

Nature as Limit

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James Fontini

Nature as Limit

Prolegomena to Ecological Thinking in Heidegger



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Abbreviations, etc.

All of Heidegger's works, barring two exceptions, are cited according to volume and page number in Klostermann's *Gesamtausgabe* (e.g. GA 14, 20). The exceptions to this are the collections *Vorträge und Aufsätze* and *Einführung in die Metaphysik*. Citations from *Vorträge und Aufsätze* refer to the Neske edition and are abbreviated "VA" (e.g. VA 20). Citations from *Einführung in die Metaphysik* are cited according to the Max Niemeyer edition and are abbreviated "EM" (e.g. EM 20). The pagination to the Neske and Niemeyer editions respectively can be found in the margins of the *Gesamtausgabe* volumes.

*

A separate section of the bibliography has been dedicated to the lexicons consulted in this work. In most cases, a lexicon is referenced without pagination according to the author and/or editor name. In exceptional cases pagination to specific entries is offered in a footnote.

Introduction

I. The Nature of the Work in Front of You

What follows is an interpretation of Heidegger's *Spätwerk*, which he characterizes as a "topology of Being".¹ The essay is oriented around the questions of Nature, humankind, and technic, thought from the irresolvable entanglement of these questions as it characterizes Heidegger's thinking in its entirety.² The central hermeneutic and/or philological claim here is as follows: The *topos* implicit in the phrase topology of being does not refer to an epoch of 'historical', philosophical, or technoscientific intelligibility as is often held by the scholarship, but rather to a radical rethinking of Nature through the motif of the limit or *delimitation* in relation to what Heidegger calls *Ereignis*. *Topos* is not a philosophical, technical, or historical epoch or era. It is also not concerned, as traditionally implied, with 'place', but sooner with a heavily qualified notion of 'localization'.

The initial proposal for this project sought to extract the practical import of this hermeneutic claim and situate it within the beginnings of a broader project for practical philosophy. Heidegger's notion of 'thinking', as distinct from so-called metaphysical philosophy, names the primal mode or moment of human action (together with metonyms such as 'dwelling', 'poeticizing', 'building'). The practice of thought, therefore, would be considered as 'topology' or as belonging to a 'topological orientation'. It would respond to the question of 'non-metaphysical action' in the tradition of Reiner Schürmann, where the question of human action is oriented by the recognition of metaphysics' 'closure' (self-sufficiency) as an autonomous rationality.

As the project developed, it became clear that such a task would be difficult to fulfill within the constraints of a single monograph. This became particularly clear as the necessity of rooting Heidegger's prospective 'topology' in his understanding of technic (*technē*) pressed upon the project. Technic cannot be understood without a structural analysis of what Heidegger understands by the term metaphysics, an elaboration of its 'consummate form' as it appears in his reading of the metaphysical canon. Such a task is in itself a daunting

¹ This characterization is made most notably by Heidegger in his 1969 seminar at Le Thor (GA 15, 335, 344f.).

² The use of the neologism technic to translate Heidegger's use of the German *Technik* should be permissible and serves primarily to indicate that this term does not quite mean *technique* and certainly not technology, though it may include both. Thomas Sheehan has done the same in his *Making Sense of Heidegger*.

endeavor. The initial intention of the project would have to build from what is offered here as its own investigation.

I therefore decided that a more feasible directive would be to reorient the project to deal with Heidegger's critique of metaphysics as a theory of technoscientific knowledge and to pair this with a series of prolegomena on his prospective 'topology' in an attempt to reconstruct the development of his thought from the mid-1930s onward. The focus on the importance of the Aristotelian concepts of *technē* and *physis* that sets the stage for this work has since transformed the project again. The end result is less about a concept of *topos* than it is about Heidegger's struggles with the metaphysical concept of *physis* and his need to think beyond it. It remains true, however, that a notion of *topos* or, at the very least, the topological motifs that Heidegger employs in the *Spätwerk* remain essential for understanding the Heideggerian notion of Nature that will eventually be presented here. And while it has been suggested to me, somewhat correctly, that this project is more about rethinking Nature or *physis* in Heidegger than it is about any 'topology', it is impossible to separate this rethinking from Heidegger's own periodization and the motifs that characterize it, with *topos* chief among them. Thus the period Heidegger calls a topology of Being should be understood as that point in the development of Heidegger's thinking where he begins to find an understanding of Nature that is novel in the face of the occidental tradition *as he reads it*. The topology of Being is his 'response' to the impasses of metaphysics. The former will remain incomprehensible if the latter is not understood.

