

Technology,
Technique,
Interplay
Questioning *Die Frage*
nach der Technik

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Abstract ¹

Heidegger's reading of the essence of Technik is beset with a fatal ambiguity between technology and technique which can be traced back further to an ambiguity lodged in the heart of Aristotle's metaphysical concept of power. This unresolved ambiguity, in turn, is intimately related to the historical cover-up of the twofold in the manifold of being between whatness (quiddity) and whoness (quissity). This cover-up is exposed using the example of the art of rhetoric. Ultimately the fog has to lift from the clearing to see, through adequate ontological concepts, that and how all beings are in estimating interplay with one another (the much abused phenomenon of *value*) and above all, that human beings strive to be somewho in a free power play with each other.

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1. A questionable ambiguity in ‘Technik’

“Im folgenden *fragen* wir nach der Technik.” This is the opening line to one of Martin Heidegger’s most widely read and influential papers, ‘Die Frage nach der Technik’, first presented in 1953 in Munich. The “*fragen*” is italicized to emphasize that the auditors now have to let fall all their preconceptions and prejudices and truly allow a question to arise that radically interrogates. This first line is correctly translated into English as “In the following we will pose the *question* concerning technology,” where the word *question* is now italicized. This translation is entirely adequate to Heidegger’s intention in the lecture of questioning Technik, and the lecture itself is known under the correct English title, ‘The Question Concerning Technology’.

But there is a problem with this rendering in English of the German word “Technik”, for not only can it mean ‘technology’ in the sense of applied science, of know-how employed in modern industry that results in typical products of industrial society such as power plants, expressways, jet turbines, powerful computers, telecommunications, etc. etc., but embraces also the spectrum of meanings covering everything we understand in English by the word ‘technique’. ‘Technique’ encompasses not merely all sorts of ‘techniques’ of industrial processing, but the techniques of making love, of cookery, of flattery, of persuasion, seduction and self-presentation, of play-acting, leadership and inspiring crowds, of marketing and ‘selling’ issues and projects, of piano-playing, painting, film-making, dancing, and so on. The phenomenon of technique is much, much more pervasive in our world than that associated merely with ‘technology’. ‘Technique’ is a synonym of ‘art’, such as the art of persuasion or of advertising, and an art is distinguished from science, which is well-founded knowledge.

Since technique is associated with art, the possible rendering of German ‘Technik’ as ‘technique’ would come down on the opposite side to ‘Technik’ understood as ‘technology’, i.e. applied science, as we are familiar with it as a hallmark phenomenon in today’s world. Nevertheless, as I have said, the rendering of German ‘Technik’ as

‘technology’ instead of ‘technique’ is correct in the sense of the *intentions* of Heidegger’s lecture, for Heidegger clearly has the phenomenon of technology in view, and the lecture was presented in a series of lectures organized by the Bavarian Academy of Fine Arts under the title “The Arts in the Technological Age”. It would make little sense to translate the title “The Arts in the Age of Technique” for we do not recognize ourselves in a mirror called the Age of Technique.

Despite the correctness and adequacy of the translation of German ‘Technik’ as ‘technology’, there is still a problem insofar as we take the lecture’s opening line at its word: “Im folgenden *fragen* wir nach der Technik,” (“In the following we will pose the *question* concerning Technik,”) for if this question is to be radically open and without prejudice, the path of thinking pursued in the lecture must deal also with the issue as to why ‘Technik’ is rendered as ‘technology’ rather than ‘technique’ in the sense of ‘art’. But if we read the opening pages of Heidegger’s lecture, we find no engagement with the issue of the broad, ambiguous meaning of the German word ‘Technik’. Rather, it is tacitly assumed that ‘Technik’ is to be understood guided by the “instrumentale Vorstellung” (“instrumental notion”, VuA:10¹) of a power that “herausfordert”, “challenges forth” (cf. VuA:18). One could well say that this is not a problem because it is obvious that the issue facing us today is technology, and not some alternative dictionary meaning as ‘technique’ put forward by a pedant, but then the prejudice of obviousness would be in play rather than genuine questioning, and the question would be partially foreclosed from the outset. Questioning demands an open mind and, because human minds are open, they can be also, and often are, closed.

Of course, Heidegger is not concerned merely with a definition of technology but with its “Wesen”, its “essence” which, he underscores, is “ganz und gar nichts Technisches” (“nothing at all technical”, VuA:9). In *questioning* technology, Heidegger aims not at a correct description of the phenomenon of technology that presupposes what it is, but at

¹ Quoted according to M. Heidegger *Vorträge und Aufsätze* Neske, Pfullingen 1954, ⁵1985.

uncovering its truth, which resides in its *essence*. [Heidegger in this regard resembles Hegel, who similarly makes a distinction between correctness and truth and situates truth in the Begriff, the concept, analogously to how Heidegger situates truth in the essence. But this is an aside.]

In posing the question concerning technology, the path of thinking leads straight back to the Aristotelean doctrine of the “vier Ursachen” (“four causes”, VuA:11) which Heidegger, using the example of a silver libatory dish, proceeds to interpret as four sources of indebtedness to which the silver dish owes its presence as a finished thing ready for use in devotional service. German ‘Technik’ is thus led back to Greek τέχνη, and τέχνη is understood as ποίησις, as “Her-vor-bringen”, “bringing forth” (VuA:15) Ποίησις is then put into relation to φύσις as self-poiesis. “Denn das φύσει Anwesende hat den Aufbruch des Her-vor-bringens, z.B. das Aufbrechen der Blüte ins Erblühen, in ihr selbst (ἐν ἑαυτῷ)” (“For what is present according to φύσις sets out to bring forth, e.g. the blossom breaking open into bloom, from within itself (ἐν ἑαυτῷ)”, VuA:15) So the path of thinking makes a beeline for Greek φύσις on which, as we know, Heidegger concentrated his thinking from early on. From φύσις understood as a way of self-bringing-forth analogous to “craft” (“Handwerk”, VuA:15) as a bringing-forth from another source, the path leads on to Technik as a “mode of disclosing” via the mediation that, “Das Her-vor-bringen bringt aus der Verborgenheit her in die Unverborgenheit vor”. (“Bringing-forth brings forth from hiddenness into disclosure.” VuA:15)

