-learned but revealed to be interrelated in a way that projects the necessity for further essential learning.

Consequently, and secondly, Heidegger does not refuse outright the effectivity of philosophy. Its power is "indirect" (SI 58), coming with time (SI 60), for which we must wait (SI 60) but in an *actively* preparatory sense: "it is a matter of thinking ahead, without prophetic claims, into the coming time from the standpoint of the fundamental

characteristics of the present age.” (60) It is thus a matter of the *praxis* of learning, in the essential sense: learning is a project of being engaged, engaged with making descriptions and prescriptions and actively instituting those ‘results’ *in order to keep on learning* rather than to *conclude* learning. Heidegger does not give direct prescriptions because prescribing is the danger, but because prescribing tends not to be understood in relation to the action of learning, but rather as that which comes after learning. The *Spiegel* interview is in fact nothing other than a prescription for the essentiality of learning, whether in relation to the necessities conditioning the errancy of Heidegger’s Nazism or in relation to the nature of how thinking can accomplish change in our time.

This conclusion then is going to attempt to make these sorts of prescriptions, prescriptions that sustain what this thesis is learning, rather than merely implement what it has learnt: it is risking – in a way that perhaps Heidegger was not at times prepared to do but which can no longer be avoided given the extent of the current withdrawal of learning – installing *technical* objectives in order to access the directional *praxis* that alone powers all learned change. What follows is therefore in a sense a new abstract: an abstract for a learning project to now do.⁸

First Prescriptive Context: Design

Abstract Announcing

Allow me to begin to explain this context by way of once again, the abstract. When discussed previously, in Chapter Nine for instance, the abstract as a discursive form was mostly only taken as a re-presentation of what had been learnt. However, the abstract, at the head of a thesis for instance, clearly also functions as a projection of what stands to be learned, from the activity of reading the thesis that follows it for instance.

Now on the one hand, this is exactly the sort of *poiesic arché* which constructs the sort of telic economy that typifies our productivist worldview. However, the whole point of Heidegger’s ‘turn’ is to learn how being, as the anthropocentric *praxicality* of learning, sustains, from a concealed position, such an economy. To put it in the terms of this thesis, if learning occurs, it is because essential learning is at work despite all the misrepresentations of the learning process.

Thus on the other hand, a thesis’ abstract can be – and, if it is to be part of the retrieval of learning rather than a key component of its concealment (‘where danger is,

grows the saving power'), needs to be – treated as a type of formal indication, a protreptic prolepsis. In this sense, an abstract rather than re-presenting what can be now taken-as-learned, is in fact part of the origin of the work of learning. The abstract is not that which fixes or pre-determines the learnt – indeed, read pro-actively, it cannot, which is why abstracts, to the ones who are only starting the process of learning, never make any sense – but that by which the movement of learning is set in train, establishing the determination (*Stimmung*) necessary for the project of learning. The abstract is precisely the *Riß* or *prohairesis* that sets forth a region for learning, endowing that clearing with a certain coherent necessity, an intra-relationality that institutes what is there to be learned as essential.

What is at stake here is everything that 'Heidegger' was teaching at the same time as his course on the thing. The first half of the 1935 course on *Schelling's Treatise of Human Freedom* seeks to teach us about the difference between those systems that are merely "thrown *over* things" (STHF 25) or "shove... anything together with anything else indiscriminately and endlessly" (STHF 27) and those systems that are "genuine projection[s,] throw[ing] beings apart in such a way that they precisely now become discernible in the unity of their innermost jointure." (STHF 25). The former is the "mere arrangement of a finished body of doctrine for the purpose of simply teaching beginners in the sciences." (STHF 28) This is thus the abstract training of technicians in what can be taken instrumentally as learnt. The latter by contrast "is the inner jointure of what is comprehensible itself, its founding development and ordering." (STHF 28) The difference here is again that between *Gestell* and *Gestalt*. Or, to put it in terms of their Sameness, a *Gestell*, a Construct, has force because of the *Gestalt* that powers it, that is to say, that sets about learning it into being. Just as Technology can and must be turned by turning toward the movement at its heart, learning to appropriate that learning, so the abstract can be relearned as part of the movement of *thesis*.

An abstract in this 'turned-relearned' sense is an announcement, a Saying. In seeking to gather together all that is the nature (*Wesen*) of language in a "recounting that anticipates the unifying element in the belonging together", Heidegger, in "The Way to Language", has recourse to a notion of design⁹ that usefully names the learning project that I am suggesting the abstract be learned as originating:

This unity of the being of language for which we are looking we shall call the design (*Aufriß*). The name demands of us that we see the proper character of the being of

language with greater clarity. The 'sign' in design (Latin *signum*) is related to *secare*, to cut – as in saw, sector, segment. To design is to cut a trace. Most of us know the word 'sign' only in its debased meaning – lines on a surface. But we make a design also when we cut a furrow into the soil to open it to seed and growth. The design is the whole of the traits of that drawing which structures and prevails throughout the open, unlocked freedom of language. The design is the drawing of the being of language, the structure of a show in which are joined the speakers and their speaking: what is spoken and what of it is unspoken in all that is given in the speaking. (121)¹⁰

Heidegger goes on to explain how this designing as a showing is the appropriat(iv)e response called for by the pervasion of Technology: “*The moving force in Showing of Saying is Owning... Appropriation assembles the design of Saying and unfolds it into the structure of the manifold Showing.*” (127-8) Thus it is precisely the way sayings, like abstracts, design a relearning that grants them appropriateness, allowing them to be a source for the recovery from (or of) the “the nature of modern technology holding sway in all directions.” (132) Heidegger is explicit in teaching us that it is the *Gestalt* of such sayings (130), the way they “form a way, and forming it, keep it ready” (130), that allows them to correspond learnedly, that is conservingly, with the way in which “all ordering [is] find[ing] itself channeled into calculative thinking.” (132) The abstract then, if it is not to be ‘uni-formed’ into mere “information”, must project its essential “way-making” (130) capabilities, its energetic or dynamising capability, that is, its primary participation in the process of learning.

There is a risk however, that Heidegger’s teachings concerning language, whilst foregrounding a certain anthropocentrism, tend to get learned, despite their constant reference to things and thingliness, without reference to the worldliness, or more accurately, the earthiness, of the world. There is perhaps too much of an imaginary quality to the linguistic realm, something that allows us moderns to once again dream of an unconditioned space-time, especially under the guidance of the exceptional poet or master deconstructor. Certainly this thesis has succumbed to this temptation by attempting to project its reflexive design as a manifestation of the essence of learning. As a gesture away from this romantic textualism, I would therefore like to insist upon the importance of learning Heidegger’s use of the term ‘design’ here as a very materially engaged *praxis*.

