

# Heidegger's Reinscription of *Paideia* in the Context of Online Learning

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## Abstract

*One of the questions that Heidegger presents in his paper, 'Plato's Doctrine on Truth' (1998), is the distortion as he sees it of paideia, that is the loss of the essential elements in education. This is characterised according to Heidegger by a misconception of Plato's concept of teaching and learning. By undertaking an historical examination Heidegger provides a means to rectify this loss. With reference to the past, present and future philosophical perspectives of teaching and learning as particular spaces within online learning, an attempt is made in this paper to examine Heidegger's reading of paideia within this context. For many contemporary writers on education the encounter with new literacies, new knowledge and the adoption of an online environment encapsulates practice that challenges the hegemonic order of the institution as the purveyors of knowledge. Teachers within this new environment are however still constituted as experts and their knowledge is seen as ultimately inviolate. Heidegger in his re-interpretation of Plato sees the teacher as leading the students back to their essential being, where they might develop their ability to make intelligible themselves within the space in which they are. This alignment forms an acceptance and a challenge to the metaphysical concepts of uniformity of being and place that limits the potential of knowledge as something that is fixed and complete (Thomson, 2002, p.136). The experience of the social web or Web 2.0 has seen a shift in learning premised upon dialogue, exchange and constantly shifting horizons. Within this context the teacher is recast as a craftsman, creating learning opportunity within dialogic exchange. The heightened sense of involvement that is revealed in this context lays the ground for a future visioning of education where emergence is seen as essential, unlike a re-working of authorization to learn that inhibits student and teacher alike in new attempts at revitalising education.*

## Introduction

When student teachers embark on their first degree qualification there is a sense that this will eventuate in teaching and learning practices that can be differentiated from their experience of schooling (Joint Information Systems Committee, 2007). The aspiration may remain just that, for tertiary institutions, under pressure from central government, seek to ensure systems being efficient in retaining students and improving completion rates rather than encourage any change in pedagogy (Guardian, 2011). This is contrary to the trend in online learning where due to increased investment a revitalization of teaching and learning in higher education has emerged. While the arguments surrounding technology, neo-liberalism and education have been well rehearsed (Peters, 2007) the development and refinement of online pedagogy has continued to progress (Anderson, 2008). Such developments as discussion forums, peer to peer learning and communities of practice, appear in course descriptions implying online learning adopting significant changes in educational practice. While this is encouraging, the widespread adoption of these terms has led to a form of branding by association, so that while advances are made in learning in some institutions, others assume change without re-examining the implications for their pedagogical practice.

The advent of online learning has had a powerful impact in opening a space designated for discussion, debate, social enhancement and exchange of ideas. It has led to a shift in thinking about what it is to learn and engage with others in the nexus of theory and practice. Through advances in this learning environment, a need to distinguish new work against *claims* for new work arises. This paper undertakes an analysis of online learning in relation to Heidegger's writing on Plato, with direct reference to the cave allegory. This is undertaken in an attempt to reveal the potential that may lie in online learning built on foundations that capture student potential as learners and subsequently teachers. Heidegger invites the online educator to re-evaluate how engagement might through practical engagement benefit students to the extent that they can develop their capacity for re-interpreting their ideas in the real world setting.

## Plato, Heidegger and the Cave Allegory

For Heidegger, Plato's *paideia* or *truth* or *education* that emerged from 'Pythagorean obscurity' and 'Orphic mystery' (Thomson, 2007, p. 124), had unparalleled influence over western understanding of education. Heidegger believed that many aspects of Plato's original intention of *paideia* have been either misinterpreted or forgotten. In his paper '*Plato's*

*doctrine of Truth*' (1998), Heidegger showed how distortions in understanding Plato could be challenged by a re-reading of the cave allegory. Heidegger's text shows the technological understanding of being had entered the academy, that is: how education had been reduced to a propositional enterprise. Heidegger adds that while he finds errors in the enframing of education in this historical misreading of Plato, he also looks forward to the possibilities for the future. It is to the future that Heidegger looks most earnestly, in effect producing a new reading of Plato in which education returns to the essence of Plato's thesis. Heidegger's intention is that in re-reading Plato, we move away from the propositional concept of knowledge that dominates contemporary education, towards an acceptance of risk and openness in the learning process. This implies a rejection of unknowingness, encapsulated in Plato's text by the cave dwellers believing the projected shadows on the wall, represents the entire world.