Heidegger asks “Wohin haben wir uns verirrt? Wir fragen nach der Technik und sind jetzt bei der ἀλήθεια, beim Entbergen angelangt.” (“Where did we go off the track? We are asking the question concerning technology and have now arrived at ἀλήθεια, at disclosure”, VuA:16) But this confusion is soon remedied by showing that τέχνη is related to ἐπιστήμη, to knowledge as “eine Weise des ἀληθεύειν” (“a mode of ἀληθεύειν”, VuA:17) But haven’t we gotten off the track even before this, because the same ambiguity in the German word ‘Technik’ is only duplicated, if not amplified by the Greek word τέχνη? Τέχνη is ‘art,

skill, craft in work, cunning of hand, a trade' or simply 'the way, manner or means whereby a thing is gained' (Liddell and Scott). Thus the Greeks know of different kinds of τέχνη such as τέχνη ποιητική, τέχνη οικονομική,² τέχνη χρηματιστική, τέχνη ῥητορική, and so on. These are respectively the arts of making, of household management, of acquiring money and of rhetoric. The art of making includes both the crafts and the arts of making works of art in the higher, finer sense. It should be noted that for Plato in his *Gorgias*, the art of flattery, τέχνη κολακευτική (464c) plays a major role, the art of rhetoric being characterized at length as a mere knack of flattery, which is not a way of knowing, but an art that merely conjectures and guesses, aiming at a target by guesswork rather than knowledge (οὐ γνοῦσα λέγω ἀλλὰ στοχασαμένη, a technique, I say, not of knowing but of guessing, 464c).

Why is it that Heidegger's questioning path of thinking eliminates without so much as a word the very broad spectrum of meaning of the Greek word τέχνη, not only for ancient Greek everyday life, but also and especially in the philosophical discourse of the founders of metaphysics, Plato and Aristotle? Why doesn't this circumstance rate a mention, and why have generations of readers of Heidegger been so amenable to overlooking the sleight of hand in sliding from German Technik to Greek τέχνη to exclusively τέχνη ποιητική and then on to φύσις, whose mode of being is characterized as self-poiesis? [Despite all its merits earned in teasing out an adequate exposition of his thinking, doesn't Heidegger scholarship, which has been doing close readings of Heidegger's writings for well nigh a century, have to be accused of complacency, inertia and pusillanimity? In all fields of scholarly philosophical endeavour, not just in Heidegger studies, the raising of an alternative question and the unfolding of a new insight, another twist, it seems, requires centuries. Be that as it may,] Heidegger considerably

² This particular kind of τέχνη would call for a metaphysics of exchange; cf. my *Heidegger's Restricted Interpretation of the Greek Conception of the Political*, especially Section 5 'Metaphysics of exchange' 2003 at <http://www.artefact.org/untpltc1/rstrpltc.html#5>.

narrows down the domain of phenomena within which the question concerning Technik is asked. We have to ask ourselves with what justification is this narrowing of the field of vision of the questioning mind's eye performed, thus transforming the sleight of hand into an explicitly posed question in the spirit of the opening line of Heidegger's lecture, "Im folgenden *fragen* wir nach der Technik.", "In the following we will pose the *question* concerning technology."

Is the question concerning the technique of acquiring money or the question concerning the technique of flattery or the question concerning the technique of persuasion not worthy of being asked, and the phenomena to which these questions point not *fragwürdig*, questionable in our world? Are they secondary or even trivial questions which, if at all, could be relegated to social sciences such as economics or psychology? Are they merely ontic questions rather than genuine ontological, philosophical questions? The panoply of defensive weapons to ward off any attempt to bring the question concerning technique in the broader sense into play is mighty and even inexhaustible in the hands of those who read Heidegger and willingly go along his paths of thinking without sufficient self-questioning. Human beings, especially academic human beings, have almost endless resources when it comes to evading the (philosophical) question. Vielleicht ist die Wahrheit des Menschenwesens eine Wahrheit so beunruhigend — ein philosophisch kritischer Blick im Spiegel —, daß kein menschliches Wesen diese Entbergung zu verkraften vermag. [Perhaps the truth of human being is a truth so disturbing — a philosophically critical look in the mirror — that no human being can bear its disclosure.]

There must be some justification for restricting the spectrum of meaning of Greek τέχνη to τέχνη ποιητική. One such possible justification would be that only τέχνη ποιητική is *philosophically* relevant, precisely because of the career that it has made within the entire tradition of metaphysics. If we cast about, we soon find Heidegger offering just such a justification. He does this as an aside in one of his most lucid and brilliant lecture courses on Aristotle in the Summer Semester of 1931:

Die Griechen, Plato und Aristoteles, haben nun nicht nur die Interpretation dieses Phänomens der Herstellung durchgeführt, sondern die Grundbegriffe der Philosophie sind aus dieser und in dieser Interpretation erwachsen. (Warum das so ist und was das alles bedeutet und warum die antike Philosophie gerade doch nicht die Philosophie der Schuster und Töpfer ist, das ist hier nicht zu erörtern.) (*Aristoteles Met. Theta 1-3* Sommersemester 1931 GA33:137)³

Now the Greeks, Plato and Aristotle, not only carried out the interpretation of this phenomenon of production, but the fundamental concepts of philosophy grew out of and in this interpretation. [(Why that is so and what this all means and why ancient philosophy was nevertheless not the philosophy of the cobblers and potters cannot be discussed here.)] (*Aristoteles Met. Theta 1-3* Sommersemester 1931 GA33:137)

A further possible justification for the narrowing of meaning can be found also in an earlier text from 1922, published in the *Dilthey-Jahrbuch* [Volume 6 1989] under the title *Phenomenological Interpretations of Aristotle (Indication of the Hermeneutic Situation)*. There we read a central thesis that Heidegger never subsequently retracts, namely, that, for the Greeks, or more specifically, for Plato and Aristotle, the meaning of being is Hergestelltsein: “Sein besagt Hergestelltsein” (MS:26), “Denn der Sinn für Sein ist ursprünglich Hergestelltsein.” (“For, the meaning of being is originally having been made.” MS:50).⁴ But are these assertions by Heidegger really justifications for excluding consideration of phenomena of technique that do not fit the mould of know-hows of making? Doesn’t the narrowing of meaning point rather to something *unthought*, ein *Ungedachtes* in the metaphysical tradition?