Designing Learning

I am currently learning that design is a very powerful way of learning learning.¹¹ Design at the least refers to a form of intentionality. This can stretch from an individuated plan to a cosmology. More formally, design, as in industrial design or architecture, is understood as that process of intentionally realising material things.¹²

In this era of late capitalism, design is often misunderstood as a form of fetishised autography. This misrepresentation of design sees designing as the technique used by a fixed subject that causes objects to come into existence. The outcome is consequently *objet d'art*, 'designer' products whose aesthetics alienate them from their designated use. In a strictly Nietzschean fashion – that is to say, in a way that manifests the same dangers that 'Heidegger' teaches us lie in a certain Nietzscheanism¹³ – these objects are excessively present in a way that denies the finitude of their materiality; they become pure signs.¹⁴

The sense of design that I am after comes more from the way design is that which aims to produce things, or more exactly equipment. Design in this sense is the project of realising things for use, *chremata*. Well-designed things withdraw before the actions they make possible, as Heidegger's early teachings concerning the work-world teach us. But, in the context of Part Two of this thesis, when "The Origin of the Work of Art" is put together with "The Age of the World Picture", it becomes apparent that for 'Heidegger', the withdrawal that happens in the relationality of the work-world is very different from concealment that happens in the totalisation of the representative object. The former is still thingly insofar as things are sustained in their thingliness despite being withdrawn in equipmentality – or more accurately because of being withdrawn and thereby preserved.¹⁵ Technology conversely is the concealment of that sustaining withdrawing, the loss of thinghood. Exactly what is at issue here is the difference between the announcing, gathering, orienting design and the overtaking, mathematicising project of the *Grundriß*; it is the former that is always already at work, enabling the latter, and thus that which is to be reappropriated from with-in the latter's denial.¹⁶

The point here is that designing things that will withdraw without disappearing into useability manifests the sort of process that this thesis has been putting forward as the essence of learning. A useable designed thing is something which becomes, in a certain way, essential: it is something that becomes integral to the way we work or live, essentially changing the nature of things.¹⁷ Design, like the action of learning described in this thesis, thus aims to institute the essential. Designing can therefore be understood to be the

projecting of necessities, the establishment of formative relations that are transformative of what is.¹⁸ This can never be an act of sheer imposition: design has an essential power but one which is delimited by the nature of the currently designed. Designing is thus a willing and a working, but one whose project is reflexive, returning it to engagements with the way things are, learning the designedness of what currently is, and apprehending the already designed's ability to be redesigned otherwise.¹⁹ In this context, design, like the radical constructivism of learning, reveals that all that is, is only by design, is designed and designing.²⁰ This means that what designing, at its best, presences can never be considered to be permanent; what is well designed does not entirely withdraw into the ontology it makes possible. The designed rather manifests itself as sustained by a particular designing, as the finite manifestation of a certain anthropocentric *praxis*, open to further reconstruction.²¹

There is therefore a useful correlation between design and learning. This is reinforced I believe by the fact that design is theorised in terms of learning: there is the unconscious evolving of craft on the one hand, and the mathematically abstracted technique of production on the other.²² Design is precisely what can be learned but not taught (abstractly); for, what one is learning is the ability to learn.²³ And, one is learning another way of teaching; for, a well-designed thing is that which affords being readily learned.²⁴ To learn things in relation to the anthropocentrism of learning means to learn things as designed.

From the other direction, design, as already indicated, powerfully furthers what there is to learn from 'Heidegger' about the nature of things in our time. Design is perhaps the best way to translate *techné*, as that modern essence of Technology that we must learn to reappropriate: *techné* as design is less than art but more than craft, that is, a *praxical* form of *poiesis*.²⁵

This then is where I suggest that the larger project of which this thesis is a part must now turn. It must learn how the *praxis* of learning must be a *praxis*, in the modern sense of being materially engaged. Learning must learn the power of design; its instituting must take the form of a material instituting, especially in this age of the withdrawal of things. It must make a project of departing from its textual context, and learn the learning that is more materially engaged, changing the world by realising learning in things, by ontological design.

Second Prescriptive Context — Sustainability

Learning Times

Whilst turning to the materiality of design is an attempt to move beyond a certain 'Heideggeriana',²⁶ it needs to be recognized that this move, this 'return' is, as Chapters Four, Five, Eight and Eleven in particular demonstrated, very much necessary to the Heideggerian project of essential learning. As was indicated in both parts of the thesis, Heidegger's 'turn' was not only one in which 'Heidegger' turned to 'Nietzsche' for instance, but one in which Heidegger was turning to what was emerging about the nature of things at that time. Heidegger was seeking to teach, himself and his peers and students, what to learn, and how, about the increasingly pervasive mobilisation of technological production and representational media at that time.

This is the whole point about nihilism: it is an aporia that arises when turning to the world and asking, how to learn what needs to be learned?²⁷ In this sense, the question of the essence of learning in relation to nihilism is perhaps not one that can be resolved merely by discerning what 'Heidegger' did or did not turn against. In this regard, Part Two of this thesis was again manifesting a certain textualism in believing that what was at stake in Heidegger's 'turn' could be learned with-in the Heideggerian texts. The issue of whether the institutional essence of learning is the sort of nihilism that needs to be overcome or whether such a form of learning is rather a way a negotiating nihilism, is something that must be decided beyond the relation between 'Nietzsche' and 'Heidegger', in a confrontation with the nihilism at work in the world at large.²⁸

To this extent, I would like to suggest that the current ecological crisis provides an appropriate context for developing the question concerning the relation between nihilism and learning.²⁹

Learning Ecologies

One of the major things that has been claimed to have been learnt from 'Heidegger' is a concern for the sustainability of the ecologies life depends upon.³⁰ What those with ecological concerns learn from 'Heidegger' is that what manifests as 'environmental problems' today is only the symptom of a more structural condition. Depletion of biodiversity, wilderness destruction, pollution and contamination of ecosystems and human environments for instance are recast 'after' 'Heidegger' as instances of a

metaphysical errancy.³¹ Ecological sustainability becomes an epochal phenomenon, a bracketing of what is essential, that which we have learned our way into, to the extent that this restricted form of existence now appears essential. To varying degrees it is recognised that the sort of 'environmental management' that is now being developed in response to mainstream ecological concerns, is, as *technical* attempts at a solution, a perpetuation of the problem, sustaining the unsustainable.³² 'Heidegger' is thus cast as a 'deep ecologist', someone who teaches the need for a fundamental change in the nature of who and how we are.

Deep ecology is then an ontological learning project, promoting a total reevaluation.³³ This project of essential change is however invariably grounded in an anti-anthropocentrism. Ecological Heideggerians tend to learn only from the later 'Heidegger', criticising or circumventing the earlier teachings, that for example 'nature' is derivative of the *praxis* of (human-)being-in-the-world.³⁴ In a paradoxical way, deep ecology mislearns Heidegger's turn with respect to 'Nietzsche' as a turn against his anthropocentrism, but thereby reinstates the unthought metaphysics of this Nietzscheanism. The error of taking-as-learned the nature of human being – that is, of presuming to already know what human being is and therefore seeking to turn away from what is thus pre-cast as a problem – evidences itself in the pluralism of unquestioned metaphysical representations of nature upon which deep ecology continues to draw.³⁵ All that 'Heidegger' finds in Nietzscheanism recurs in deep ecology's biocentrism: a Cartesian mechanics (ecosystems), a Leibnizian monadological will (evolution), a Kantian sublime (environmental aesthetics), a Hegelian spiritualism (Gaia).³⁶ In fact, in deep ecology's animism we find one of the clearest indications of the fact that what is erroneous about Nietzscheanism is its anthropomorphism, its representation as objective of what is only ever a concealed projection of a particular type of human activity.³⁷

What is perhaps most significant for this thesis is that deep ecology's perpetuation of metaphysics evidences itself in a problem of learning.³⁸ To have agency for the institution of their new essence (though it is for this very reason only a myth or world-view), deep ecologists must in the end, in the absence of any substantial engagement with the question concerning learning, fall back onto some very conventional understandings of education as panacea.³⁹ Having not confronted the radical constructivism of human being, that is, having failed to confront nihilism appropriat(iv)ely, deep ecologists tend to miss both how we learned our way into our current unsustainable habits and consequently the extent to

which these habits have been *essentially* instituted into the very materiality of the things with which we dwell.⁴⁰ The evasion of the early 'Heidegger' results in a Nietzschean recurrence of the overtaking of things that is the cause of our current unlearned relation to our world. In short, deep ecology misses design, and so does not have the *praxical* ability to institute changed environments with the relations that will make possible a changed ethos. And likewise, it is this context that indicates the unavoidability of design, of designing in response to the designedness of all that is, for the *praxical* learning of essential change toward sustainability.