This paper revisits the cave allegory, as an allegory in itself, of the potential that we might see within online learning. This includes the positive impact that arises from students and teachers being absorbed into a process of revealing. This is where many of the elements described by Heidegger are seen to be exemplified in Plato. Most importantly the four stages of the cave allegory mirror ways in which in teacher education students and their learning occurs in a controlled and uneventful environment, where knowledge remains predictable, uneventful or in effect merely functional.

The four stages of Plato's allegory typify man in his relation to truth, knowing and experience, all of which are interrelated in Heidegger's reading of education. In stage one man is seen as merely a receiver of images of the world, where he does not question what is seen. In stage two, man is shown to have no means to question without being practiced in reading what is put before him. In stage three, man is removed from the cave and confronts the world outside where he encounters objects in their own being where he himself has to create boundaries to his experience. For the last stage, stage four, man returns to the cave where he becomes a 'liberator.' Here the experience of seeing the shadows, as shadows occurs, and so in turn this leads to revealing a new encounter with what is obscured or hidden.

### **Plato's Allegory:**

#### *Stage One*

In stage one the cave dwellers, or 'prisoners,' are shackled and blinkered looking up at a wall. Images are projected by puppeteers, who hold up objects that are reflected from a fire behind them, that the cave dwellers observe. This depicts "... our everyday abode – which is revealed to sight as we look around." (Plato 517a8 – 518d7). The *real* for the cave dwellers, is what they see - that which *is*. This setting is home for the cave dwellers where they are *in the world*. This becomes an illusion of *being*, where beings are simply shadows – representations that are controlled by the puppeteers. However there is more to the 'visible form,' whereby a thing presents itself.

The allegory is poignant in referencing ancient Greek understanding of the visible forms termed as the *idea* (Heidegger, 1998). In the allegory the things that are visible outside the cave, where sight is free to look at everything, becomes a concrete illustration of *ideas*. Heidegger points out that if we did not have *ideas* in view – that is a concrete illustration of the *ideas* - we would never be able to perceive this or that as a house or a tree. As Heidegger points out however to see a house or tree, does not mean that the onlooker realises what is seen is everything that passes so easily and familiarly for the real. In Plato, what is presumed to be exclusively the real – what we cannot immediately see, hear, grasp, compute – always remains an incomplete representation of the *idea* and consequently also a shadow. Thus that which is nearest, though it has the consistency of shadows, holds us as humans *captive* day after day. The cave thus represents a form of prison, where prisoners leave all *ideas* behind, as they do not recognise this everyday region as a prison, seeing it instead as the arena of all experience and judgement and the only way in which things are related.

#### *Stage two*

In the second stage the prisoners are turned around to look at the objects and the fire. The shackles are removed but all they do is just look at the shadows and approach a "little nearer to what is." (515 d2). As Heidegger/Plato maintain, the freed prisoner "... will consider that (the shadows) he saw before (without any help) are more unhidden than what is now being shown (to him, by someone else in fact)." (Heidegger, 1998, p. 209) Here for the first time we come across the term *unhidden*. Heidegger infers that *unhiddenness* is a recognition without a cognitive stage of response. This will be returned to later as it is a significant aspect of Heidegger's re-reading of the allegory as a whole. The point being made is that the glow of the fire, blinds those who have been liberated. They see other things but see them in confusion. Heidegger suggests that they lack the prior condition for *assessing* freedom and see only shadows as their reality.

#### *Stage three*

The prisoners are removed from the cave –with a new orientation to ideas and so learn to discern the presencing of beings and of themselves. Here they learn to see beings appear as what they are, not as representations provided by others in the cave. Heidegger suggests that like the eye becoming accustomed to the outside so the 'soul' has to become

accustomed to being outside and has to be in its entirety *turned around* so that it can 'see' all around. This slow turning around has to be nurtured and must *unfold* from a relation that *sustains*. This movement is described by Plato as a graduation from *apadeisua* to *paideia* or from *apeduiesia* - where there is no formation, no fundamental knowing where "no normative proto-type is put forth." (Heidegger, 1998, p. 217) Heidegger also links the German *Bildung* (light) to *paideia*. It is here that the prisoners themselves create boundaries, unlike the puppeteers making their decisions for them, as they allow beings, their light, to presence within their new experience of being.