It is apparent that Heidegger has his gaze fixed on φύσις as what he regards as the earliest Greek experience of being that was in the sights of the first Greek thinkers, those preceding Plato and Aristotle who

³ Throughout, references to the Heidegger Gesamtausgabe will be given in the form GA33:137 for *Gesamtausgabe* Band 33 S. 137, edited by Heinrich Hüni 1981. All English translations of Heidegger quotations are my own.

⁴ Cf. *Heidegger's Restricted Interpretation of the Greek Conception of the Political*, especially Section 3 ‘Being as Hergestelltsein’ 2003 at <http://www.arte-fact.org/untpltcl/rstrpltc.html#3>.

represent already the late culmination of Greek philosophizing. There is undeniably a movement and an undertow in Heidegger's entire thinking 'back to nature', back to the simplicity of living in harmony with the earth and its bearing of the emergence into the clearing of beings bringing themselves to presence. Especially the later Heidegger's terminology, such as *Lichtung*, *Aufgehen*, *Geviert*, (clearing, emergence, fourfold) and his entire later thinking is redolent of this closeness to nature. The focus on φύσις as the original Greek experience of being in its simplicity, Heidegger claims, could not be held onto in the "Überfulle des erstanfänglichen Anfangs" ("over-fullness of the first, incipient beginning", GA69:62)⁵

Heidegger poses the question concerning *Technik* only against the foil of the early Greek experience and thinking of being as φύσις, and his questioning of the modern world in its oblivion to being and what he sees as "Verwüstung" ("devastation") is summed up in what he calls "die rasende Technik", i.e. technology that has gone mad and is racing out of control. Heidegger's conception of power, therefore, is also derived from this unwavering fixation on φύσις and its degeneration from the first beginning into modern technology. In the 1938/40 manuscript entitled *The History of Beyng* he asks "Woher das Sein als Macht?" ("Whence being as power?" GA69:62) and replies by way of assertion, "Das Sein als Macht ist das Unwesen des erstanfänglichen, ungegründeten Wesens des Seins als φύσις." ("Being as power is the degenerate essence of the essencing of being as φύσις [left] ungrounded in the first beginning." GA69:62)

Heidegger's thesis is that the very first beginning with the thinking of φύσις itself contained an ambiguity, a negation, so that the essence of φύσις, because it was left ungrounded, could degenerate into a prevailing of power. In tracing back the philosophical tradition to this first Greek beginning, Heidegger sees the task for thinking in grounding an Other Beginning as a grounding of what remained ungrounded in the first beginning. According to Heidegger, the first beginning starts to go

⁵ *Gesamtausgabe* Band 69 *Die Geschichte des Seyns (1938/40)* edited by Peter Trawny 1998.

off the track and into degeneration very early on, in fact, as soon as φύσις itself comes to be experienced and thought as a kind of making, culminating in what Heidegger sees in today's world as die Machenschaften der Macht (the machinations of power) in every conceivable domain of human being.

Das Wort 'Machenschaft' hat hier einen wesensgeschichtli/chen Bedeutungsbezug zur φύσις, sofern sie alsbald für eine Weise der ποίησις (Mache) im weitesten Sinne genommen wurde." (GA69:46f)

The word 'machination' here has an essential historical semantic relation to φύσις insofar as it was soon taken to be a mode of ποίησις (making) in the broadest sense.

This says that the understanding of φύσις as self-poiesis, its conceptualization as such by Aristotle, was already a first, fatal step in the degeneration of the experience of nature with the ultimate historical consequence at the consummation of metaphysics, in an end-game of the world, that nature itself is exposed ruthlessly to the making and machinations of technological power. Thinking φύσις as self-poiesis, according to Heidegger, already infects it with making, with effective causes, with endless chains of mere cause and effect, with manipulation and the whole string of metaphysical consequences that Heidegger sets out in his history of being, which we will now briefly take up.

2. The dire consequences of Sein thought as Wirklichkeit

Die Stufen des seynsgeschichtlichen Denkens, das die Macht im Wesen zu denken versucht und in dessen eigener Geschichte das Wesen der Macht erfragt wird und allein erfragbar bleibt, lassen sich durch diese Folge anzeigen:

Sein als Wirklichkeit.

Wirklichkeit als Subjektivität.

Die Subjektivität als der Wille zur Macht.

Der Wille zur Macht als Sein.

Das Sein als Macht.

Die Macht als Machenschaft.

Die Machenschaft als Loslassung des Seienden an es selbst.

Die Loslassung des Seienden und die Verwüstung. (GA69:72f)

The stages in the thinking of the history of being which attempts to think power in its essence and in whose own history the essence of power is questioned and solely remains questionable can be indicated by the following sequence:

Being as actuality.

Actuality as subjectivity.

Subjectivity as will to power.

Will to power as being.

Being as power.

Power as machination.

Machination as letting beings loose on themselves.

The letting loose of beings and devastation. (GA69:72f)

This series of consequences makes dire reading, but it remains a concatenation of terms each of which has to be unfolded phenomenologically if the chain is to have a validity beyond mere hints, murmurings, assertions, assurances and auto-suggestive conjurings. The first link in the chain is crucial, for the consequences will flow from it. This first link is *Wirklichkeit*, actuality. To those who regard the starting-point of the above sequence with “being as actuality” as “*willkürlich*” (“arbitrary”, GA69:73), Heidegger replies, “*daß die Geschichte des Seins in einer Geschichte des ‘Existenz’-begriffes sich darstellen kann*” (“that the history of being can be represented in a history of the concept of ‘existence’”, *ibid.*) and that, “*die Wirklichkeit als actualitas in die ἐνέργεια zurückweist und damit in die erstanfängliche Geschichte des Seins.*” (“actuality refers back to ἐνέργεια and thus into the history of being in the first beginning”, *ibid.*) With this key concept, ἐνέργεια, from Aristotle’s *metaphysics* we have a touchstone and a foothold with which to assess Heidegger’s conception of the history of being and its culmination in “being as power” and finally in the “devastation” (“*Verwüstung*”) of the oblivion to being. The concept of ἐνέργεια, together with its sister concept δύναμις, is also the linch-pin for understanding Heidegger’s assertion that “*die Grundbegriffe der Philosophie sind aus dieser und in dieser Interpretation erwachsen*” (“the fundamental concepts of philosophy grew out of and in this interpretation”), namely, the interpretation of the phenomenon of production by Plato and Aristotle.