While I will give an overview of this work's three chapters below, it is useful to say something here about the relationship between *topos* or topology and the rethinking of Nature found in Chapter 3. If I do not provide a notion of a Heideggerian *topos* that is unique in relation to the ample literature that exists on the topic, I could nonetheless not avoid the importance of investigating this topic. The Heideggerian *topos* is characterized in large part by two central motifs: the limit and relation or relationality. These motifs are, in turn, essential to an understanding of Nature that is no longer within the bounds of a metaphysical conception of *physis*, specifically the one traceable to Aristotle. It is from the latter that Heidegger develops his understanding of *Technik* and/or *Gestell*. These terms inherit *physis*'s sense of 'the entirety of what exists' (*das Seiende im Ganzen*) as determined by presence or *ousia*. I develop this claim in the second chapter and position Heidegger's *Spätwerk* along the lines of a polarity between *Gestell* and *Ereignis*, representing the technical and non-technical dimensions of Nature respectively. The movement of *Gestell* is a (pseudo) totalizing movement whereby entities and knowledge about them

come to formal intelligibility (the enduring compulsion of presence, *ousia*). The dimension of Nature indicated by Heidegger's development and use of the term *Ereignis* comes to be understood in terms an interruption of this (pseudo) totalization, an 'occurrence' taking place in the margins or enduring 'absence' of Nature. The question of the 'entirety of what exists' (metaphysical questioning) turns to a questioning of the experience of *a* (and *not* the) whole. The motifs of time and space that might generally characterize an understanding of Heidegger's topology become secondary or determined by the importance of limit (delimitation) and relation.

What I initially sought in Heideggerian phenomenology as a prospective topological thinking is perhaps better characterized as a prospective *ecological thinking*. This is a thinking mapped out through the importance of the motifs of limit and relation that determine the Heideggerian notion of *topos*. My use of the terms ecology and ecological, found in the essay's title and again throughout Chapter 3, derive from a rather intensive working through of the Heideggerian *topos* and have implications for how familiar Heideggerianisms such as *Ereignis* and difference (*Unterschied*) come to be oriented here. *Ereignis*, for example, comes to be understood in terms of an intervention into the regimes of presence attributed to the technical movement of *Gestell*. This term, which can and should be linked closely to Heidegger's attempts to transmute the metaphysical sense of *physis*, will also be closely linked with my use of the term 'delimitation'. The sense of 'autodisclosure' often associated with it comes to be understood in terms of an indefinite whole (a localization) that emerges through this intervention into technical presence. Thus Heidegger's later thinking can be distanced from the disclosure of intelligible presence. An attentiveness to *Ereignis* is rather an attentiveness to what remains indivisible and unknown in such disclosure, namely, the movement of delimitation itself. It may be suspected that this means the same as an attentiveness to what Heidegger calls 'the clearing' (*die Lichtung*). This is true as long as the clearing is understood as the clearing away of beings, that is, what is precisely *not* concerned with or by entities or their presence.

The word ecology here can be understood in the sense of 'relationality' that has come to determine its use in contemporary science, namely relations among things and their localized context. It must also be understood in the senses provided by its Greek etymology, particularly the senses of 'dwelling place', 'meeting point', and 'inheritance', the latter being the point at which Heidegger's notions of time, space, and history appear as aspects of a non-technical Nature. Readers will find, I hope, regardless of their agreement, that none of this is without precedent in Heidegger's text.

Since this essay is, in many respects, limited to the form of a highly technical monograph rooted firmly in Heidegger's text, I will spare the reader any long-winded discussions of the questions Nature and human comportment as contemporary issues. The goal of this essay is not to *finally* define Nature, nor to directly respond to the question of 'how to act'. That the research and analysis of this essay has been conducted during, or possibly near the end of, a geological epoch termed the anthropocene, or even more narrowly, among the harrowing *signs* associated with this epoch – scenes of ecological change or destruction, sporadic and acute weather disasters, a global pandemic –, ought to speak for itself. Included in the contemporary situation of this work's undertaking is also a rapid technological advancement that *appears* to continuously outstrip any *collective* human understanding of it. The scope of the questions associated with the contemporary situation vastly exceeds not only anything that might be said in this essay, but also the broader philosophical or academic *milieu* with which it might be associated. This is not to say that such questions and concerns have been ignored. Their import has certainly weighed heavily upon the writing of this work. Any insight into or contribution to questions concerning Nature, humankind, and technology gleaned by the reader would be a welcome result of the work's undertaking. The primary concern here, however, has been to address these problems in the most fundamental or schematic manner possible.