The response that this thesis' way of learning 'Heidegger' teaches is appropriate is instead one that would accept that sustainability⁴¹ is going to have to be a wholly constructed necessity, an essence that must be projected by a leap, and then sustained in an on-going confrontation with the learntness of what currently is. There is much work beyond environmental philosophy that is already contributing to this radically constructivist version of sustainability. There are histories and sociologies of the science and politics of ecological concerns that stand to teach us the instituted nature of 'nature'.⁴² What becomes apparent is that ecological problems, as matters concerning relational wholes, longer time frames and risks, are phenomena that are dependent for their existence upon learning.⁴³ These are abstract phenomena that must be made concrete, formal indications that must be learned into the way we live and work.⁴⁴ This is why, in addition to the (good and thus wholesome?)⁴⁵ danger of deep ecology's neo-romanticism (or spiritualism), there will always be the (bad and thus muddled?) danger of trying to make ecological phenomena present through calculative representations.⁴⁶

However, what this thesis teaches is that we will learn sustainability only insofar as it is projected as essential: beyond any consensual social constructivism, it is necessary that sustainability be instituted as a necessity. Sustainability is then the imperative to learn to make sustainability the nature of things, to make the coming epoch structure beings-as-a-whole in terms of sustainability.

Such a learning of sustainability will be an utterly unfounded action, however its founding will nonetheless be thoroughly conditioned. Further, as a *praxically* instituted essence, sustainability will have to draw attention to the learning that is sustaining it. An anthropocentric sustainability will make the finitudinal presencing that is human being essential to what is essential. This is why sustainability will not be (just another) metaphysical (epoch). All that is, will be always already (learned as) that which whiles

through the responsibility of the humans who learn it to be thus.⁴⁷ Hence, the sustainable is both permanent and changing: that is to say, what is sustain-able is able to stay the same or change.⁴⁸ Sustainability is the learning, the appropriative turning, of the modern age's permanentization of change, where everything is changing whilst remaining the same.

What this thesis teaches that we now need to learn, by sustaining designs, is that: sustainability is the ability to learn by design; and learning is the ability to sustain by design.

Endnotes for Conclusion

¹ Lacan mentions the term "inmixture" obliquely in Seminar II and explains it in Seminar III. In the grammatical sense it refers to different verbal ways of describing the same action: for example, I concluded it, I made it conclude, I let it be concluded, I saw to its conclusion. In the psychoanalytic sense, these constructions invariably lead to a con-fusion of agency, mixing the subject in with the object of the action, often resulting in passive or at least middle-voiced constructions: I was made to conclude, it concluded (me). It is redundant therefore to say that a description and prescription inmixes. It is this inmixing that leads Lacan, via the pun *je suis* (I am, I follow), and the phrase 'thou art', to the Pindaresque, 'where it was, so shall I come to be'. See *The Psychoses*, trans.R.Grigg [London: Routledge, 1993]

² I have suggested at various times throughout this thesis that 'logic' should be understood in the Heideggerian fashion after the Ancient Greek *logos* as that which essentially gathers, i.e. that which has the force of learning: what has been learned seems to follow, logically as it were; conversely, logic in the modern sense of rationality has force only by learning. Heidegger's whole concern was to develop a rigour that was not dependent upon logic. This is another way of explaining what is being argued in this conclusion about the pedagogic use of essentialising claims. See for instance, Rorty's "Overcoming the Tradition: Heidegger and Dewey" now in *Consequences of Pragmatism* [Brighton: Harvester Press, 1982], M.Weatherston "The Rigour of Heidegger's Thought" *Man and World* v25 (1992).

³ With this term I am referring to D.Wood's hesitant criticism's of the sort of active compliance needed for deconstruction's performative pedagogy to occasion learning: see for example the following comment about what it takes to learn (from) a deconstruction: "Speaking, I hope, not just autobiographically, the moments of insight (and indeed of frustration) in reading Derrida are always associated with having 'grasped' (or failing to grasp) the formal scheme organizing his writing at a particular time (the words 'formal' and 'grasp' both being written under erasure!)." ("The Possibility of Literary Deconstruction: A Reply to Eugenio Donato" in *The Textual Sublime* [Albany: State University of New York Press, 1985], 59)

⁴ Now might be the time to admit that throughout the writing of this thesis I have felt that I have been trying to do what Heidegger does to Hölderlin as succinctly described by Paul de Man: “Hölderlin says exactly the opposite of what Heidegger makes him say.” (*Blindness and Insight* [New York: Oxford University Press, 1971], 255) I could take solace in what Paul de Man says immediately afterwards, about the fact that opposites are at least concerned with the Same thing.

⁵ For example, Krell asks C.Scott, concerning Scott’s analysis of “*Gelassenheit*”, about “Heidegger’s consummate *staging* and *writing* of the “Conversation”. Could it be that the entire discourse (as ‘conversation’) concerning letting-be consists of a series of ruses and ruses of writing, at which Heidegger was actually quite accomplished? Would that mean that the ascetic priest is harder at work in the language of *Gelassenheit* than he is anywhere else?” (“A Thought in Full Self-Dispossession”, *Research in Phenomenology* v21 (1991).

⁶ Heidegger quotes from a Hölderlin letter in “Hölderlin and the Essence of Poetry”: “[The human] has been given arbitrariness, and to him, godlike, has been given higher power to command and to accomplish and therefore has language, most dangerous of possessions, been given to [the hu]lman, so that creating , destroying and perishing and returning to the ever-living... he may affirm what he is – that he has inherited, learned from thee, thy most divine possession, all-preserving love.” (HEP 296)

⁷ Heinrich Petzet, a close friend that Heidegger asked to be present at the interview, “as a sort second since the other side would also consist of two”, in his “Afterthoughts on the *Spiegel* Interview” (in G.Neske & E.Kettering eds *Martin Heidegger and National Socialism* trans. L.Harries [New York: Paragon House, 1990]) notes in aside with reference to Heidegger’s remarkable composure throughout the interview, “(Was he always aware that not only the few people in the room but also a world wide circle was listening to him?)” (74). In Heidegger’s case, the awareness manifests in a typically redoubled form. In recounting the nature of his compromises with institutions of National Socialism, he concedes to *Spiegel*’s explanation by way of “*ad usum Dephini* – revised for public consumption” (46). Here again is the strategy of exo-esotericism by which pronouncements are turned into formal indications, foregrounding the institutional essence of learning at work in such descriptions and prescriptions.

⁸ I am reiterating the formal indicativeness of what follows not only to excuse what has suffered the restrictions of space, but also to indicate that one of the things that I think I have failed to learn about learning concerns that learning, or more exactly that teaching, that occurs by withholding, by not making everything come to presence. Despite mentioning Heidegger’s sigetic esotericism, my habit of excessive endnoting demonstrates my inability to learn to teach by not ‘saying it all’. This conclusion was supposed to be an attempt at this more ‘cryptic’ learning process. “They have no vision for the fact that the incapable is actual precisely because it *does not find the transition to*

enactment. To not find the transition to...: this is not nothing, but instead can have the pressing force and actuality of the greatest plight and so be what is properly urgent." (AM 180)

⁹ I am here attempting to further Mugerauer's attempt to gather Heidegger's way of teaching the learning of thinking around the term *Gebild* or *figura* (see *Heidegger's Language and Thinking* [Atlantic Highlands: Humanities Press, 1988], as mentioned in Chapter Ten.

¹⁰ Derrida discusses this passage at the end of "The *Retrait* of the Metaphor" *Enclitic* v2 n2 (1978).