It is significant that this reference back to ἐνέργεια as the starting-point in a chain of historical castings of being that culminates in being as power, machination and devastation occurs in a section headed “58. Die Wesensbestimmung der Macht” (“The determination of the essence of power”). Why is this significant? Because Heidegger does not mention in this section, nor in the pages preceding or following, the twin concept to ἐνέργεια that directly says power, namely, δύναμις. Δύναμις is the Greek word for power, and it is also the twin concept of ἐνέργεια that lies at the heart of metaphysics and which Aristotle analyzes in detail in Book Theta of his *Metaphysics*. Instead of starting with Wirklichkeit, ἐνέργεια, Heidegger could have started directly with δύναμις and pointed out that φύσις was early on experienced as the δύναμις of self-bringing-forth.

Heidegger apparently justifies his dismissal of familiar phenomena of power such as political, social and economic power in the “Enge einer historischen und politischen Betrachtungsweise” (“narrowness of an historical and political way of seeing”, GA69:72), by referring to the history of metaphysics which is a history of the castings of being, even though he, too, does not in the least refrain from dealing with concrete historical manifestations of power such as the Second World War, as he does in Τὸ Κοινόν Aus der Geschichte des Seyns/From the History of Beyng (1939/40), or even with more specific manifestations of political power such as “Power and Violence” (VI. *Der Austrag. Das Wesen der Macht. Das Notwendige* 60.) and “Power and Crime” (ibid. 61.). So, on the one hand, Heidegger insists on fixating the gaze of thinking on φύσις as the purportedly originary experience of Greek thinking (which soon degenerated into “productionist metaphysics”⁶), to the exclusion of the manifold of social and political phenomena associated with power, whilst, on the other hand, nevertheless retaining the right to comment enigmatically on phenomena such as “violence” and “crime” and “right/law” that hardly make sense without a social, political context. It

⁶ On productionist metaphysics cf. Michael E. Zimmerman *Heidegger's Confrontation with Modernity: Technology, Politics, Art* Indiana University Press, Bloomington 1990 pp. xv and passim.

would seem that for Heidegger, only in the move back to the pure upsurgence of nature in its coming to presence of itself could the perversions of power that are rife in all kinds of social living in today's world be overcome.⁷

⁷ Cf. however Heidegger's 1946 essay 'Der Spruch des Anaximander' (*Holzwege* Klostermann, Frankfurt/M. 1950, 6th corrected printing 1980 HW:317-368) in which he argues that Anaximander is by no means one of the φυσιολόγοι, a natural philosopher, as Aristotle and Theophrastos, and then the entire tradition has characterized him. Heidegger is at great pains to show that Anaximander's fragment concerns *all* beings, τὰ ὄντα, including natural things, made things, gods and human beings, circumstances, moods, social practices and usages, etc. The fragment we have reads, ἐξ ὧν δὲ ἡ γένεσις ἐστι τοῖς οὖσι καὶ τὴν φθορὰν εἰς ταῦτα γίνεσθαι <κατὰ τὸ χρέων· δίδοναι γὰρ αὐτὰ δίκην καὶ τίσιν ἀλλήλοις τῆς ἀδικίας> κατὰ τὴν τοῦ χρόνου τάχιν., where only the part in pointed brackets is today regarded by philologists as genuinely Anaximander's words. Nietzsche translates: "Woher die Dinge ihre Entstehung haben, dahin müssen sie auch zu Grunde gehen, nach der Notwendigkeit; denn sie müssen Buße zahlen und für ihre Ungerechtigkeiten gerichtet werden, gemäß der Ordnung der Zeit."

Diels translates: "Woraus aber die Dinge das Entstehen haben, dahin geht auch ihr Vergehen nach der Notwendigkeit; denn sie zahlen einander Strafe und Buße für ihre Ruchlosigkeit nach der festgesetzten Zeit."

Heidegger contests these renderings and translates Anaximander's words (in pointed brackets) after a lengthy discussion elucidating just why he renders it thus: "...entlang dem Brauch; gehören nämlich lassen sie Fug somit auch Ruch eines dem anderen (im Verwinden) des Un-Fugs." (HW:367 "...along the line of usage; for they let order and reck belong to one another (in the surmounting) of dis-order." *Off The Beaten Track* p. 280) Greek τίσις can mean 'Buße', 'penance', but more originally, Heidegger points out, it means "Schätzen", 'estimation'. I point out that τίσις is related to τιμάω 'to esteem, value, honour, revere' and τιμή 'esteem, value, estimation, honour', a word and phenomenon that plays a major role throughout Plato's and Aristotle's political and ethical writings as one of the major goods of living.

Considering all Heidegger says in his essay from 1946, and twisting it into the side-step, here is an attempted translation of Anaximander's fragment into English: "Whence all beings come to presence, however, thither they also depart <according to the handing-out for usage, for they do justice by giving each other due esteem, thus bringing everything into joint> according to the order of time."

The crux of Heidegger's questioning of Technik and his critique of machination and power as rooted in the history of being as the history of metaphysics thus comes down to an assessment of the ontological concept of δύναμις that lies at the heart of Aristotle's, and also of all later metaphysics. So let us briefly review the concept of δύναμις.

