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Heidegger and the Greeks

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3 The Intractable Interrelationship of *Physis* and *Techné*

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In a rather remarkable passage in Heidegger's *Beiträge zur Philosophie*, Heidegger asks:

What happens to nature in technicity, when nature is separated out from beings by the natural sciences? The growing—or better, the simple rolling unto its end—destruction of “nature.” What was it once? The site for the moment of the arrival and the dwelling of gods, when the site—still *physis*—rested in the essence of be-ing. Since then, *physis* quickly became a “being” and then even the counterpart to “grace”—and, after this demoting, was ultimately reduced to the full force of calculating machination and economy. . . . Why does earth keep silent in this destruction? Because earth is not allowed the strife with a world, because earth is not allowed the truth of be-ing. Why not? Because, the more gigantic that giant-thing called man becomes, the smaller he also becomes? Must nature be surrendered and abandoned to machination? Are we still capable of seeking earth anew? Who enkindles that strife in which the earth finds its open, in which the earth encloses itself and is earth?¹

In this paper, I will claim that at the time of the writing of this manuscript, which is so preoccupied with the problem of *Machenschaft*, in the late 1930s, and even later in the 1950s, when Heidegger wrote his essay on “The Question Concerning Technology,” Heidegger’s thought is centered around the recovery of the question of the intractable interrelationship of *physis* and *techné*. For Heidegger, it is never a question of thinking *physis* apart from *techné*. Not even in his analysis of our time, which Heidegger calls the age of *Machenschaft*, does Heidegger claim that something like *techné*, transformed into technicity, truly operates outside of its relationship to *physis*. *Machenschaft* relies upon what Heidegger calls the disem-

powerment of *physis*, the failure to acknowledge the *dynamis* that belongs to *physis* and makes human undertakings possible.³ This disempowering is not the result of human activity. It is rather, in fact, the opposite. Human activity and human making are themselves dependent upon *Machenschaft*. Beings give themselves over machinationally, not because of the force of human intervention, but because of the abandonment of beings by being. At the summit of the reign of technicity, calculative thinking, and measureless repetition, *physis* still reigns in its abandonment. There can be no *techné*, not even the absolute reign of *techné* without nature, outside of the relationship of *techné* to *physis*. But for Heidegger, it seems to me, the opposite is equally true. That is, there can be no revealing of *physis* without *techné*. The distortion of the meaning of nature, its virtual disappearance in the technological age, occurs in part as a result of the severance of this interrelationality. What Heidegger calls for is not the turn away from *techné*, back to *physis*, but a return to the mutual favoring that inclines one to the other.

In the opening remarks to his *Physics B I* essay, Heidegger speaks of the many different interpretations of nature that have been offered in history. He points out that these interpretations were always offered in dichotomies on the basis of which, under the guidance of an underlying understanding of nature, beings from nature were differentiated from another way of being.⁴ He calls this originary event an *Ent-scheidung*, a de-cision, recalling (to me) the power of Zeus in Hesiod's account of the genealogy of the gods, when Zeus distributed the territory belonging to each of the gods. Increasingly in later decades, Heidegger became convinced that the decisive incision, on the basis of which being as *physis* is partitioned into regional ontologies, is the division between the natural and the artificial. What I would like to suggest is that this originary parting of being that gives rise to history is not in itself the decline into metaphysics and the forgetting of being, which culminates, on Heidegger's reading, in the reign of the gigantic and machination in our times. This parting belongs to *physis*. Rather, it is the failure to think from out of this division of being and beings that Heidegger's philosophy calls us to question.

Both beings from *techné* and those from *physis* have being, but they have their being in different ways. In other words, it is not a question of two different senses of being, but of two different ways in which beings belong to being. In both cases, movement and being produced or brought forth into being characterizes the way of being. But in each case the *poiesis*, the movement of production, occurs in a different way. No doubt Heidegger's