¹¹ Design, like learning, is a dangerously under-developed conceptual tool for reading the way of our modern world. We westerners live totally by design. Our environments are wholly designed, though they have obviously not been holistically designed; they are completely full to excess of designed things upon which we depend for everything we do and even think. It is no longer possible for us to live without designed things, and as a consequence, without interacting with design processes; we are designed by the designed things that saturate our environments and we can only cope by adopting a designing mentality, redesigning our relation to those designed environments. It is through designed things, in and with which we live and work everyday, that we western moderns come to be instructed in what is and how. However, despite the omnipresence of design, design is taught nowhere except as a specialised set of vocations (architecture, industrial, graphic and interior design, engineering, etc) and as an under-theorised form of social history. It therefore remains a thoroughly vague term, but one whose ambivalences are very useful for this thesis and its hypothesis. See Tony Fry's *Remakings: Design, Ecology, Philosophy* [Sydney: Enviobook, 1994]: "The realisation of the omnipresent power of design, and its past, present and future importance, is still under-recognised in the design professions themselves as well as within intellectual and political culture at large... If the significance of design that is sought to be acknowledged [in *Remakings*] here was even partially recognised, a critical understanding of it would be regarded as an essential element of everyone's education." (9-10) Fry and E.Manzini (see their papers in R.Buchanan and V.Margolin eds *Discovering Design* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995]) are attempting to think through what it means to recognize that we now live in a totally designed environment, a naturalised artificial (Fry) or an ecology of the artificial (Manzini).

¹² It is fortuitous therefore that the English translation of what Heidegger teaches lies at the essence of the work of art, namely *Riß*, is design. The translation means to refer to a very restricted understanding of design, as in drafting; however, it provides a useful opening through which it becomes possible to say that since what Heidegger is attempting to learn has little to do with what we conventionally understand by (gallery) art, what he is actually concerned with is design.

¹³ In other words, the residual Platonism of Nietzsche, those elements that tend to hypostatise the *eidōs* of things, divorcing something's *morphé* from its being.

¹⁴ Jean Baudrillard has taught us this subsumption of things by design into pure economies of exchange. Baudrillard to this extent is the most sustained teacher of all that Heidegger teaches in "The Age of the World Picture". See for example "Design and the Environment" in *For a Critique of the Political Economy of the Sign* [St.Louis: Telos, 1981] and *The System of Objects* [London: Verso, 1995]

¹⁵ What is at issue with this distinction is being discussed in an emergent field that could be called the philosophy of being-with-things. The point of this work is to use design to describe the way that, what things are, is not distinct from how they are: their being thingly is meaningful and active, but for all this processual quality, no less material. This work is thus collapsing thingliness and things (and not merely the psychological cathexes people make with things: see M.Csikszentihalyi & E.Rochberg-Halton *The Meaning of Things: Domestic Symbols and the Self* [New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981]), showing how the essence of something is its existence. The philosophy of being-with-things learns from 'Heidegger' that humans exist in proto-*techné*-logical ways, which means that technology is not inherently bad, but rather becomes a danger precisely when it conceals this anthropocentrism, something that is symptomised by the disappearance of things into objects and then signs. See P.Kockelkoren "Toward a Technological Intimacy with Things" *Research in Philosophy and Technology* v17 (1998): "I replaced the notion of dead nature, interpreted as a conglomerate of inert things, with that of the expressivity and intelligibility of nature... I want to question the proposition that technology necessarily alienates us from nature... I want to argue that a technologically mediated relation to things is a direct result of the 'human condition'... The question is how we can once again do justice to things through increasing technological mediation, since technological mediation itself is unavoidable." (48) Also P.P.Verbeek & P.Kockelkoren's "The Things that Matter" *Design Issues* v14 n3 (Autumn 1998) which draws on Ihde and Borgmann: "It is because of the way [a microwave] functions as a thing that it co-shapes the cooking and eating practice around it. What it 'is' within those practices, of course, cannot be completely reduced to the oven itself – it remains 'multistable' – but it nevertheless has more 'intentionality' than its designers gave it and its sign-character could accomplish." (38) See also: Clive Dilnot's "To Change the Object Itself: Notes on the Relationship between Knowing and Design" *Form/Work* n2 (1998) which approaches the matter from the other side, arguing that design represents a new knowledge, a knowledge of the way things know; and C.Christensen's criticisms of Dreyfus' excessive anti-representational reading of Heidegger's intentionality – Christensen's attempt to de-absorb the way Dreyfus describes concerned comportments opens the way to seeing a continuity between *Being & Time* and "The Origin of the Work of Art", insofar as thingless becomes always essential to the movement of existing ("Getting Heidegger Off the West Coast" *Inquiry* v41 (1998), "Heidegger's Representationalism" *Review of Metaphysics* v51 (1997)).

¹⁶ To this extent, I would like to draw attention once again to the remarkable work of Elaine Scarry. Her *Body in Pain* [New York: Oxford University Press, 1985] provides a way of reading the products of a *poietic techné* as the manifestations of a *praxis*: in other words, Scarry reads designed things as works of art, reflexive world disclosing gatherers of the fourfold.

¹⁷ Concerning this 'ontological design', see the work of Fernando Flores, *Management and Communication in the Office of the Future* [self-published, 1982], and co-authored with T. Winograd *Computer and Cognition: A New Understanding of Design* [Reading: Addison-Wesley, 1987].

¹⁸ I do not mean that design is the mere forceful necessitating of what it projects, but the projection *that* there is some necessary coherence to the environment of the problem into which one is designing. To this extent, the design problem functions like a *quidditas*: what is formulated as the object of the brief is only the region for the leap which is deliberately, that is, de-liberatingly, finding/inventing the essentials of 'what is' there. Design as a discipline, is, like 'Heidegger', self-conscious about charges of arbitrariness, but unlike Heidegger, forever attempting to constitute a method to shore up the 'rigour' of its 'strategies'. See for example R. Buchanan's work on placements ("Wicked Problems in Design Thinking" in V. Margolin & R. Buchanan eds *The Idea of Design: A Design Issues Reader* [Cambridge: MIT Press, 1995]) and H. Simon's work on heuristics (*Reason in human Affairs* [Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1983] and *Economics, Bounded Rationality and the Cognitive Revolution* [Aldershot: Elgar, 1992]).

¹⁹ C. Jones, in *Design Methods*, usefully describes the reflexive nature of design: "Designers are obliged to use current information to predict a future state that will not come about unless their predictions are correct. The final outcome of designing has to be assumed before the means of achieving it can be explored: the designers have to work backwards in time from an assumed effect upon the world to the beginning of a chain of events that will bring the effect about... Designers are forever bound to treat as real that which only exists in an imagined future and have to specify ways in which the foreseen thing can be made to exist." (9-10) And this entails learning circumstances.