My hope is that the hermeneutic endeavors of this essay, as they move towards an elaboration of certain theses, create a sort of map of where the core motifs, problems, and questions of Heidegger's later thinking can be taken up within a more immediately contemporary and prospective philosophical framework, or, perhaps better yet, where the Heideggerian framework can be truly departed from in a way that his own work may have envisioned. At the same time, the form of this essay is determined by the self-governing limitations that Plato placed upon philosophical writing, according to Giorgio Agamben, namely that philosophical writing is limited to the form of a *proem* (*prooímion*), an introduction or prelude. As Agamben notes, thought (or action) that is not *proem*-determined or *proem*-oriented would be tyrannical in nature, as is 'pure' or 'unblended' law.³ The check that a prolegomatic or

³ Agamben writes: "Just as a pure (*ákratos*, unblended) law, that is, a law without a proem, is tyrannical, so a discourse devoid of proems that is limited to formulating theories – however correct they might be – is also tyrannical." Philosophical writing, as proemial, thus appears bound to a preliminary character that serves to 'blend' (*keránnumi*), and thereby disrupt the tyrannical character of any law or discourse. Chapter 3 will cover related motifs. Giorgio Agamben, *What is Philosophy*, trans. Lorenzo Chiesa (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2018), p. 93.

proemial writing would put on any instantiation of a discourse or theory thus belongs to this project through and through.

I will now provide an overview of this project, focused on two points in particular, with hopes to anticipate any potential difficulties they may pose. The Heideggerian who has followed the main currents of English language scholarship will likely be surprised by the Heidegger presented in this text. While I recognized this during the undertaking of the project, it wasn't until I began reading or hearing the reactions of the others that I realized to just what extent it might be viewed as provocative or contentious within certain contexts. The intention here was never to be revisionist in a polemical sense (as concerns the scholarship). Any novelty lies in having followed a particular set of questions always accompanied by the question of 'how to read Heidegger'. The result is a path through Heidegger that may not have much precedent in English language scholarship. It is also true that in writing this I sought to provide an innovative framework for approaching Heidegger. Though, if I had non-Heideggerians in mind or sought to bring certain important aspects of his thought to a different set of readers, this has not made the text any less demanding.

1. The first point is specific to language. The interpretation of Heidegger given here is born of a meticulous attention to language and Heidegger's use of language. Generally speaking, this feature will not come as a surprise to seasoned readers of Heidegger, though the extent and results of my approach may. It may also cause initial difficulties for readers unfamiliar with Heidegger's use of the German language. The attention given here refers in large part to what I will elsewhere refer to as 'paratactical arrangement'. I attempt to follow the repetition and juxtaposition of terms, motifs, and figures across bodies of work in arrangements that offer more insight than what the source material is able to say through standard syntax and linear synthesis. The development of terminology or concepts in Heidegger often serves to further elaborate other terms developed elsewhere in a text, glossed, or occurring in other texts altogether. My approach here can be considered a further development of what can be done with, what can be seen or heard in the text, the more language-oriented approach developed in the English language scholarship of the 20th century.⁴

⁴ What I might refer to here is the 'first wave' of serious English language scholarship, the work that laid the foundations for Heidegger's reception in English over the past three or four decades. While there are many others whose work needs to be acknowledged here, be it as translators or commentators, I can say that the work of Christopher Fynsk, David Farrell Krell, William McNeill, and Thomas Sheehan were of particular importance to me during my initial encounter with Heidegger. More recent commentaries that pertain specifically to 'language' and that also influenced my initial encounter have been composed by David Nowell Smith and Krzysztof Ziarek.

Its apparent necessity in gleaning what is useful and productive in Heidegger's work is the cause of many problems concerning the reception and continued relevance of this work. It leaves the interested but 'uninitiated' reader with a choice between various strains of Heideggerian orthodoxy or with the commitment of a great deal of time and effort.