#### *Stage four*

The prisoners, now liberated, return to the cave. With the return, the *liberators* are able to distinguish different levels of intelligibility on the basis of which beings can appear as what they are. Recall that the cave is the everyday in the allegory. Here the liberators engage in a struggle between two different concepts of truth. One is unhiddenness and the other is cognition over other practices or kinds of familiarity. Plato states that when something is more uncovered, unhidden or unconcealed it also becomes the lowest form of truth. Plato puts *ideas* as higher than other practices or familiarity with the world. However it is in Stage 3 of the allegory that this can be upheld. In the final stage, the liberators access a more fundamental understanding of 'truth,' as they endeavour to draw out new knowing from that which is hidden, veiled or obscured.

### **Heidegger and Plato - Unhiddenness, Hiddenness and Correspondence**

Heidegger describes two forms of *unhiddenness* as characterizing the experience of the cave and that of the *liberator*, the person who tries to take more prisoners from the cave to the outside. The everyday is seen as the cave where the dwellers are blind to the higher forms in which disclosure may occur where things are seen in their own being. For the higher disclosure of the world we need to become oriented to something other than the everyday beings with which we are involved. The being of essences allows for when we regard something, it is not seen as simply observing the qualities to which our eye responds. Heidegger adds that we also discover things as having meaning or significance, a recognition in a more primordial sense. To achieve this kind of recognition there belongs another understanding of what it is that we encounter.

Unhiddenness that prevails in the cave constantly threatens everyday understanding. Unhiddenness is a word that for Heidegger, has been removed from Plato's view of *paideia*. Prior to Plato, Heidegger adds that the usage of unhiddenness was the same, though referred to as *unavailableness*. In Plato, hiddenness becomes through interpretation 'distorted cognition', and underwrites unhiddenness or truth as correspondence. Heidegger maintains that focusing exclusively on correspondence thus prevents any other experience of concealment and consequently other modes of unhiddenness, a process by which we become capable of bringing things into unhiddenness.

Heidegger constantly tries to look for an origin to the way in which thinking is perceived only in terms of rational cognitive operations. He accomplishes this by reinterpreting Plato in terms of hiddenness and unhiddenness, so that truth can be seen in a non-cognitive or non-conceptual framing. Heidegger sees the scientific view in the adoption of the cognitive form of unhiddenness where Plato maintains that a theoretical grasp of the ideas provides the highest form of unhiddenness. However *epistemi* - that is to fix one's thoughts - in Heidegger's interpretation directs the self to something and means a coming closer to occupy *it* myself with *it*. For Heidegger this is quite different to the sense of complete understanding of something, "... a standing over the thing..." (Heidegger, 2002, p. 111). By seeing knowledge in this form implies a total ownership of the concept of the thing. Heidegger maintains that this knowing is just one form of unhiddenness.

Heidegger rejects knowing as familiarity that can be captured in terms of this cognitive propositional form of knowledge. For Heidegger naming things and the properties of an object is not conceptual knowing. A philosophical concept for Heidegger isn't abstract logical content but an attempt to come to grips with things or a situation in order to engage oneself with it. However owing to an historical misinterpretation, Heidegger sees the observable read as the only way of seeing in Western knowledge. This is for Heidegger the knowledge that demands least knowing or familiarity with things that prevents an engaging with a practical knowing of something.

### **An evaluation of Plato's discussion of Knowledge**

In *Theatetus* Plato embarks on a discussion of perception, and equates perception as sensation. This is seeing knowing, aside from being and truth, though Plato admits that perception can enshrine knowledge if it moves beyond sensation. In the discussion following, knowledge is seen as a form of *doxazein* - a thinking or doing or holding an opinion. *Doxa* however is seen as being true or false as it can express an idea of being as well as the attributes of a being. A distorted view occurs when the viewer gives us an orientation to being which doesn't allow itself to show itself as it is, or portrays itself in showing. Here Heidegger sees distortion, as a view that can be held about about being represented by

others, just as in the cave allegory, and hence the manipulated grasp is seen as predominant as opposed to the being unhidden in itself.

As an analogy to the everyday experience we can see how we make at times a comportment towards something the *whatness* of the being. It is the everyday association that Wrathall (2004) notes concerning opening doors. When opening doors between offices, Wrathall points out that as we walk through a building we see a door but do not see it as a 'door' - but something we go through to get to where we are going. It is in the *whatness* of the object that Heidegger sees as a useful approach to how to read beings. The danger, as seen by Heidegger, is that without guarding the sense that there is more to experiencing and knowing, than the observance and cognitive deduction that follows. With reference to *koina* Heidegger suggests that we see an object –such as a table but that tableness isn't known until we know the situation of living with tables, in offices in the home, etc..