²⁰ I believe that the way a design gets naturalized is a useful way of understanding what 'Heidegger' means with the 'guidewords' in *Basic Concepts*, especially "Being is the most reliable and at the same time the non-ground" (BC 52) and "Being is the most constraining and at the same time liberation." (BC 56) Also see in this regard Herbert Simon's *The Sciences of the Artificial* [Cambridge: MIT Press, 1969]. Simon distinguishes between the "natural phenomena [that] have an air of 'necessity' about them in their subservience to natural law, [and] artificial phenomena that have an air of 'contingency' in their malleability by environment." (ix) The latter, which Simon names design, thus comprise a constructivist realm where possibility is prior to actuality. Because this realm entangles prescriptions and descriptions (x), it requires a different mode of knowledge from natural science, though one that given Simon's faith in rationality can still be a science, with a pre-determined (rather than reflexive: cf Luhman's *Sociological Systems* [Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996])

methodological rigour. This tendency in Simon, which in terms of this thesis can be read as an abstractive missing of learning – i.e. decisions can be solved without existential resolution – has been well criticised by H.Dreyfus (in *What Computers Still Can't Do* [Cambridge: MIT Press, 1990] F.Flores (in *Computers and Cognition*) and L.Suchman *Plans and Situated Actions* [New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987]. Simon can also be criticised these days for his initial distinction which no longer holds even empirically. However, if there is a conflation of the natural and the designed, then the qualities of each must also be transferred: in other words, what is missed by Simon and Dreyfus and Flores, is that 'artificial phenomena' depend for their existence and operation upon having attained a certain level of 'necessity'. In the context of this thesis then, Simon's teleological prejudice – designed systems are to be defined by their reflexive 'goal-seeking' behaviour – can be relearned in relation to the *praxical* necessity of learning.

²¹ Well designed things are therefore never mere *mathémata*, taken-for-use by those who could never (re)make them. A well-designed thing rather manifests its making in a way which would allow the user to deconstruct and reconstruct it. This is the craft element of design that is currently being promoted in the name of sustainability, that is, extending the life of products by allowing them to be maintainable, repairable and even modifiable: see Fry *Remakings* and Manzini "Design, Environment and Social Quality: From 'existenzminimum' to 'quality maximum'" in *Design Issues* v10 n1 (1994), "Products, Services and Relations for a Sustainable Society" >http://www.Doors_of_Perception<, "Leapfrog Strategies" in van Hinte.E ed. *Eternally Yours: Visions of Product Endurance* [Rotterdam: 010, 1997]. It takes the form of promoting the simple, which far from being simplistic, is that sophisticated form of design that can resolve a design to the point that it becomes self-instructive. Digitalization, in establishing a discontinuity between hardware and software is exemplary in its non-simplicity, which is not to say that it is therefore unsustainable: there is merely a large design challenge here. What is at issue here can be compared to Heidegger's adovcation of the simple as the essential, as that which precisely makes manifest jointure. See for example *Basic Questions of Philosophy*: "If we try to determine the present situation of man on earth metaphysically – thus not historiographically and not in terms of world-view – then it must be said that man is beginning to enter the age of the total unquestionableness of all things and of all contrivances. That is a truly uncanny occurrence, whose orientation no one can establish and whose bearing no one can evaluate. [Questioning must therefore seek this] most strange [which] is therefore the most necessary. And necessity has its most powerful form in the simple. The simple however is our name for what is inconspicuously the most difficult, which, when it occurs, appears to everyone immediately and ever again as the easiest and most accessible." (BQP 13)

²² Both C.Jones (*Design Methods* [New York: Wiley & Sons, 1970]) and C.Alexander (*The Synthesis of Form* [Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1964]) describe how design differentiates itself from the adaptive process of craft by becoming self-conscious about its abstractive methods. In

Jones it is the pre-planning made possible by imagistic drafting that distinguishes design (18-22), whereas Alexander suggests that the difference comes from the development of design as a profession, with an individual devoting their life to this one activity (rather than having the craft of repairing equipment as one amongst other responsibilities). (57-8) In either case, the emergence of design is linked to what Heidegger teaches us are the traits of the modern age: the *technical poiesis* of individuated representation. Thus in both cases, design comes into existence when an institutional doctrine is developed that is able to be taught (Jones, 62, who refers to it as “learning in the abstract”, and Alexander, 35-6). However, both Jones and Alexander see this as the trouble with design: its abstraction into a method misses what is singular about the situations it designs in; in short, design loses the necessities that guide it, it loses its *way of learning* and becomes what is being merely taken-and-used. Jones attempts to re-singularise design through a sort of methodological pluralism. More interesting is Alexander’s attempt to put the formative nature of *Gestalten* back into the mathematical abstractions of *Gestellen* that he is advocating design should incorporate: ‘we designers must “learn” simultaneously to sense ‘form’ in mathematical abstractions, and sense the ‘fitness’ of design solutions in the same way that a mathematical proof ‘feels’ right’. Alexander thus goes beyond Simon in accepting the radical constructivism of the ‘artificial’ realm with the consequence that rationality is treated as a merely arbitrary method (a self-conscious skewing in other words) that we learn to make essential to our designing in order to apprehend what is problematic in a design problem: see Alexander, 6-10 and the footnote on 194.

²³ Schön’s work on *Educating the Reflective Practitioner* is one of the best ways of accessing this point. What is at issue here is everything that Lacoue-Labarthe has diagnosed as the mimetology of all such *Bildung*-apprenticeships where one must learn by imitating one knows not what until one has learned how to become a model for others to learn by, what Lacoue-Labarthe calls appropriating the means of appropriation – see for example *Heidegger, Art and Politics: The Fiction of the Political* [Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990], 81. See for a classic example, Kant *Critique of Judgement*, trans. W.Paul [Indianapolis: Hackett, 1987]: “Art, as human skill, is also distinguished from *science* ([i.e. we distinguish – translator’s addition] *can* from *know*, as practical from theoretical ability, as technic from theory (e.g. the art of surveying from geometry). That is exactly why we refrain from calling anything art that we *can* do the moment we *know* what is to be done, i.e. the moment we are sufficiently acquainted with what the desired effect is. Only if something [is such that – translator] even the most thorough acquaintance with it does not immediately provide us with the skill to make it, then to that extent it belongs to art... Now since learning is nothing but imitation, even the greatest competence [i.e. – translator] teachability (capacity) *qua* teachability, can still not count as genius... [Thus] the rule [of art] must be abstracted from what the artist has done, i.e. from the product, which others may use to test their own talent, letting it serve them as their model, not to be imitated, but to be imitated.” (170-1, 176, 177) Compare with Kant’s comments about the

unteachability of philosophising in *Critique of Pure Reason* trans. N. Smith [Houndmills: Macmillan, 1933] 657. On this see J. Derrida "The Languages and Institutions of Philosophy" *Recherches Sémiotique/Semiotic Inquiry* v4 n2 (1984).

²⁴ This is why design is not an art in the Kantian sense of what is unlearnable. Hence conversely, design should aim at learnability. This has been acknowledged by D. Norman's influential application of the theory of affordances to design: that is to say, well-designed things inflect (not direct, as in explicitly instruct, nor merely force, as in unconsciously structure) users toward appropriate use. See *The Design of Everyday Things* [London: MIT Press, 1988]. See also Scarry's account of what well-designed things should *already know* about human behaviour and sentience in *The Body in Pain*.

²⁵ There is a polemic here against Arendt's excessive privileging of speech as the domain of the purest appearance of action. Her deprecation of the artifacts of *homo faber*, whilst acknowledging that they sustain the realm of speech, refuses that designed things might also manifest as appearances of action, that they might, in her terms, speak. I see this prejudice as symptomatic of her concealment of learning beneath an insistence upon the effervescence of actions. For a rectification, see again Scarry's way of reading designed things as *phronetic*: or the following suggestion by Gendlin in his "Afterword" to the translation of *What is a Thing?*: The way in which being toward others is inherent in a person cannot be split off from the person's living among things (as though *these* were our relations to other people and *those* were our relations to things). Rather, anything that encounters us is already the sort of thing it is (a door or a gun) by virtue of its having been made along lines of use and purpose by people, both historically in devising such a thing and currently as the makers of the thing." (WT 287)

²⁶ This is a title of an essay by D. Janicaud in his book co-authored with J-F. Mattéi *Heidegger: From Metaphysics to Thought* [Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995]. The essay, written in the style of Heidegger's "Overcoming Metaphysics" problematises the notion of a *Heideggerian* overcoming of metaphysics, and consequently attempts to retrieve what Janicaud calls a 'hermeneutic' or 'dwelling rationality': "Not every act of willing is a seal on [a unilateral] (fore)closure... In the later Heidegger... the will has neither vanished nor collapsed; it has relocated within its originary *mögen*, openness and availability to things." (36) See *Powers of the Rational* [Indiana University Press, 1994].