interest in Aristotle's tendency to think of *physis* in the context of this *Abhebung*, or divisive character, is in order to retrieve an originary insight into nature that contrasts to Hegel's dialectical movement or *Aufhebung*. For Heidegger, the being-together and being-as-a-whole of beings does not imply a notion of a totality of beings, nor does he seek to arrive at a sense of an originary *physis* that overcomes this fundamental discord. Similarly, Heidegger's claim that the ancient Greeks knew nothing of modern subjectivity no doubt is an implicit critique of Hegel's philosophy of spirit, or of a theory that would posit an overarching, guiding, external force that would determine the meaning of and movement of being. But it is also a philosophical commitment on his part to allow *physis* to take the lead in the bringing forth and disclosure of all beings, and to rethink the meaning of human knowledge, and the relationship of *physis* and *logos* on this basis. In the middle of his discussion of art and the artist in "The Origin of the Work of Art," Heidegger suddenly reminds us: "Yet all this happens in the midst of the being that surges upward, growing of its own accord, *physis*."⁴ This retrieval of a nonsubjective sense of a *techné* that belongs to *physis*, a kind of human knowing that is for Heidegger more utterly human than subjective knowledge, is at the heart of Heidegger's project in reading Aristotle, as is evident in his essay on Aristotle's *Physics B I*, as well as his treatment in *Platon: Sophistes* of the relationship of *techné* to *sophia* in the *Nicomachean Ethics*.⁵

Aristotle's distinction between natural beings and produced beings serves to articulate the way in which *kinesis* is the being of natural beings. Produced beings come into being and are through *techné*. In contrast, natural beings emerge out of themselves and stand forth in their being of themselves. In the emergence and appearance of both kinds of beings, the human being's openness to truth plays a role, but this role is different. To grasp the natural being in its being requires *aisthesis*, perception, and what Aristotle calls *nous*, the immediate view of the givenness of the being as such. In contrast, the power of *techné* as a way of knowing and revealing lies in its ability to heed and draw upon the hiddenness of *physis*, the capacity of natural beings to not-be, and to stand ontologically in relationship to what they are not, a capacity that also belongs to natural beings by virtue of their coming to be. This relationship to truth and disclosure of what is that characterizes both *physis* and *techné* has been lost sight of in contemporary technology. For this reason, technology, which attempts to turn away from the project of revealing what is, needs to be distinguished from Aristotle's notion of *techné*, which Heidegger sees as still operative

within the framework of *poiesis*, the bringing forth into appearance of what is and can be, rather than the non-attentive making on its own that characterizes technology.

What is the Greek meaning of *techné*? Heidegger traces the origin of this word in his essay "Building Dwelling Thinking":

The Greek for "to bring forth or to produce" is *tékto*. The word *techné*, technique, belongs to the verb's root *tec*. To the Greeks, *techné* means neither art nor handicraft but rather: to make something appear, within what is present, as this or that, in this way or that way. The Greeks conceive of *techné*, producing, in terms of letting appear.⁶

Heidegger further depicts the Greek sense of *techné* as originally the same as *epistēmē*:

The word *techné* denotes a mode of knowing. To know means to have seen, in the widest sense of seeing, which means to apprehend what is present as such. For Greek thought, the essence of knowing consists in *alētheia*, that is, in the revealing of beings. It supports and guides all comportment toward beings. *Techné*, as knowledge, experienced in the Greek manner, is a bringing-forth of beings in that it brings forth what is present as such out of concealedness and specifically into the unconcealedness of their appearance; *techné* never signifies the action of making.⁷

The need for involving *techné* in any discussion of the truth of natural beings, I believe, lies in this capacity to relate to the concealedness that belongs to the being of natural beings. *Techné* is a mode of knowing governed by *alētheia*, and for Heidegger, to stand in the truth involves a relationship to both concealedness and unconcealment. The realm of *techné* comes to be associated with the artist, the carpenter—not because he engages in the action of making and producing, but because the artist and carpenter have a certain relation to being and beings that forms the basis for these actions. In "The Origin of the Work of Art," Heidegger makes the bold statement: "Beings are never of our making, or even merely our representations."⁸

Heidegger translates *techné* as *Sichauskennen*—a knowing one's way around, a being-familiar with the presencing of beings among which one lives so as to know how to let beings appear in one's world. *Techné* opens up the world in which beings are disclosed.

The *arche* of natural beings is that which originates and governs the be-

ing-moved of these beings. *Kinesis* is their way of being. Change is always from something to something, and therefore presupposes a relationship between beings that are placed and therefore determined in their being. The relationship of beings to each other is not founded in Aristotle on the totality of beings, but on the being-together and being-as-a-whole of beings and on the *metabole* that governs this way of being. Beings are disclosed in their truth when they appear in their worldly character, and Heidegger attributes to *techné* in a special sense an opening to the world in which beings appear.