3. The merely single source of power in metaphysical δύναμις

A δύναμις as a power, force, potential, potency or ability is a mode of being which Aristotle characterizes as ἀρχὴ μεταβολῆς ἐν ἄλλῳ ἢ ἢ ἄλλο (*Met.* Theta 1, 1046a9f), i.e. being "a source governing a change in something else or in the same being insofar as it is regarded as something else". The standard illustrative example of this definition provided by Aristotle is that of the τέχνη or art of house-building. [This know-how is a point of origin, a source residing in "something else", namely, a builder, governing the change in wood, stone, tiles, etc. so that in the end or τέλος a finished house comes about, i.e. is brought forth into presence and stands there in completed, perfect presence. The

"Handing-out" (χρέων is related to ἡ χεῖρ, 'the hand') or 'dispensation' is accordingly the earliest thinkerly name for being itself which Heidegger renders as "Brauch", "usage", thus suggesting that the handing-out takes place according to and for customary usage. The coming of beings into presence and the going of beings into absence take place in the clearing of self-concealing presencing itself that encompasses both presence and absence, disclosure and hiddenness, clarity and obscurity, granting and withdrawal. Being (presence itself) grants and dispenses, i.e. hands out, the time for beings to take their stand in presence in the transition from coming to presence and leaving it into absence. In-jointness (justice) is done when beings do not persist in standing in the clearing beyond their time, but esteem and value each other in allowing each other their allotted time in open presence. Esteeming and valuing each other (ἀλλήλοισις) is thus the originary μεταβολή, i.e. exchange, that applies to all beings with regard to their being, i.e. their presence in the clearing (cf. my Cologne Theses from June 2004 at <http://www.arte-fact.org/clgnthss.html> and 'The Principle of Reason and Justice' 2006 at <http://www.arte-fact.org/untpcltcl/prncprsn.html>).

know-how is not the change in wood, stone, etc. itself, but rather the fore-seeing, and therefore fore-knowing, starting-point for such a change, albeit the starting-point *governing* such a change. Insofar as the know-how of house-building resides in the house-builder as a being other than the wood, stones, etc., he is able, i.e. has the power, to (potentially) bring forth finished houses. The know-how of house-building as a power grants the builder the status of mover able to knowingly move other things. The “insofar” qualification built into Aristotle’s definition covers the case when a know-how residing in a being is applied not to another, distinct being but to itself, as in the case when a physician treats himself. In this case, the starting-point for bringing about the change consisting of a switch from sickness to health does not reside in another being, a doctor, but in the patient himself, but not insofar as he is a sick person, but insofar as he is a doctor.

This summary of what δύναμις is as a mode of being is all very well known, especially after Heidegger’s thorough phenomenological interpretations of the phenomenon, so it could seem superfluous to repeat a definition of δύναμις here. But] given that technology and the power of technology are in question here, we must point out that the metaphysical definition of power is by no means beyond question. How so? Because there is an ambiguity that is lodged in the very heart of Aristotle’s definition of power, δύναμις, one that has far-reaching consequences for the whole of metaphysics as we know it from the tradition of philosophy. The ambiguity resides in the pivotal term μεταβολή employed in the formulation of δύναμις, because μεταβολή can mean not only ‘change’ but also ‘exchange’. So what, you might say. From the context it is perfectly clear that ‘change’ is the appropriate meaning, and this meaning is indeed perfectly adequate to Aristotle’s intentions and also to the phenomena themselves, such as house-building, which Aristotle explicitly has in view. And even if ‘exchange’ is included as a possible meaning of μεταβολή, one could ask why that is a problem, especially considering that Aristotle sees that for every active δύναμις there is a passive δύναμις, so that there would be an ‘exchange’ between an active and a passive δύναμις. For instance, the

wood and stone that is worked on by the builder, in whom the δύναμις of the knowledge of house-building resides, must themselves have the passive δύναμις to suffer the changes wrought upon them by the builder. But are the wood and stone then ἀρχαί? No, not at all. They only suffer the change; they only *react* to the active δύναμις in being able to bear it and are therefore not themselves starting-points, origins.

As Aristotle points out in Book Delta of the *Metaphysics*, an ἀρχή is always a ὅθεν, a ‘whence’. In the case of a τέχνη such house-building, the know-how of house-building is clearly the ‘whence’, the point of origin, whence the change or transformation of the building materials proceeds, and not the building materials themselves, which at most are αἴτιοι, i.e. causes to which something is indebted. The metaphysical casting of power depends essentially on one pole being the active source of power and the other pole being the other being, the ‘object’ that is subject to this power and suffers the change brought about by this power. It must be emphasized that the being upon which the power works when it is exercised in its ἐνέργεια is always a *some-thing*. This is apparent especially in the limiting case of Aristotle’s frequent example of medical treatment, for the patient is treated *bodily, physically* by the physician. The physician has a know-how of the possible means of treating the patient’s body to make it healthy, and the patient suffers this bodily treatment. The powers considered by Aristotle are always powers over things, or human beings *qua* things, and *this conception of power is essential to the entire metaphysical tradition of thinking on power*. Power as thought in productionist metaphysics always emanates from a source that governs a change in something else or a human being considered as a passive thing. The action and reaction between an active and a passive power does not alter this but is precisely part of the conception of a unidirectional power emanating from a source which is the ἀρχή for the μεταβολή brought about by the δύναμις. Here the focus is on the paradigm of τέχνη as δύναμις μετὰ λόγου, i.e. as a power that is guided by the fore-sight of the foreknowing sight of the τέλος that is to be brought about by the one in whom the know-how resides.

The difference in the ontological structure between change brought about from a source governing that change and the phenomenon of exchange becomes clear when we consider the simple example of a market exchange. The phenomenon of exchange itself is much broader and richer than market exchange, encompassing, say, not only the exchange of views in a discussion but also the subtle *interplay* in which human beings acknowledge and esteem each other. People associate and maintain social intercourse with one another by exchanging greetings, views, opinions, news, compliments, insults, blows, kindnesses, gifts, waves, glances, sexual favours, etc. But to keep to a very simple example: When goods are sold in the market, there is a seller and a buyer. The seller does not simply suffer to have his goods acquired by the buyer. Nor does the buyer simply suffer to have his money taken out of his pocket by the seller. The sale or purchase transaction is based on an *agreement* between buyer and seller. There is no single source governing the exchange, but rather there are two sources, two ἀρχαί, which must reciprocate and intermesh in an agreement if the exchange is to be effected at all. *Exchange cannot be thought without an interplay between at least two ἀρχαί, and this circumstance already bursts the ontological structure of τέχνη ποιητική that is the paradigm for Aristotle's concept of δύναμις and the entire metaphysical tradition's thinking on power.*

Heidegger's comment that the fundamental concepts of philosophy grew out of Plato's and Aristotle's interpretation of the phenomenon of production refers precisely to the ontological structure of δύναμις in which there is a *single* source of power that is potentially put to work in mastering some *thing*. All metaphysical thinking on power from the Greek beginning up to the present day comes to grief on the phenomenon of the *interchange* between human beings as *somewhos*, each of whom must be considered as its own source, its own ἀρχή. This circumstance has hitherto not been brought into sharp focus by philosophical thinking, despite even Hegel's famous dialectic of recognition and the rise of dialogical philosophy in the mid-nineteenth century.