²⁷ I refer to Derrida's work on the aporia in relation to a situation in which "the time is out of joint." (see "The Time is Out of Joint" in A. Haverkamp ed. *Deconstruction is/in America* [New York: New York University Press, 1995]). In a discussion concerning limits and crossing the line, Derrida describes an aporia as the problem of a lack of anything problematic. Derrida understands a problem etymologically as a "projection... that which one poses or throws in front of oneself, either as the projection of a project, of a task to accomplish." (*Aporias* [Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993],

11) An aporia is therefore “a matter of what, in sum, appears to block our way or to separate us in the very place where *it would no longer be possible to constitute a problem*, a project, or a projection, that is, at the point where the very project or the problematic task becomes impossible... Not that, alas or fortunately, the solutions have been given, but because one could no longer even find a problem that would constitute itself and that one would keep in front of oneself.” (12) An era with a schematic understanding of itself as an ‘age’ is one with a problem to be worked on, much in the style of a Kuhnian paradigm. Our current nihilism, our inability to define our problem, to institute projects of essential learning, therefore suggests that our time is ageless, between ages (see R.Schürman *Heidegger on Being and Acting* [Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990]). However, if such a characterisation were learned, then we would have managed to institute ourselves into a new era, one whose problem would be to find and define our problem. This has been F.Jameson’s strategy of “outflanking” (which he also understands to be a *praxical* project) the paradox of postmodernism’s hypocritical (anti)totalisations: see *Postmodernism: or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* [Durham: Duke University, 1991]. See also M.Haar “Attunement and Thinking” in H.Dreyfus & H.Hall ed. *Heidegger: A Critical Reader* [Cambridge: Blackwell, 1990]: “Distress is the inverse of *techné* and of assurance. Not knowing how to get along, to get one’s bearings, to manage, but *in the face of everything*... Wonder makes one *experience* an aporia, an absence of way out, without there being any formulated aporia.” (163, 168)

²⁸ As mentioned previously, this is powerfully demonstrated by R.Havas’ “Who is Heidegger’s Nietzsche?” in H.Dreyfus & H.Hall eds *Heidegger: A Critical Reader* [Cambridge: Blackwell, 1992]. Havas argues that Heidegger is not criticising Nietzsche’s interpretation of our time, but disputing what stands to be learned with this interpretation: “Heidegger seems to think that while Nietzsche was right about what it means to be human in the present age, in principle he could *understand* what his thinking uncovered about who we have become.” (237) What is at issue is how we ‘turn’ from ‘Nietzsche’ or ‘Heidegger’ to the world.

²⁹ To this extent I am following Heidegger’s quasi-transhistorical suggestion that the nature of an epoch derives from, or at least is evident in, its notion of nature, i.e. beings as a whole, and consequently its idea of what a (natural) thing is. I am suggesting that current perceptions of an ecological crisis evidence an opportunity for relearning the nature of things.

³⁰ I refer primarily to the more Heideggerian work of M.Zimmerman (for a (self-critical) survey of his own and others’ work, see *Contesting the Earth’s Future* [California: University of California Press, 1994], B.Foltz *Inhabiting the Earth* [Atlantic Highlands: Humanities Press, 1995], and the collection of essays in L.McWhorter ed. *Heidegger and the Earth* [Kirkville: Thomas Jefferson University Press, 1992]. See also J.Llewelyn *The Middle Voice of Ecological Conscience* [London: Macmillan, 1993], L.Thiele *Timely Meditations* [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995], W.Marx *Is there a Measure on Earth?* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987], H.Jonas *The Imperative of*

Responsibility [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984], R.Mugerauer *Interpretations on Behalf of Place*[Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994]. What is at issue in every case is what the nature of 'life' is – what does it entail (not just different forms of survival but everything else that makes life worth living) and who (or what) should therefore have their way of living sustained?

³¹ Heideggerians sometimes come close to thinking that the ecological crisis is something of an empirical verification of Heidegger's teachings: "Well before 'environmentalists' appeared among us and a concern with the ravaging of the planetary resources had taken place... and begun to cause our heedlessness to give way to fear, Heidegger had characterized vividly the 'challenging', exploitative approach of technology to nature... If we listen seriously to Heidegger we cannot but see sharply etched in telling detail the environmental crisis that our technology has brought upon us and that now confronts on every hand." W. & H.Lovitt *Modern Technology in a Heideggerian Perspective* [Lewiston: Edwin Mellon Press, 1995] v2, 696.

³² With reference to the 'aporia' of our times note L.McWhorter's characterisation of Heidegger's contribution to an ecological sensibility in "Guilt as Management Technology: A Call to Heideggerian Reflection" in *Heidegger and the Earth*: "Once we begin to move with and into Heidegger's call and begin to see our trying to seize control and solve problems as itself a problematic approach, if we still believe that thinking's only real purpose is to function as a prelude to action, we who attempt to think will twist with agonizing grip of paradox, feeling nothing but frustration, unable to conceive of ourselves as anything but paralyzed. However, as so many people before us have known, paradox is not only a trap; it is also a... passageway." (3) This criticism of 'sustainable development' as 'planetary management' is widespread beyond Heidegger: see for example the Marxian-Foucauldian criticisms of Timothy Luke in *Ecocritique: Contesting the Politics of Nature, Economy and Culture* [Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997] (but compare A.Gare *Postmodernism and the Environmental Crisis* [London: Routledge, 1995]); see also the editor's "Introduction" to S.Lash, B.Szerszynski & B.Wynne eds *Risk, Environment and Modernity: Towards a New Ecology* [London: Sage, 1996].

³³ See for example L.Milbrath's *Envisioning a Sustainable Society: Learning our Way Out* [Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989], which advocates a program of social learning. Arne Naess's ecosophy is perhaps the most comprehensive attempt to set out the nature of the ontology toward which we need to make fundamental changes: see *Ecology, Community and Lifestyle* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989]. Naess's ecosophy is perhaps also the exception insofar as it does have an explicit educational strategy for that change. The anti-anthropocentrism used is explicitly metaphysical. Nature is projected as a source for *Gestalten* with which individuals transcend themselves into a holistically immanent cosmology. The model for learning is therefore profoundly mimetological.

³⁴ K.Löwith's institution of the 'turn' interpretation in Heidegger was motivated by his desire to vindicate his criticisms of the early Heidegger for excluding the possibility of a 'nature' beyond the world of human being though Löwith is also reductively critical of the later Heidegger's destiny: see *Nature, History and Existentialism* [Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1966] and *Martin Heidegger and European Nihilism* [Columbia: University Press, 1995]. M.Haar is more questioning (and is in the end more interested to critically note the ahistoricity of the later Heidegger's notion of earth) wondering whether "when we see an animal playing; when we stand in a meadow in springtime; when we hear the ceaseless rumble of the waves, no equipmental relation is present which might subsequently be broken." (*Song of the Earth* [Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993], 19). Irrespective of whether this evidences an authentic learning of 'Heidegger', what can be learned with/in/from these presumably 'natural' events, and how? This is T.Sheehan's argument discussed in the final endnote.