The most significant way in which natural beings and produced beings are the same is given to us in Aristotle's text—they both have *kinesis* as their way of being. This is also the source of their difference. The *arche* of the being-moved of produced beings is different from that of natural beings. As Heidegger says in the *Beiträge*, *physis* is not *techné*.⁹ But it is precisely this not that interests Heidegger. The difference between *physis* and *techné* indicates a fundamental complicity. Aristotle needs the discussion of *techné* in order to accomplish the authentic disclosure of the being of *physis*, because this ability to be taken over, this being-able to be other than it is, belongs to the nature of beings from *physis*. *Techné* is possible precisely because it attends to this negativity at the heart of natural beings, and brings forth beings by allowing this force of negativity to be revealed.

The Dependency of *Techné* on *Physis*

Techné is the kind of knowing that one carries along in one's everyday dealings and that makes it possible for one to be situated in one's encounters with beings. *Techné* is not first of all a specific knowledge of some particular individual, but a *hexis*, a disposition or comportment that provides the foundation (*arche*) for such knowledge. Thus *techné* is not primarily the process of manufacturing or the manipulation of goods in such a way as to produce a product. Knowing in the sense of understanding and being at home with beings in the world of one's preoccupation is the prerequisite for all producing. It is this knowledge that governs all bringing-forth and from this that a produced being emerges. Heidegger says: "With produced things, the *arche* of their movement and of the rest of being completed and finished is not in themselves, but in another, in the *architekton*, the one who governs over the *techné* as *arche*."¹⁰ Aristotle says as much in the *Ethics*: "All *techné* is concerned with the realm of coming-to-be, i.e., with planning and meditating on how something which is capable both

of being and not being may come into being, a thing whose *arche* is in the producer and not in the thing produced" (NE 1040a 11–13).

In the *Metaphysics*, Aristotle says that the architect is not wiser because he can do things but because he holds himself in relation to *logos* (dwells in *logos*) and knows the causes (Met. 981b 6–7). Like *episteme*, then, *techné* is founded on knowledge of the causes and of the whole and is concerned with the application of this knowledge. Aristotle says that it is this kind of knowing that differentiates *techné* from sense perception: "Sense experience is a knowledge in relation to the individual, *techné* in relation to the whole" (Met. 981a 16–17). Both *techné* and *episteme* are guided by *nous*, the seeing of being as such, as a whole. *Techné* concerns itself not so much with its capacity to know as such, that is, with the opening that grants to it knowledge of the whole, but with its way of revealing beings on the basis of that knowledge. Nevertheless, it is important in order to understand what Aristotle means by *techné*, and how it is distinguished from *physis*, that we not forget that *techné* presupposes this capacity to stand among beings in such a way that they are open in their being. Aristotle places *techné* alongside *episteme*, *phronesis*, *sophia*, and *nous* as ways in which the soul through *logos* is in the truth. *Techné*, then, is far from the disinterestedness in worldly disclosedness that characterizes technology. *Techné* is not world-poor. Nor is *techné* a form of subjective domination that creates beings after its own image in a milieu of infinite repetition without regard to the task of knowing as attentiveness to what is coming to be.

Techné is rather a *hexis*, a being-disposed toward, adopting a stance toward. In that sense, *hexis* involves *prohairesis*, the already having a view of (*skopos*), which guides one's encounters and actions. It is this having-in-advance a view of the being that guides *poiesis*. It is not just *hexis* and *proairesis* that are required for *techné*. It is *hexis meta logou*, a holding oneself in relation to *logos*. And, in *techné*, this means adopting in advance a position toward beings that is governed by *logos*. When this happens, Aristotle tells us, the soul is in the truth. That is, *techné* is a mode of *aletheuein*. But what is this kind of *logos* for Aristotle and what is *aletheia*? *Techné* is only one of five ways *aletheia* is in the soul. How is *techné* as a mode of *aletheuein* differentiated from *nous* and from the *aisthesis* of experience?

Aristotle differentiates *techné* from experience in that experience is a being-among and encountering of beings but without *hexis*—without that prior understanding of world that allows the human being to see beings in their unity and relation. But *techné* requires *aisthesis* in order to discover what can be brought forth. And this is why Aristotle says that experience

precedes *techné* and, in this respect, *techné* is founded on experience. But ontologically speaking, *techné* is prior to experience since it is what at all makes experience possible. How is, according to Aristotle, *techné* different from *aisthesis*? The one who has *techné* knows the whole—that is, he knows the *eidos*, he knows what the being is. He also knows how the being is—the causes that are responsible for its being what it is. *Logos*, then, becomes the gathering together of what is responsible for a being's being. In *techné*, this means the bringing of the *hyle*, that out of which the being is constituted (which is discovered in experience) into the *eidos* that is the *telos*—that which fulfills it in its being.