A later section of this Introduction will further detail the overall methodological approach to Heidegger's text. For the present purposes it is worth noting that, like many scholars, I engage in reflections that are etymological and lexicological in nature. The text is built of various philological excursions. At times this may come in the form of a consideration of a German word and the exploration of Heidegger's intention in using it in such and such a way or the development of a term's intention from one place to the next. This includes the construction of words and an attention to Heidegger's use of prefixes in particular – sometimes shown graphically through hyphens, sometimes not. At other times it may concern the transmutation of philosophical concepts through Heidegger's translations. In both regards I have not limited myself simply to German lexicons (such as Duden or Grimm), but have explored Greek, Latin, Proto-Germanic, and Sanskrit, though within the various limitations that condition such a project. Note that nothing etymological or lexicological is done without precedent in Heidegger's text; the aim of the analysis has been to follow its internal logic. I have been at pains to make it so that most, and hopefully all, of my ventures into the thinking embedded in language itself are direct reflections of the thinking occurring and at stake in the texts I analyze.

I also develop translations of Heideggerian German and/or terminology and coin certain neologistic phrases that may surprise long-time readers of Heidegger. I do this only in order to develop and guide the elaboration presented here. This is something like an active tracing of Heidegger's manner of thought. It is not a matter of "doing philosophy by translation", but rather of translating Heidegger's thought and philosophical lexicon – including his understanding of the Greek philosophical lexicon – in such a way as to draw out the structural function of this lexicon within the broader project. The coining of neologisms further serves to draw various terms or themes together in order to show their structural import. A characteristic example of this comes with the coining of "optic imperative" in the first chapter. This term is coined in order to guide my analysis of both technic and Heidegger's destruction of metaphysics. It is formed of the important co-conditioning that occurs for Heidegger between the concepts of *ousia* and *idea* in Greek thought and the technical (*technē*-oriented) presupposition of this, for example, the correspondence between the "metaphysical identification of the movement of *physis*"

with what I term the “technical *logos*,” or that between the self-appearance of Being with the generation of the *idea*. Thus this unfamiliar term gathers together ideas in Heidegger that pertain to the circumscribed sense of intelligibility he associates with metaphysical thinking and technic. The coining of “optic imperative” also allows me to gather together three senses of the *idea* that co-condition this circumscribed notion of presence, namely, as formal appearance, collection or heterogeneous unity, and paradigm (Section 1.1).

Another example of this can be found when I consider Heidegger’s use of the term *Gefahr* not as solely as “danger”, but in terms of the world as *simulation*. Certainly I can admit that ‘translating’ *Gefahr* as simulation is a provocative gesture. While I do draw on etymology in order to make this interpretive gesture – for example, the semantic links between *Gefahr* and the verb *nachstellen* – the etymological considerations serve primarily to highlight what is actually being said in Heidegger’s own text, which is again to say this is not some stand-alone reference to etymology that attempts to ‘philosophize’ solely by way of speculative translation. In this particular instance, it is a matter of drawing together everything that Heidegger has said leading up to his introduction of the term about the self-reflexive nature of presence or intelligibility and the finitude that allows it. Presence ‘alone’ is elaborated by Heidegger as an autonomous rationality within Nature but which, tempered by finitude, is not a movement of totalization. To abbreviate the argument: if the world is constructed, in a given instance, of only partially inflected (partially present) entities, then it stands that the intelligible world is a reconstruction (a simulation) formed of intelligibility’s striving to maintain itself, that is, to be present. *Gefahr* names the active dimension of *Gestell*, how it is articulated, which is to say in the production of the simulated World from out of presence’s self-relation.

It is difficult to convey in the space of an introduction what fully justifies the coining of “optic imperative” or the elaboration of *Gefahr* in terms of simulation. Their introduction and use will become clear within the context of the work as a whole. They are mentioned here to prepare the reader for unexpected turns and to anticipate the technical nature – here in the sense of ‘difficult’, that is, pertaining to the meticulous nature of my analysis – of the text. The interpretation and interpretive framework presented here are, to the best of my ability, tightly wound. This is not to say ‘flawless’. The attentive reader will surely find points of contention and/or error. It is to say that the text is neither light reading nor introductory and that it will likely demand considerable efforts on behalf of the reader. In attempting to remain close to the internal logic of the text, this essay has at times reproduced the labor requirements of the texts it elaborates. What is accomplished, I hope, is a presentation of

Heidegger's thought that can be advanced upon without relying on the repetition of his sometimes obtuse lexicon.