Whereas the late Heidegger's philosophical energy is concentrated on showing up the fatal historical consequences of φύσις having been conceived as self-poiesis by Aristotle, thus opening the way, via a long historical trajectory, for the unfettered machinations of productive power, here attention is drawn to the circumstance that violence is done to *all* phenomena of social exchange and interplay by metaphysical thinking and even Heidegger's post-metaphysical thinking⁸ because metaphysics' core concepts do not and cannot conceive the other human being *as* another human being. Instead of a retrieval of the unthought origin through a "step back"⁹ in thinking that allows the open clearing of ἀλήθεια to be seen as the site of presencing and absencing, disclosure and withdrawal, an *alternative* and *complementary* way of leaving the all too well-worn ambit of metaphysical thinking is to *side-step* it to the other human being. This side-step allows the estimating

⁸ This despite Heidegger's thorough phenomenological interpretation of the Aristotelean pair of concepts, δύναμις and ἐνέργεια in his lecture course on Aristotle's *Metaphysics* Book Theta 1-3 in Summer Semester 1931 in which he notes, "... For which reason it is no accident that today, despite the long tradition of this pair of concepts, we do not have the slightest serious attempt in philosophy to really get to the phenomena hidden behind the term δύναμις" (... Weshalb es kein Zufall ist, daß wir heute, trotz der langen Tradition dieses Begriffspaares, nicht den geringsten ernsthaften Versuch in der Philosophie haben, den Phänomenen, die hinter diesem Titel der δύναμις liegen, wirklich auf den Leib zu rücken, GA33:74).

⁹ Cf. above all Heidegger's seminar paper 'Die onto-theo-logische Verfassung der Metaphysik' in *Identität und Differenz* Neske, Pfullingen 1957 pp. 31-67, and also the transcript of a later seminar: "If however we at first leave unclarified how the more original [dimension] is to be understood, and that means, how it is not to be understood, it nevertheless remains the case that thinking — both in the lecture itself and in the entirety of Heidegger's path — has the character of a regression. That is the step back." (Wenn wir aber auch zunächst unausgemacht lassen, wie das Ursprünglichere zu verstehen, und das heißt, nicht zu verstehen ist, bleibt es dennoch bestehen, daß das Denken — und zwar sowohl in dem Vortrag selbst als auch im Ganzen des Weges von Heidegger — den Charakter eines Rückgangs hat. Das ist der Schritt zurück. 'Protokoll zu einem Seminar über den Vortrag >Zeit und Sein<' in *Zur Sache des Denkens* Niemeyer, Tübingen 1969 p. 30.

interplay¹⁰ between human beings to ontologically come to light in which we disclose ourselves to and also withdraw from each other as *who* we are so that the phenomenon of *whoness*¹¹ can light up as such for the first time in the history of philosophy. Both the “step back” and the side-step point to something hitherto unthought in the history of philosophy. The side-step leads to an explicit ontological bifurcation in the being of beings into quiddity and quissity, whatness and whoness.

[On the home stretch of this present path of thinking, let us consider the phenomenon of rhetoric to see more closely how it is that metaphysical thinking does violence to the phenomena of human interplay and what is revealed if the phenomena are thought through more considerately.

4. Rhetoric as a paradigmatic technique of social interplay¹²

In English we speak of an art or technique of rhetoric and usually have in mind the phenomenon of public speaking — before a court, in parliament, in public assemblies, in the mass media, etc. — and it is true

¹⁰ On interplay cf. my *Heidegger's Restricted Interpretation of the Greek Conception of the Political*, especially Section 5.6 ‘Exchange as the core phenomenon of social intercourse: interchange’ 2003 at <http://www.arte-fact.org/untpltcl/rstrpltc.html#5.6>

¹¹ Cf. my *Der Mann: Geschlechterontologischer Auslegungsversuch der phallogischen Ständigkeit* Haag + Herchen, Frankfurt/M. 1989 220 pp., and *Phänomenologie der Männlichkeit: kaum ständig noch* Verlag Dr. Josef H. Röhl, Dettelbach, 1999 266 pp. Both these works could also bear the title *Phenomenology of Whoness*. Cf. <http://www.arte-fact.org/kaumstan.html> Cf. also my *Social Ontology: Recasting Political Philosophy Through a Phenomenology of Whoness* ontos, Frankfurt 2008.

¹² For more details, see my *Assessing How Heidegger Thinks Power Through the History of Being*, especially Section 3 ‘Rhetoric as a test case for power over the other’ 2004 at <http://www.arte-fact.org/untpltcl/pwrrhtrc.html#3>. An interpretation of interplay as *angeletics* is provided by Rafael Capurro; cf. e.g. ‘What is Angeletics’ 2000, available at <http://www.capurro.de/angeletics.html> and ‘Angeletics - A Message Theory’ 2003, available at http://www.capurro.de/angeletics_zkm.html

that these are prime sites where rhetoric comes into its own. But rhetoric can also be seen more broadly as speaking to win the other over, and this covers great expanses of our being-with-one-another. When Aristotle investigates rhetoric, he calls it a τέχνη, an art or technique, “like all the others” (*Rhet.* A1355b10), and tries to fit it as a “power” (δύναμις A1355b25) into the mould of a δύναμις μετὰ λόγου which he worked out in the *Metaphysics*.¹³ In this way he brings rhetoric into line with the other τέχναι of bringing-forth, even though we may well hesitate to call it a τέχνη ποιητική like house-building. Nevertheless, Aristotle says that rhetoric is an art whose “work” (ἔργον) is “to see in each case the existing means of persuasion” (τὸ ἰδεῖν τὰ ὑπάρχοντα πιθανὰ περὶ ἕκαστον A1355b10). This seeing is the same knowing fore-seeing of the builder who sees the means of house-building with respect to the end of a finished house. The end (τέλος) which the speaker has in mind is to have persuaded his audience.