But what is the *hyle* from which *techné* can bring forth its product? The one who has *techné* finds this already there for him in his dealings. It is there from *physis*. Thus *physis* is always present in *techné*, but it does not show itself forth as itself. This means that produced beings are not natural beings. And yet the *not* is not such as to completely deny the relation to nature that is present in such a being. For, it is precisely this capacity to not be itself that defines natural beings. Here the question emerges: what is the being of beings from *physis*, such that they can show themselves as they are not?

Aristotle tells us in the *Ethics* that *techné* is concerned with *genesis* and with bringing about of something and viewing how this something comes into being which can both be and not be, and whose *arche* lies in the one who brings forth, however not in that which is brought forth. Like produced beings, natural beings are not *always* there but are rather governed by coming into being and going out of being. These are the beings with which *techné* is concerned. Natural beings are only differentiated from produced beings in that their *arche*, the emerging and governing of their beings, is not in another, but in themselves. But this way of coming into being is therefore much different from that of *techné*. This can be made clear by showing how it is that *poiesis* works. Beings from *physis* tend by nature toward their fulfillment. However they do not come to be necessarily. If nothing gets in the way, their *kinesis* will be toward their being themselves. But natural beings are related to other beings in such a way that they can be affected by them. *Techné* is possible because it is an awareness of this fundamental relationality that belongs to beings. Moreover, this being-able-to-be-affected-by, this *pathein*, cannot be something extrinsic to their being. It is the *physis* of natural beings. *Techné* needs *physis*, and the primary way in which the revealing of this relationality that belongs to *physis* occurs is through *techné*. I think this is why Heidegger analyzes equipment-

tality in *Sein und Zeit*, that is, not in order to ignore *physis* and establish his ontology on the basis of *techné*, but in order to uncover this relationality, and the reciprocity between *physis* and *techné* that it implies.

How does *techné* bring-forth? Through *logos*, that is through the gathering together of the causes with a view of the *telos*. The *telos* is there in advance in the mind of the architect. It is a pre-view, a viewing in advance, a seeing (*theoria*) of that which the being is (its *Wesen*, its *eidos*) that governs, as *arche*, the orderings of what is to be brought forth. This pre-view is a *prohairesis*; that is, a foresight that is reaching out toward beings and sees in advance, and yet is resolute in holding itself out toward being, on the basis of which it determines its relation to what is to be brought forth. There is a circle involved here. As previous pre-view, it comes first. But as a holding of something in view it is always coming from and directed from what is to be determined by it. Thus experience precedes *techné* and yet *techné* governs experiences. While *noein* is the pre-view of the being of a being (its *eidos*), and *aisthesis* is a view of beings as not in their being, the *logos* of *techné* holds both in relation to one another. *Techné* is the site where the correlation and inextricable interrelationship of *aisthesis* and *nous/eidos* can be revealed. It is in this relation that they arise into their sameness and maintain themselves in difference. The *prohairesis* has all ways to do with the *pragmata*, and it arises on the basis of its constant already-there relation to the beings it encounters. *Poiesis* involves deliberation, that is, a step-by-step disclosing of what is necessary in order to bring about that which the producer determines as to be brought about. Since this is always particular to the situation, such disclosing cannot be founded entirely on knowledge of the *eidos* of what is there. *Techné* approaches and relates to natural beings by also seeing them as they are coming to be, and thus not in their being. That such things can be taken and perceived in ways that they are not, in and of themselves, means that such beings must have this "not" as a characteristic of their way of being. Also, if natural beings can be taken over and made into other beings, that is, incorporated in a way that they no longer have a being of their own but only appear in another being, then such beings must already be related to other beings in such a way that they can be radically affected by them.