Following this line of thought, if we are fixed in our views we do not grasp beings as such. We are ensnared when we have a particular understanding of being. Within this fixed understanding we feel compelled to change only after certain points are presented as important or unimportant within that understanding of being. A reading of the world is thus made that reflects a comportment to being. However this comportment is based on the 'projection' in the world by someone who does not understand a way of being but tries to see a world as projected by that person's understanding themselves or their own way of experiencing beings. It is this venturing into the possibilities that may occur that is understood as antecedent knowing that is later in the paper characterised within the scope of an online encounter within shared knowledge development.

Heidegger adds that the things that we encounter themselves, also demand a *comportment*. Our fundamental way for making sense of the world is therefore nothing natural or necessary, but in this we are attuned by the natural world around us. We are then always projecting ourselves into the world into action and possibilities comporting ourselves in different ways and making sense of objects and situations that we encounter. In referring to *doxa* Heidegger is saying that the primordial un-conceptual element in *doxa* disappears as the *logos* in *doxa* is adopted. As *assertion* is brought into play through the regard to truth as correspondence and this removes all trace of the phenomenal.

### ***Heidegger's reinscription of Plato's cave allegory in the context of online learning***

Online learning has its origin in *distance education*, a term first used to describe the use of non-digital communicative modes (e.g. print based study guides, assignments and correspondence by post). Digital networks and networking communities were initially to achieve similar educational purposes as distance education. That is to provide study materials for those living at a distance from the institution or those who faced other temporal challenges. Beginning as an email service with the rise of the Internet and World Wide Web there has been a rapid growth in the developments of online provision.

Online learning is not as large as the field of all forms of digitally enhanced learning that utilize networks and the Web. We do not yet wish to include many practices that come under the broader heading of elearning, which situate teachers and classmates in the physical face-to-face realm or online learning management systems used to manage resources such as lecture notes, the course booklet and class announcement. The availability of library resources in online spaces could be part of online learning. The defining feature of this environment is the communal and communicative elements of the classroom learning space being online. An important unifying factor in this definition of online learning is learning activity taking place online (both formally and informally). This then allows us to include emerging situations where learning environments can include face-to-face opportunities, both in novel and in the traditional teacher student capacity of *blended learning*.

Online learning, described as networked learning or distributed learning will have a bearing on our discussion when we consider the cave and its exterior. This is marked by *paideia* understood as passages of movement both resisting and striving towards liberation. Here truth becomes a determination to "wrest unhiddenness from the hiddenness" (Heidegger, 2002, p. 223) of our everyday ground. Although online learning could take account of many educational settings our focus will be on the literature, issues and problems that largely assume reference to higher education settings.

### **A discussion of Online Learning**

A review symposium for the journal Education Philosophy and Theory (EPAT) conducted a critical engagement into themes Hubert Dreyfus raised in his book 'On the Internet: Thinking in Action' (2001). This special issue involved five participants—Nigel Blake, Nicholas Burbules, Ian McPherson, Michael Peters and Paul Standish. We have chosen to explore the positions held in this publication, as the focus was the future of potential of online learning with respect to Dreyfus' book. This in turn may indicate how we might develop our interpretation of Heidegger's reinscription of Plato.

The year 2002 was a decade on from the birth of the Internet, and we are now almost a decade since the (EPAT)

review was compiled. In the intervening time significant socio-technological developments have taken place. Changes have been witnessed in social media, social networking and affordances of technology coined as Web 2.0. It has been argued that there has been both a potentially deep impact, and a trivialization of education, through the introduction of emerging technologies with new conceptualizations of education in online learning environments. While the difference of opinion is expressed Heidegger's encouragement is for us to combat the unhidden being of things enframed within the current prevailing technological mood of conformity and efficiency at the expense of participation. Dreyfus a decade ago clearly understood as Blake (2002) put it "the Protean possibilities of the Internet" (p. 379). The need to sound warnings whilst still hinting at disclosing new worlds is also advocated by Peters' who comments "It is a thesis as powerful as it is frightening, as simple and elegant as it is prophetic. The Net as a kind of technological *enframing* of being stands at the door. It contains both the danger and the saving power." (2002, p. 405). For Dreyfus the Internet in the 21<sup>st</sup> century cannot play any significant role, as the risks far outweigh opportunities. Peters suggests that Dreyfus is mistaken as whilst "based on appeals to the work of Kierkegaard, Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty... it does seem to overly commit Dreyfus to a philosophy of e-learning which rules out, a priori, developments on the Internet that might substitute for mood, context and embodiment." (2002, p.405). This reply provides us with the question as to what might mood, context and embodiment look like as the digital ground continues to evolve.