The key term here is πιθανόν from the verb πείθω meaning ‘to persuade, win over, engender trust and confidence, convince, move’, in short, to bring another or others around¹⁴ to a viewpoint amenable to the speaker’s aims. The medium in which this is done is speech itself, but, as we shall see shortly, it is by no means *what* is said that is crucial in any rhetorical situation. Rhetoric, according to Aristotle, is therefore a power in his sense, residing as a fore-seeing know-how in the speaker which enables him to bring about a change in another, namely the listening others, the audience, to persuade them, to win them over, to gain their trust. Such winning-over is of course a matter of changing the listeners’

¹³ Cf. an investigation of Heidegger’s inadequate treatment of the ontological structure of rhetoric in *Assessing How Heidegger Thinks Power Through the History of Being*, Section 4 ‘Heidegger’s treatment of rhetoric in Summer Semester 1924’ 2004 at <http://www.arte-fact.org/untplcl/pwrrhtrc.html#4>.

¹⁴ The corresponding passive/middle form πείθεσθαι means ‘to be persuaded, won over, moved, to believe, trust, to listen, obey’. Rhetoric is thus a power of moving that depends on listeners’ *allowing* themselves to be moved, so there are (at least) two reciprocal, intermeshing ἀρχαὶ κινήσεως in the rhetorical situation.

mood, of retuning the audience to another attunement more amenable to the speaker's objectives, and it is easy to see in this a budding *Wille zur Macht*. This fits Aristotle's ontological definition of a *δύναμις μετὰ λόγου*, but furthermore, rhetoric is a *δύναμις ἐν λόγῳ*, i.e. a power that 'lives and breathes' in the element or medium of the *logos*. The means of winning over a listener are words themselves, whereas for a builder, the means of building a house are stone, wood, etc. as well as his tools.

But to say that the means of winning over a listener are words themselves is immediately misleading because Aristotle says that there are three *εἶδη* (A1356a1) or 'faces' of means of persuasion, namely, firstly, the habitual stance or character of the speaker, secondly, putting the listener into a 'certain mood' (*διαθεῖναι πῶς* 1356a3), and lastly *what* is said, through which something is "shown or seems to be shown" (*δεικνύναι ἢ φαίνεσθαι δεικνύναι* 1356a4). There are therefore at least four peculiarities of the art of rhetoric in contrast to the other productive arts:

Firstly, it aims at showing or seeming to show something to a listener, thus presupposing that the other who is to be changed by the power of rhetoric is another human being who *understands* what is said and participates in a happening of disclosure or at least seeming disclosure of what is spoken of. (This other could even be taken to be the speaker himself insofar as he is his own listener and needs to persuade himself.) The rhetorical event is thus situated within the open clearing of *ἀλήθεια* to which only human beings are exposed. The other upon which the power of rhetoric works in its energy (*ἐνέργεια*) is not *something*, like wood or stone, but *somewho*, as a listening, understanding human being.

Secondly, what is said is not designed to dispassionately bring the issue under consideration forward with irrefutable arguments. Rather, the very element of rhetorical speaking is passion or *πάθος*, and the speech has to be composed of rhetorical syllogisms, *ἐνθυμήματα*, i.e. arguments and forms of demonstration that 'slip into the heart and soul' (*θυμός*), engendering trust and bringing about a change of mood in the

audience. This presupposes that the other upon which the power of rhetoric works is not only an understanding human being, but a *mooded* human being who is open to the world by way of attunement with it. The speaker cannot work on the listener like a block of wood that can be manipulated ontically this way and that with his tools, but rather, the entire rhetorical happening takes place in the ontological dimension and is only possible because both speaker and listener ‘inhabit’ and share the open dimension of ἀλήθεια within which both understanding and attunement are enabled. The rhetorical situation is a first-and-second person situation, whereas the productive situation of metaphysical power is a first-and-third person situation. Insofar as the art of rhetoric attempts to manipulate the vagaries of mooded human being, it has to be characterized as a δύναμις ἄνευ λόγου, a power *without* the guidance of fore-seeing logos.¹⁵ Of course, this phenomenological truth does not prevent metaphysical thinking from misconceptualizing human beings themselves as certain kinds of things to be manipulated by employing the ubiquitous ontic schema of cause and effect. Nor are techniques of audience manipulation in the broadest sense that employ the schema of cause and effect by any means ineffective; cf. e.g. election campaigns.

Thirdly, the first two peculiarities of rhetoric as an art mean that it is not precalculable like the usual productive arts. The other, listening human being is his or her own ἀρχή. Not only the speaker is an ἀρχή in which the power of rhetoric resides and from whom it emanates in the attempt to win over a listener, but the listener is also an ἀρχή, here understood as his or her own individual source of understanding and being attuned with the world.¹⁶ The listening other as a free ἀρχή is *free* to go along with the speaker’s presentation or not. The listener can

¹⁵ This power without the guidance of the foreseeing logos is not entirely blind, like natural powers such as magnetic or electric force, which are blind natural forces or δυνάμεις in the proper metaphysical sense. Rhetorical power certainly sees an aim, a target, a τέλος, but whether it can hit the target is essentially uncertain because the other human being at which it aims is a free source of mooded understanding.