The Dependency of *Physis* on *Techné*

In Heidegger's course on *Metaphysics* Θ 1–3, he discusses the relation of *physis* to *techné* in terms of what he sees as the fundamen-

tal question in Aristotle's treatment of *physis*, which is the way in which *kinesis* or *metabole* ontologically defines natural beings. In contrast to natural beings, the defining characteristic of beings from *techné* is that the origin of the movement and coming to be is from outside, in another. Were we to understand *arche metaboles en allo*, change as exchange, as meaning the *arche* of change in the being that changes, so that the change does not belong intrinsically to the being but is imposed upon it, then a typical example for us might be the potter who changes the lump of clay into a mug. Change in this case would appear to be the alteration that incidentally happens to a thing. But Heidegger insists that *metabole* here also has an active sense, and does not simply mean that something is done to something else. That which undergoes change is in some way itself a force in that it enables the change. The force of *techné* in relationship to *physis* then gets understood not so much in terms of imposition as in terms of exchange. Change in this sense is both active and passive and the issue is not how things that are get affected and changed, but about the capacity for change that belongs to the being as such. It is not about what one thing does to another but about *dynamis* and *metabole* as the being of beings. Heidegger's analysis also requires a rethinking of *symbebekos*, what belongs to natural beings but only incidentally. The accidental is what can be taken over and taken away from the being because it is other than the being itself as such. But the *symbebekos*, the otherness that belongs to natural beings, and gives itself over to *techné*, is for Aristotle one of the many senses of being. It is because of the nature of natural beings that they can let themselves be brought forth in such a way as to be produced through *techné*. In this insight, Heidegger restores the power to *physis* in the relationship between *physis* and *techné*. This yielding power belongs to the essence of *physis*, and makes possible the power of *techné* for the artist who attends to this *dynamis*. In *techné*, this yielding power and this capacity to resist that belongs to *physis* on become manifest.

Similarly, Aristotle also speaks of the *dynamis* that co-constitutes the being of natural beings as *aitia*, as cause. But Heidegger cautions us not to understand causality according to the modern notion of cause-effect that is prevalent in the technological approach to beings. We tend to view cause in terms of a mechanistic transfer of force onto an object. Instead Heidegger says cause and effect need to be seen as mutually and reciprocally binding each other. The discussion of causality provides a frame for similarly interpreting the *poiein-pathein* structure in Aristotle's understanding of *physis*. By *poiein*, Aristotle means the capacity to cause something to be

brought forth, and by *pathein*—the capacity of that which is brought forth to be affected. Noteworthy for Heidegger is the fact that both *poiein* and *pathein* are understood as *dynamis*, as causes and capacities. There is a mutuality and reciprocity involved here in the interrelationality of the change that occurs. Aristotle says that all force is also *paschein*, a being affected, a suffering (Met. 1046a 11–16). This is usually understood as opposite to a doing (*poiein*) or effecting. But Heidegger translates it as *Erleiden*, to tolerate, in the sense of not holding back, not resisting. Force as *pathein*, as letting happen, presupposes a lack, a not-having and not-being, a not-standing-against. Aristotle also speaks conversely of a *pathos* in natural beings that does not let itself be affected (an *a-pathein*), namely the power of *physis* to resist. In fact, Heidegger points out, often we first become aware of the phenomenon of force when something blocks the fulfillment of an occurrence. Resistance (*Widerständigkeit*) involves the being's holding itself there as being-against, as opposing the *dynamis* of change. The being resists that with which it interacts. Thus the being remains. Both coming to be and remaining in this active-passive sense of resisting are governed by *dynamis*. The fragile force of bearing and resisting is just as decisive as the force of doing, of producing. Human *techné* is the exchange of this twofold. The power of *techné* lies precisely in this relation and reference of *poiein* and *pathein* to each other. *Poiein* always implicates *pathein* and vice versa. *Dynamis* is this implication (*Einbezug*).¹¹ The primary way in which we experience force is opposition. What awakens us to *dynamis* is the *not coming through*, the not-being-able. Resistance invades power both among natural beings and in relationship to human *techné*. All coming to be occurs in relationship to that which one is not. In *Sein und Zeit*, the structure of equipmentality and the analysis of significance and involvement (*Bewandtnis*) parallel what Heidegger here discovers in Aristotle. The human interaction with *physis* in *techné* discloses in particular the *stereis*, the capacity to be deprived of being that belongs to the being, the *physis* of natural beings.