Dreyfus takes two examples of online learning to demonstrate how the online environment does not adequately meet conditions for learning. The first is what Blake (2002) sees as a reductive version of an online correspondence course, one that has moved from paper to online but sees little change in pedagogy. The second is at the other extreme of a cyber-theorists vision, where we witness "Extropians and their fantasy of escaping the body in cyberspace" (p. 379). As an online educator at the Open University, Blake does not see himself in any of the practices described by Dreyfus, "...even in vague terms" (2002, p. 379).

Blake explores the embodied nature of speech as the being of online written 'talk,' yet in returning to Heidegger and the cave allegory there are concerns that online communication is not only disembodied in the sense of the physical realm but all other senses too. More specifically the stages of passage from the place captured by reality, as represented in the shadows, to the roles played by the different beings. In linking to new social web practices and communal engagement those liberated who return to beings in the everyday experience of the world; disclose their comportment to the unhiddenness of things. Consideration in our discussion of Web 2.0 social media and social networking discourses draws attention to *paedaeia* in Heidegger's terms.

Standish expresses two primary concerns. Firstly he draws attention to what he calls "a lack of political realism" (2002, p. 407) referring to what he believes is "insufficient sensitivity to the practical and political conditions of current usage of ICT in education." (p. 407) Secondly, he claims that there is a failure to assess the Internet's potential for improvement of education. Standish argues that the visionary picture stands "in the way of our gaining a proper distance on these things." (p. 410) This replacing of vision with reality can be read as a vindication of looking for new possibilities in action that are readily observable in online enquiry within the conceptual practices that would come under the guise of Web 2.0. Leading on from this, Standish offers a number of possibilities in terms of the potentiality of the Internet in higher education – what Standish has said has been reinforced by the evolution of Web 2.0. In reference to his first concern Standish elaborates that a lack of political realism between the pressures of education in globalised populations, and neoliberal views of accountability create imperatives - we have to recognize *real politik* and move on.

### **Mood, context and embodiment as the digital ground**

For Dreyfus it could be said that *shadows* take form in course prescriptions and learning materials that the learner works through as representations of correctness. The mood is passive in which the teacher smooths the conditions for students. This type of online course expects the teacher, or *hidden* curriculum designer, to prescribe a discourse within instrumental rationality a path to perceived goals. There are no challenges to the taken-for-grantedness everyday hiddenness of beings. At its most reductive it is highly unlikely that any change of comportment can occur. In these contexts there may also be little authentic engagement with ideas, or with other human beings. The 'truth' is asserted with no quest for a more critical analysis, reflection or deconstruction. The striving that is in the educative moment Plato/Heidegger describes, are reduced to interactions that focus on technicism, conveyed by shadow puppeteers and questions to teachers that are a minimalist in the endeavour. Courses are perceived by students and teachers alike as a process of assessment. An added cause for concern are administrators seeking cost efficiency by separating course marking, with clear shifts in the proximity of embodied practice between learner and teacher, and learner with other learners.

By returning to the allegory can we exemplify what happens when educators attempt to liberate their learners? When thinking about what this might mean to be turned away from the reflections and shadows, how can educators introduce a questioning of ideas through online dialogue? Plato's allegory reminds us that this is at first a discursive shock for the

cave dwellers, and indeed may remain that way. We draw attention to the trend referred to above, that reports social engagement but little intellectual depth. Heidegger's questioning of thinking, truth and the purpose of education offers an opportunity for a focus on comportment towards the hiddenness of beings, of ideas, and of the idea of ideas. This is a social engagement in line with Standish who speculates on what online learning potentially affords, for 'written talk.' With reference to the cave allegory this might be seen as an embodiment of the liberator and cave dwellers and subsequently between liberated learners and those yet to develop their own comportment towards various levels of unhiddenness. Can this be equated with students who cannot be drawn away from the shadows, who disengage, without inserting anything of their authentic being in the discussions that introduce movement out of the cave? This superficial engagement shuns the dialogical relationship applying pressure on teachers to return to the safety of the shadows. With little opportunity to question the representations of ideas, there may be no desire to, understand why this is important for learning. Even where there is little experience with online learning it can be as though the expectations and assumptions about online learning are not being met. In the context of the allegory how we disclose ourselves to ourselves is related to how we interpret the world and what it is to know. When movement out of the cave occurs, and beings present themselves, not controlled by puppeteers, the learners create their own boundaries within their experience. It is not just the outside sun that shines light but the learners also have a light that they shine on objects that they see (Gonzales, 2009, p. 90).