³⁵ For defences of this pluralism see L.Thiele's account of fourth wave environmentalism in *Environmentalism for a New Millennium: The Challenge of Co-evolution* [New York: Oxford University Press, 1999] and M.Zimmerman's *Contesting the Earth's Future*, which attempts to do to environmentalism what G.Graff tried to do to the humanities with *The Culture Wars*: for instance, "Even though I regard the current rate of species-extinction as suicidal, tragic and reprehensible, I know that the causes of this loss are complex. In struggling to preserve wild nature, I must enter into dialogue with multiple contestants with varying perspectives on what 'preservation' means. Similarly, deep ecologists must be willing to take the risk of *contesting* Earth's future in cultural and political arenas populated by people with very different perspectives." (104) I do not understand how these scholars of Heidegger can advocate exactly the sort of 'worldview' pluralism that Heidegger condemned constantly throughout his teachings irrespective of any other turnings. For instance, the following account of nihilism given by Zimmerman in his earlier book *The Eclipse of the Self: The Development of Heidegger's Concept of Authenticity* [Athens: Ohio University Press, 1981], reads as brief for his third book on environmental politics (which does explicitly recant his earlier Heideggerianism): "Once the world becomes a mere picture (*Bild*) for the human subject, men contend for the 'right' to organize the picture as it suits them. There arises the struggle for 'world views'... Each competing world-view declares that its system of values best promotes human life." (221)

³⁶ *Fundamental Concepts* criticises all these issues within its general recognition that any consideration of animality, given the ineluctability of our anthropocentrism, must be formerly indicative only, that is, cybernetically (*pace* Heidegger) observing observing. Thus, if ecology is a useful characterisation of the impoverished ring within which animals subsist, this is a clear indication that we moderns should not be trying to learn to live ecologically: see s61.

³⁷ To this extent I believe that L.Ferry's characteristically overstated criticism of deep ecology (*The New Ecological Order* [Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1995]) cannot be avoided. Ferry, in line with his previous criticism of the French assertion that Heidegger's Nazism was a result of his humanism (see *Heidegger and Modernity* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990]), argues that "man is the antinatural being par excellence" (*New Ecological Order* xxviii), that "if humanism has a meaning, it is that the distinguishing feature of man is his not having one: the definition of man is to be indefinable; his essence is to have no essence." (*Heidegger and Modernity* 4) This radically constructivist account of being human, where "all valorisation, including that of nature, is the deed of man and that, consequently, all normative ethic is in some sense humanist and anthropocentrist" (*New Ecological Order* 131) allows Ferry to identify that "deep-ecology[']s rejection of anthropocentrism (Cartesian and utilitarian) in the name of the rights of the ecosphere... causes them to fall back on one of the absurd forms of *anthropomorphism*." (130) It is fairly apparent though that Ferry does not live up to his own determinations. His liberalism on the one hand masks a thoroughly delimited notion of human being (evident in his oppositional dependence upon a notion of 'nature') and on the other hand fails to see that certain ways of being get learned to the extent that they become essential – we are always conditioned, as is Ferry's understanding of anthropocentrism. For this style of critique, see C.Wolfe's "Old Orders for New: Ecology, Animal Rights and the Poverty of Humanism" *Diacritics* v28 n2 (1998) and with regard to other pragmatists, *Critical Environments* [Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998].

³⁸ L.Theile, concludes his article "Nature and Freedom: A Heideggerian Critique of Biocentric and Sociocentric Environmentalism" *Environmental Ethics* v17 n2 (1995) by citing another environmental ethicist: "So far (as often happens in environmental ethics) I have said something like, 'If all of us had this feeling about ecological problems, we could solve them.' This may be true, but it is not much help. There are steps missing. What about those who do not (basically) have the feeling?" (190)

³⁹ See for example how conservative D.Orr's model of education is in his agenda setting and widely extolled *Ecological Literacy: Education and the Transition to a Postmodern World* [Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992], though in a recent article he was suggesting that a study of design be made central to all forms of general education ("Educating for the Environment: Higher Education's Challenge of the Next Century" *Journal of Environmental Education*, 9). C.Bowers, in a number of books (*Culture of Denial, Educating for an Ecologically Sustainable Culture* [Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995], *Education, Cultural Myths and the Ecological Crisis: Toward Deep Changes* [Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993 etc), has been critical of the liberal education models that persist and are even endorsed by environmental educators. He argues that the relationality of ecological matters cannot be taught appropriately through modes of education that continue to promote individual technical abilities. He is therefore especially critical of constructivism

as well as the liberationist aspects of critical pedagogy, though he does promote a sort of social constructivism in which knowledge is collective and traditional. Because Bowers sees anthropocentrism as a form of individualism he unfortunately works with a quite outdated model of culture, certainly one that has no place for thingly design.

⁴⁰ There are for instance quasi-constructivist deep ecologists who assert the importance of constructed *Gestalten*, that is, narratives, to teach us new ontologies. I say, quasi-constructivist in that they admit that what is formative about the narratives they construct is their fictioned aspects, but they nonetheless often believe that these cosmologies are based on 'true stories' as it were. I am referring to the project of re-enchanting science, that is, turning quantum theory into a grand-unifying myth: see the work of T. Berry and B. Swimme (co-authored *The Universe Story* [San Francisco: Harper, 1992]). Exactly what is missing in these 'virtual' versions of a new *Bildung* are things. These remain idealisms, in the strictest Jena romantic sense, because they are absolute, removed from the finitudinal conditions of everyday life. What makes us unsustainable and therefore needs to be relearned and thereby unlearned is not modern *science*, but the modernism of the domestic environments we work and live in that have managed to institute that science as essential to our existence. What we therefore need to learn are not cosmologies but things; not more stories, but more design.

⁴¹ It will become apparent in what follows why I am proposing that sustainability be taken as the guideword for this project of learning rather than say, environmentalism or ecological politics. All these terms have various advantages and disadvantages. Environmentalism conventionally refers to a hypostatized version of *the* environment, that untouched region over there (e.g. wilderness) that must be preserved from incursions from here. However, environment also refers to that which merely surrounds, and as such usefully signals the embodied-learning-and-thus-teaching that environments do. The constructivist approach to sustainability that I am advocating could therefore be thought to be an environmentalism in this sense: see the work on a phenomenological approach to environmental design or 'dwelling' when given an explicitly Heideggerian inflection (D. Seamon ed. *Dwelling, Seeing and Designing: Toward a Phenomenological Ecology* [Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993], D. Seamon & R. Mugerauer eds *Dwelling, Place and Environment* [The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1985]). Ecological politics refers to a similar though more institutional by directed practice of environmental protection. However, as an adjective, 'ecological' usefully refers to the sort of (projected) relational necessity that such a politics would need to have if it is to essentially teach what it seeks to have learned. Sustainability on the other hand, whilst chosen because of its explicit reference to a temporal *dynamis* or *en-ergeia*, has nonetheless already been so colonised by the gaming (in the Bourdieuan sense) of international politics as it attempts to catch up to global capital, that, as nothing more than the sustaining of the unsustainable, it perhaps should now be abandoned.

⁴² The work on the culture of 'nature', particularly on 'nature in the age of its technological reproducibility', is now prolific: see for example the work of the D. Worster *The Wealth of Nature: Environmental History and the Ecological Imagination* [New York: Oxford University Press, 1993], A. Bramwell *Ecology in the 20th Century: A History* [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989], B. McKibben [New York: Random House, 1989], D. Botkin. *Discordant Harmonies: A New Ecology for the Twenty-First Century* [New York: Oxford University Press, 1990], and collections like G. Robertson et al. ed. *FutureNatural* [London: Routledge, 1996]. For a reaction (though not all the essays are reactionary) see E. Soulé & G. Lease ed. *Reinventing Nature? Responses to Postmodern Deconstruction* [Washington: Island Press, 1995].