Heidegger's analysis of the *dynamis* that belongs to human being, which Aristotle calls *dynamis meta logou*, is also driven by his aim to rethink the relationship of *physis* and human knowing or *techné*. To have *logos* in a human way is to be empowered with and by *logos*. If we translate *logos* for a moment as language, then what we are discussing here is Aristotle's definition of the human being as the one who has the command of language, what Heidegger calls poetry, *poiesis*—the power to bring forth. Why is this

dynamis, why is the poetic saying and gathering, fundamentally distinguished by Aristotle from those beings whose power or force is without *logos*? Is the *dynamis* of the rose not also a bringing forth? Yes, but in a different sense. The rose is not conversant (*Kundschafft*). It does not deliberate and choose and direct its power. It is not worldly. What particularly distinguishes human *dynamis* from force that is without *logos*, according to Aristotle, in that it is open to opposites, to contraries. So what makes *poiesis*, poetic saying, possible is that human being has the power that sees and relates to opposites, that is empowered to hold itself open to the opposition at the heart of being. To bring forth in a human way requires an awareness of what one is not—an awareness of what one needs to bring something about, an awareness of what is available, what is not suitable, what is contrary to and resists our working with it, and so on. It is awareness of contraries, and thereby of otherness, that opens up the neighborhood and world of involvements. This openness to contraries means that there is an inner division, a discordance and finitude that belongs to this force; finitude in the sense that it is awareness of the not, of what does not belong, of what is revealed as other than itself in its dealings. Heidegger says: “*Wo Kraft und Macht, da Endlichkeit*.”¹² It is mostly through our dealings with things, through *techné*, that we become aware of *dynamis logou*, of the *dynamis* that belongs to non-human beings. And we encounter these *dynamis* primarily in terms of a certain resistance, a not being able to bear the forces that encroach upon them. For Heidegger, art has the power to engage and rekindle the strife and divisiveness that belongs to *physis*.

In Heidegger's discussion in his chapter on *Metaphysics* Θ 3 of the Megarian argument against Aristotle's understanding of *physis*, it becomes clear that the failure to understand properly the relationship of *physis* and *techné* was already prevalent at the time of Aristotle and led to a metaphysics of presence and the disempowering of *physis*. The Megarians, as Eleatics, are unable to think of privation (*stereis*) and incapability as intrinsically and essentially belonging to the actuality of beings. What disturbs the Megarians is that cessation of activity, holding back and remaining in one's being, is a not-doing, a not-being actualized, which implies that the *not* can also be present. Moreover, when *dynamis* is present only in the process of an actualization of a *work*, then no separation of human power and the work that is being produced is possible. The *pragma*, the work as work, can be only to the extent that it is being worked on; its being belongs

to the one who is working. The power to set beings to work, the power to engage *physis* in effect gets reduced to appropriation and the power of domination. The independence and self-reliance of beings is denied.

According to Heidegger, Aristotle offers this counterargument to the Megarians: "The actuality of the *dynamis* as such remains completely independent of the actuality of that of which it is capable, whether it has actually been produced, or is only half-finished, or even not yet begun."¹³ Here, in my opinion, Heidegger has worked out the difference between the Aristotelian view of *techné* and the version of power as domination that is prevalent in modern technology. This philosophical moment of insight rescues the *dynamis meta logou*, human converseance, from its mere confinement to *techné* in the restricted sense of technicity. It also frees *techné* for a thoughtful relationship to *physis*.

Heidegger shows in his discussion of Aristotle's confrontation with the Megarians that *techné* is not primarily a transferring of itself onto something else, but a recoiling power in which what is set forth as a work is empowered to be on its own. But then *dynamis* is a double movement, a going forth that makes possible the production of things, and at the same time withdraws, letting the otherness of the things it produces come forth.

The Reciprocity of *Physis* and *Techné*

I would like to conclude with a brief reference to "The Origin of the Work of Art" where Heidegger takes up the question of the intractable interrelationship of *physis* and *techné* on a new level by shifting the ground of the discussion away from *techné* as a human activity and toward a discussion of the work that is produced. I will simply quote two passages. The first:

If the work is indeed to bring thingness cogently into the open region, must it not then itself—and indeed before its own creation and for the sake of its creation—have been brought into relation with the things of earth, with nature? Someone who must have known all about this, Albrecht Dürer, did after all make the well-known remark: "For in the truth, art lies hidden within nature; he who can wrest it from her, has it." Wrest here means to draw out the rift and to draw the design of the rift. . . . But we at once raise the counterquestion: how can the rift be drawn out by the pen of the artist on the drawing board if it is not brought into the open by the creative projection as a rift, which is to say,

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brought out beforehand as strife of measure and unmeasured? True, there lies hidden in nature a rift—design, a measure and a boundary, and tied to it, a capacity for bringing forth—that is, art. But it is equally certain that this art in nature becomes manifest only through the work, because it lies originally in the work.¹⁴