### **Antecedent Knowledge**

Antecedence as a concept of knowledge, derives from *Being and time* (1926) where Heidegger elaborates that in the moment of the being presencing, a being that already is, discloses the possibilities of the full disclosure of the being's being. This statement questions the rationalist concept of education where a linearity in course design and learning objectives is perceived as truth and foundational knowledge. Heidegger's interpretation allows ideas to come out of reflection on experience within a perception beyond the cave. Pedagogy that recognizes this allows for student invention and tangential working undermining the division between the student and teacher, where the locus of control is placed with the learner.

In returning to the cave the liberated student can experience their being within their passage of learning in terms of foreground and background. Seeing the potential of ideas allows them to as Heidegger emphasizes to "wrest from hiddenness," (Heidegger, 1998, p. 223) to see the learning in the context of the everyday and to see the hidden and recognise the hidden and in turn to see what it is that they learn within that same context. Their condition becomes that of always questioning hiddenness and seeking unhiddenness. This learning Heidegger notes is to be seen in the context of revealing what is in Heidegger's words is veiled, concealed. How the truth is not readily accessible yet to recognize this and accept that the two are inextricably part of learning is a significant level of understanding. The integrity of ideas is no longer hidden but one is the being of beings more unconcealed now significant in the degrees of unhiddenness. This striving – sums up this approach to living where a comportment to everyday life is lived in contrast to a life that is manmade and controlled. The liberated learners see learning in a foreground manner as well as broader manner in which local knowing plays a vital role.

In Web 2.0, in its fullest sense, the students recognize their own being by creating new knowledge in the sense of world disclosing while acknowledging prior knowing what may be obtained from the teacher. As in a comportment to the unhidden there is a curiosity for sharing and developing thinking that evolves. From a pedagogical point of view we are asking - what are then the conditions in which the student might bring their own knowledge and being or experience of living - to bear. Here a comportment in regard to truth from Heidegger's point of view which is not a diminished form of Western propositional correctness is explored in *paideia*. What is revealed is a bringing together and a legitimation of what is to 'see' with the what-ness of what is seen. It in this space students move beyond the modernist concept of what is seen in empirical knowing. The learner becomes a world-discloser. The democratised space of Web 2.0 provides the read write identity that reveals the learners as liberators.

### **Conclusion**

Liberated learners returning to a new sense of the everyday whatness - able to return to the cave - able to discern the shadows for what they are wrest the hiddenness from the unhiddenness, to see beings in their beingness beyond their concealment of the everyday. Clearly the conditions to enable this engagement cannot be taken for granted. This is a phenomena not merely of the technologies themselves but of the interplay between people, and the cultural shifts made possible by communities viewing technologies in a non-instrumental way. From an ethical stance if we are not aware of these operations then we fall back into a form of educational enframing in the employ of structuring and ordering all aspects of education. Referring to the arguments made by the symposium this recognition is made in order to counter the prevailing technicist control of our being and to enact the saving of hope for educational endeavour for future

envisioning. Building on the arguments made by Standish, Peters and Burbules (2002) space has to be allowed for new possibilities of being afforded by the evolution of Internet.

Web 2.0 developments have afforded conditions for learners to contribute narratives, engage with ideas, resources and live experiences with others that challenge a tightly defined linear prescription of a course. It is not hard to imagine learners who construct meaning through communal interactions that are cogent and that lead them into that social learning space where they are able to draw on their antecedent knowledge. In that confluence of sharing possibilities which can be likened to Heidegger's description of hiddenness from the cave. This creates a new role for learners and new demands for teachers where they become, like the artist (Heidegger, 1995) charged with making possibilities from the substrate of the community. This points directly to how insufficient Dreyfus argument becomes. The Internet perceived within the context described of a learning community creates their own meaning, and thus their own being. As Thomson (2002) argues, drawing on Heidegger's thesis, perhaps this becomes the *raison d'être* for the university within the scope of the 21st Century and the next epoch.

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