⁴³ See B. Latour's argument that if modernism is a humanism then *We Have Never Been Modern* [Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993], that is to say, we have never acknowledged the hybrid 'morphisms' by which *anthropos* constructs its modern world. I would also like to signal the work of Ulrich Beck which not only discerns that constructivism that is necessary for any account of sustainability, but also demonstrates an awareness of the institutional essence of what is thereby constructivistically learned. Beck's work develops out of the hypothesis that a certain reflexive modernisation has resulted in what can now be characterised as 'our' "Risk Society": see *Risk Society* [London: Sage, 1992], *Ecological Politics in an Age of Risk* [Cambridge: Polity, 1995], *Ecological Enlightenment* [Atlantic Highlands: Humanities Press, 1995], *The Reinvention of Politics* [Cambridge: Polity, 1997]. By focusing on 'risks', Beck manages to move the issue into a more constructivist realm; for a risk is precisely something that only exists to the extent that someone has learned (of) it. (I bracket the 'of' to indicate that what is at issue is the difference between knowing *of* a risk but feeling *at* a risk, that to say, whether one has learned the risk to the point that it has *praxical* manifestations.) "Dangers, it would seem, do not exist 'in themselves', independently of our perceptions. They become a political issue only when people are generally aware of them; they are social constructs which are strategically defined, covered up or dramatized in the public sphere with the help of scientific material supplied for the purpose." ("World Risk Society" *Theory, Culture & Society* v13 n4 (1996)) Beck is at pains in this essay to correct misinterpretations of his earlier work which see this constructivism as a relativisation of ecological concerns. The point is that like "economic constraints", risks are constructions that get learned to the point that they acquire a certain "materiality or compulsiveness" ("WRS" 7). And learning means here, 'become essentially instituted'. "The closer [these constructions of risks] are to and in institutions (understood as the institutionalisation of social practices), the more powerful and closer to decision and action they are – and therefore the more 'real they become or appear'. Essentialism, when illuminated by the sociology of knowledge, turns into a kind of strategic institutionalisation geared to power and action... The impression of having been constructed is thereby (to a greater or less extent) reflexively and powerfully destroyed, and the appearance of reality-in-itself is produced." ("WRS" 10) Beck is

therefore working precisely with a learning ontology, in which case his description of a risk society can be considered an epochal determination where the nature of things is being discerned in terms of learning. Beck therefore actively espouses teaching society how to teach (i.e. institute as counter-essences) itself sustainable futures.

⁴⁴ The issue of education arises in deep ecology circles as the local vs global: see for example, M.Zimmerman's account of the debates between Sessions and Snyder, and Berry and Atkisson in "The Future of Ecology" in *After Earth Day* Max Oeschaefer ed. [Denton: University of North Texas, 1992].

⁴⁵ I am referring here to Heidegger's poetized thinking aphorism concerning the "three dangers [that] threaten thinking": the third, wherein the saving power rests presumably, is the "evil and thus keenest danger [of] thinking itself. It must think against itself, which it can only seldom do." (TP 8) I take this to refer to the radical constructivism of human learning, hence its capability for evil; 'thinking against' is then the reflexive *praxis* of unlearning what is (currently learned to be).

⁴⁶ See in this regard D.Ihde's latest work, for example, "Whole Earth Measurements: How Many Phenomenologists does it take to detect a 'Greenhouse Effect?'" in *Philosophy Today* (Spring 1997) Ihde usefully indicates the abstractness of a phenomenon such as the 'greenhouse effect' and points to interrelated factors that allow us to learn (of) it: the praxical hermeneutics of working with technical instruments; the *Gestalt* that contextualises and referentialises those relative interpretations, in this case, the idea – though it is here not separable from the image – of the earth. With both these points Ihde risks missing the calculative representation which Heidegger taught us to see instruct(ur)ed., science in our world-picturing age.

⁴⁷ This dense closing section is what I have learned from working at the EcoDesign Foundation and teaching sustainable design. Much of this thesis was inspired by the following argument by Thomas Sheehan, which seemed to articulate what I was inchoately learning in that praxis. When Sheehan's paper on "The Question of Being" ("Nihilism, Facticity and the Economised *Lethé*" in *Heidegger: A Centenary Appraisal* [Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1990]), that is, on Heidegger's relation to nihilism, takes aim at the right-Heideggerians, as discussed in Chapter Seven, one of his targets is deep ecology. Sheehan notes that the conventional interpretation of nihilism is of a situation in which Being "seems to have been stamped out by men... who stamp everything with their own *Gestalt*, turn all entities into reproductions of human will, and thus reduce Being to production" (36); in which case, "is it not the task of philosophy to overcome that nihilism by somehow drastically limiting the power and reach of *techne* in order to make room again for *physis*?" (36) As has been indicated, Sheehan finds this Antiphonianly materialist interpretation of both nihilism and 'Heidegger' to be very wrong: "*Physis* means 'movement-into-presence-to-the-human-essence' (*An-wesung, par-ousia*) whereas Antiphon's elemental stuff does not move at all, least of all toward human beings. Any appropriation of *physis* – for example, into a *technei on* – is for Antiphon

a violation of *physis*. Like the Right Heideggerians who follow his logic to its ultimate historical conclusions, Antiphon becomes the mad ecologist, the Green gone beserk who has to leave the earth in order to preserve it.” (46) Against this then, Sheehan develops a powerful argument for a finitudinal anthropocentrism, one where “To let entities be means to let them be *present*, that is, to take them as endlessly appropriable. And one does that precisely by endlessly appropriating them. “ (42)

The fatedness of the correlation [of *noein* and *einai* as appropriability] is a two-fold invitation. On the one hand, it is an invitation, even a mandate for human beings to appropriate the world endlessly. On the other hand, it is an invitation, even a command, to recognize the incomprehensibility of the ‘origin’ of that endless appropriability. A mandate to appropriate the world and a command to recognize that we will never understand why that is possible... *Everything is comprehensible except the comprehensibility of everything...* This reinscription confirms the finitude of the human essence precisely by opening up the infinity of possibilities of the human appropriation of the world. In this reinscription the *lethe* no longer lies beyond in another world, or over the edge of this world at the point where human performance allegedly runs out of steam. Neither does it lie back behind *techne*, whether behind artifacts in some pristine *physis*, as Antiphon would have it, or behind the human being as worker in the area of some non-technological *Dasein*, as Heidegger himself would seem to argue. Rather, the mystery inhabits technology [what I am now calling design], propels the appropriation of the world, empowers historical nihilism. That is its gift. Therefore we live into the mystery not by being less nihilistic but more. (53)

⁴⁸ Heidegger notes concerning Hölderlin’s “But that which remains is established by the poets”, “Poetry is the act of establishing by the word and in the word. What is established in this manner? The permanent. But can the permanent be established then? Is it not that which has always been present? No! Even the permanent must be fixed so that it will not be carried away, the simple must be wrested from confusion, proportion must be set before that which lacks proportion. That which supports and dominates the existent in its entirety, must become manifest. Being must be opened out, so that the existent may appear. But this very permanent is transitory: “Thus, swiftly passing is everything heavenly; but not in vain.” But that this should remain is “Entrusted to the poets as a care and service.”... When the gods are named originally and the essence of things receive a name, so that for the first time they shine out, human existence is brought into a firm relation and given a basis. The speech of the poet is establishment not only in the sense of the free act of giving, but at the same time in the sense of the firm basing of human existence on its foundation.” (HEP 304-5). In line with this conclusion’s turn away from textualism, I read ‘poetry’ here as design. At issue here is a certain pre-Socraticism: if Nietzscheanism is the modern perversion (by being the mere inversion) of the Heraclitean ‘all is flux’, sustainability is the reversion to ‘the same differing in itself.’

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