The work of art is the site for the disclosure of the strife between earth and world. What this means is made evident in the final passage with which I would like to close, namely Heidegger's discussion of the Greek temple:

A building, a Greek temple, portrays nothing. It simply stands there in the middle of the rock-cleft valley. The building encloses the figure of the god, and in this concealment lets it stand out into the holy precinct through the open portico. By means of the temple, the god is present in the temple. This presence of the god is in itself the extension and delimitation of the precinct as a holy precinct. The temple and its precinct, however, do not fade away into the indefinite. It is the temple-work that first fits together and at the same time gathers around itself the unity of those paths and relations in which birth and death, disaster and blessing, victory and disgrace, endurance and decline acquire the shape of destiny for human being. The all-governing expanse of this open relational context is the world of this historical people. Only from and in this expanse does the nation first return to itself for the fulfillment of its vocation.

Standing there, the building rests on the rocky ground. This resting of the work draws up out of the rock the obscurity of that rock's bulky yet spontaneous support. Standing there, the building holds its ground against the storm raging above it and so first makes the storm itself manifest in its violence. The luster and gleam of the stone, though itself apparently glowing only by the grace of the sun, first brings to radiance the light of the day, the breadth of the sky, the darkness of the night. The temple's firm towering makes visible the invisible space of air. The steadfastness of the work contrasts with the surge of the surf, and its own repose brings out the raging of the sea. Tree and grass, eagle and bull, snake and cricket first enter into their distinctive shapes and thus come to appear as what they are. The Greeks early called this emerging and rising in itself and in all things *physis*. It illuminates also that on which and in which man bases his dwelling. We call this ground the *earth*. What this word says is not to be associated with the idea of a

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mass of matter deposited somewhere, or with the merely astronomical idea of a planet. Earth is that whence the arising brings back and shelters everything that arises as such. In the things that arise, earth occurs essentially as the sheltering agent.

The temple-work, standing there, opens up a world and at the same time sets this world back again on earth, which itself only thus emerges as native ground. But men and animals, plants and things, are never present and familiar as unchangeable objects, only to represent incidentally also a fitting environment for the temple, which one fine day is added to what is already there. We shall get closer to what is, rather, if we think of all this in reverse order, assuming of course that we have, to begin with, an eye for how differently everything then faces us. Mere reversing, done for its own sake, reveals nothing.¹⁵

Notes

1. Martin Heidegger, *Beiträge zur Philosophie (Vom Ereignis)*, ed. Friedrich von Hermann (Frankfurt am Main: V. Klostermann, 1989), 277–78.
2. Martin Heidegger, *Beiträge zur Philosophie*, 115.
3. Martin Heidegger, "Vom Wesen und Begriff der *Physis*," in *Wegmarken* (Frankfurt am Main: V. Klostermann, 1967), 309.
4. Martin Heidegger, "Der Ursprung des Kunstwerkes," in *Holzwege* (Frankfurt am Main: V. Klostermann, 1972), 48; "The Origin of the Work of Art," in *Basic Writings*, ed. D. Krell (New York: Harper and Row, 1993), 184.
5. Martin Heidegger, *Gesamtausgabe* 19, *Platon: Sophistes* (Frankfurt am Main: V. Klostermann, 1992).
6. Martin Heidegger, "Bauen Wohnen Denken," in *Vorträge und Aufsätze* (Tübingen: Neske Verlag, 1954), 154; "Building Dwelling Thinking," in *Basic Writings*, 361.
7. Heidegger, "Der Ursprung des Kunstwerkes," 48; "The Origin of the Work of Art," 184.
8. Heidegger, "Der Ursprung des Kunstwerkes," 41; "The Origin of the Work of Art," 178.
9. Heidegger, *Beiträge zur Philosophie*, 190.
10. Heidegger, "Vom Wesen und Begriff der *Physis*," 322.
11. Martin Heidegger, *Gesamtausgabe* 33, *Aristoteles, Metaphysik* Θ 1–3: *Von Wesen und Wirklichkeit der Kraft* (Frankfurt am Main: V. Klostermann, 1981), 89.
12. Martin Heidegger, *Aristoteles, Metaphysik* Θ 1–3, 158.
13. *Ibid.*, 187.
14. Heidegger, "Der Ursprung des Kunstwerkes," 58.
15. *Ibid.*, 30–31.