¹⁶ Perhaps the greatest contradiction in being a human being is *individually sharing* with others the open truth, the Da of the world.

refuse the speaker's attempts at persuasion and remain mistrustful or unconvinced. This makes rhetoric into an uncertain, incalculable art whose means may or may not hit the target. For this reason, as I have already mentioned, Plato characterizes rhetoric as a mere habitude which does not know, but merely guesses, hoping to hit the target (οὐ γνοῦσα λέγω ἀλλὰ στοχασαμένη, *Gorgias* 464c). The word Plato uses to characterize this hit-and-miss art is στοχάζεσθαι, 'to guess', from ὁ στόχος, 'the target'. That speaking to others in the attempt to win them over and persuade them is *ontologically* an uncertain enterprise, and in truth a play, means in particular that this phenomenon and technique falls outside the ambit of those arts that for Heidegger will develop through Western history into modern technology with its total, planning precalculability.¹⁷ This indicates that the other human being as a *free other* and *individual* site of truth eludes the foreknowing, calculating reach of technological machination. *The importance of this cannot be over-estimated, for it is the Achilles' heel in Heidegger's thinking on technology.*

Fourthly, Aristotle introduces an innovation in the treatment of rhetoric by treating not only *what* is to be said to compose a successful, persuasive speech, but also *how* it is to be said, the λέξις or 'delivery' of the speech. This is not merely a matter of arranging the parts of the speech stylistically but of what he calls ὑπόκρισις (C1403b22), literally 'hypocrisy', which he even claims to have "the greatest power" (δύναμιν μεγίστην C1403b21). This is an astounding statement, considering what is normally understood by rhetoric and oratory. But what is 'hypocrisy' thought in the Greek way? It is the art of play-acting, of presenting oneself *as* somewho to others, of projecting one's image of

¹⁷ "In Zeiten der schrankenlosen Planung, der nur rücksichtslose Maßnahmen genügen, ist die Berechenbarkeit alles Seienden diesem als Grundcharakter seiner Machsamkeit zugeschrieben". (69. Das Ungewöhnliche und das Unversehentliche GA69:84)

"In times of unlimited planning in which only ruthless measures suffice, the calculability of all beings is ascribed to them as the basic character of their makeliness." (69. The Unusual and the Unexpected. Note that the neologism 'makeliness' here renders Heidegger's neologism, 'Machsamkeit'.)

oneself. This Aristotelean insight goes to the heart of the matter, for now we can see that the rhetorical situation in which someone is attempting to win over another is not only a two-way exchange between human beings rather than a one-way set-up in which one human being effects a change in another, but also crucially and essentially a situation for *showing off* to another *who* one is in an interplay of play-acting. Not only is this aspect of presenting oneself *as* who one is — or pretending to be who one is *not* — unavoidable in a rhetorical situation, but it is the “greatest power” in such a situation, as we know from the media and advertising in which images are continually being projected. That is, showing off as *somewho* is the greatest means of winning over and engendering trust in the listening other. Compared to the *who*-acting of a self-presentation, the rhetorical arguments themselves are of secondary importance. Today we often hear references to the ‘body language’ or the ‘charisma’ of a speaker as ‘factors’ in the speaker’s ability to influence people, but this is a very insipid aftertaste of Aristotle’s truly speculative insight into the importance of being *somewho*.

The happening of truth in speaking with one another is therefore not merely a matter of things being shown to be (apparently) what they are in the medium of language, but above all of the self-showing of the speaker *as who* he or she is, or pretends to be, to another. Today we think of hypocrisy only morally as merely pretending to be *somewho* as a way of appearing in a favourable light to others. This brings into play the ontological dimension of *whoness* or *quissity* as an essential element of human interlocution in addition to the dimension of *whatness* within which things are shown to be (apparently) what they are. The hermeneutic *as* worked out by Heidegger in *Sein und Zeit* and other writings, which enables the showing and the showing-off of beings *as* such, applies not only to beings as *somewhats* in the world, but also to human beings as self-reflective and self-reflecting *somewhos* in the world who show themselves off, and are ineluctably exposed to the interplay of showing themselves off to each other as *who* they are or pretend to be.

5. Conclusion: The importance of seeing whoness

This dimension of the interplay of whoness, which is one facet of the happening of ἀλήθεια, is beyond the horizon of the power of technique understood on the basis of the core metaphysical concepts of δύναμις and ἐνέργεια because metaphysical δύναμις μετὰ λόγου thinks only the one-sided emanation of power from a human ἀρχή over something, or over human beings understood as things. Only once the dimension of whoness comes into explicit view (für sich) on the horizon of thinking, when the fog lifts from the clearing of ἀλήθεια, wenn der philosophische Nebel sich lichtet, will we truly be able to take the side-step out of the historical trajectory laid down in the casting of metaphysical thinking in the first Greek beginning.]

The dimension of whoness is a fold sui generis in the manifold of open timespace that must be distinguished from the whatness of the historical series of metaphysical castings of beings as a whole and also saved from the grip of the social sciences that can only get a theoretical and ultimately practical hold on human being itself by conceiving it as a kind of whatness.

In moving from technology, on which Heidegger's thinking was single-mindedly focused, to technique, which broadens the horizon, and then to interplay, in which the other comes into play in an exchange and interchange, we prepare the way for reconsidering the one-sided metaphysical casting of power in favour of a casting of being as the stage of presence on which beings estimate each other in their mutual interchanges, as it is said in the most ancient saying of Western thinking, the fragment of Anaximander: "...for they do justice by giving each other due esteem, thus bringing everything into joint...".

Finally, by way of a hint that can no longer be filled out here, I would like to point out that, ironically, it is Heidegger himself who draws attention to the fact that the very first thinkerly word for being is τὸ χρεών from Anaximander's fragment. Heidegger renders τὸ χρεών as "der Brauch", "usage" and interprets it as "das einhändigende Aushändigen des Anwesenden je in eine Weile im Unverborgenen" ("the one-handed handing-out of what is present each into its own

whiling in unconcealment”, HW:364). So, in the end or rather, in the beginning, it is precisely *not* φύσις that is the first thinkerly word for being, even according to Heidegger himself. So, contra Heidegger, starting already with “der älteste Spruch des abendländischen Denkens” (“the oldest saying of Western thinking”, HW:317), Anaximander’s fragment, we are called on to think usage, justice and esteem in a way that itself does justice to the phenomena of human interplay. Esteeming and valuing each other (ἀλλήλοισις) is the originary μεταβολή, i.e. exchange, that applies to *all* beings with regard to their being, that is, to their presence in the clearing.¹⁸ Herein lies perhaps a possibility of thinking a confluence of whatness and whoness, quiddity and quissity, in an ontological concept of value.¹⁹

¹⁸ Cf. the above note on Anaximander’s fragment.

¹⁹ Cf. my *Der Wert ist ein Spiel — Marx anders denken* 2007 at <http://www.artefact.org/wertspil.html> and also *Social Ontology* op. cit. Chap. 5 iv) et seq., Chap. 9 vi).