It is on the point of language that I ought to acknowledge the perception that this essay lacks any substantial discussion of art, since Heidegger's discussions of art can be tied directly to his discussions of technic. My reasoning for this is quite simple: I do not believe Heidegger's essays on art, specifically art in the sense of the visual arts, ranging from the commentaries on Van Gogh and Greek architecture in *Der Ursprung des Kunstwerkes* to the sporadic comments on sculpture (*Kunst und Raum*) or painting (*Über die Sixtine*), offer more than do his reflections on poetry and poetic language. Additionally, a monograph of such a meticulous nature cannot cover 'everything' and must make well-considered decisions about what to address directly. There are others who have addressed the above-mentioned points in Heidegger's text to a far greater effect than I could have here. I leave this work to those who find more in Heidegger's direct reflections on visual arts than I have.

It is true, of course, that Heidegger seeks to develop a certain problematic wherein art, as a potential space of 'emancipation' from western metaphysics, is inseparable from *technē* or *Technik*. When I refer to the addendum of the art essay, it is to this problematic that I refer. This is a problem that pertains very specifically to the question of human practice or agency. What place does the human have in the occurrence of truth? How does the human experience or pursue it? What role does it play in the production of knowledge? What are the repercussions of its agency or lack thereof broadly speaking? The reader will discover that I am not able to make absolute distinctions between what I term the technical *logos* and the presumed non-technical *logos* Heidegger seeks to develop in discussions of Heraclitus or references to art and poetry. In fact, the lack of a clear distinction between these two is at work throughout Heidegger's thought, from the fundamental ontology to the topology. Conceptions of the *logos* exist on a spectrum defined by the polarity of *Gestell* and *Ereignis*.

For Heidegger the 'essence' of art is most clearly articulated in poetry. Thus, rather than mine the sparse material provided by Heidegger on visual art in order to ask if or how art is a space of transgression, I have attempted to engage deeply with Heidegger's understanding of language as poetic. The above-given example of *Gefahr* as simulation is an important example of this, since it is precisely at the point where the reader must grapple with Heidegger's intention with the word *Gefahr* that a 'saving power' is gleaned, a saving which comes in the form of exposing the essence of *Gestell*. The experience of thought in the text through a *logos* which is not purely technical provides a view of the technical and its lack. With the development of *Gestell*, the purely technical *logos*

becomes a decidedly non-human or ‘inhuman’ *logos*. It is a *logos* of an intellect embedded in Nature to which the human has access, but the human cannot (or should not) define or determine it. Such ‘saving’, which in the final analysis is an access to insight, is, in great part, the speaking of language and what it tells us, in the case of *Gefahr* and *Gestell* what it tells us about the technical *logos* and the world or worlds it produces.

2. The second point of anticipation concerns the emphasis or highlighting of motifs in Heidegger or aspects of his thinking that may seem either marginal or altogether new. I will address these emphases by way of an overview of the essay’s organization. I believe the appearance of an unorthodox set of emphases follows in large part from the claim I make regarding the destruction of metaphysics and the ordering of metaphysical epochs: that these should be viewed as analytical tools which can be discarded when attending to Heidegger’s later work. The claim that metaphysics is homologous with the structure of technic or *Gestell* (so that metaphysics=technic) leads immediately to the claim that what is at stake in Heidegger’s later thinking is a Janus-faced thinking of technic and *Ereignis*, formulated with the same irresolvable tension that Heidegger attributes to truth or *aletheia* between concealment and unconcealment. What is attempted here is a ‘reintegration’ of Heidegger’s notion of technic or *Gestell* within a broader phenomenology of Nature, which is represented in Heidegger’s thinking by the term *Ereignis* and the motifs of limit and finitude. Thus I present something quite close to a ‘naturalization’ of technic and, in doing so, strip away the often rhetorically pejorative dimension of technic and technology that is Heidegger’s preferred mode of presentation.

The basic movement of the text is organized in two parts and three long chapters, themselves divided into sections and unnumbered subsections. The first part includes Chapters 1 and 2 and considers the relationship between metaphysics and technic. Together these chapters undertake the work necessary to ask questions pertaining to Nature and ecology in Heidegger’s work. The first chapter focuses on his return to Aristotle in 1939 in the essay “Vom Wesen und Begriff der *Physis*, Aristoteles Physik B”. It should be noted that I do not draw in any substantial way from Heidegger’s earlier engagements with Aristotle, namely, those that shaped his thinking in the period associated with fundamental ontology (ending sometime in the early 1930s). Thus it must be stressed that I am interested here in Heidegger’s *return* to Aristotle in the subsequent period (from 1939 onwards) associated with the destruction of metaphysics and his struggles with the *physis-technē* dichotomy, since it is my claim that these struggles constitute the basis for his conceptions of *Gestell* and *Technik*.

Chapter 1 locates a ‘reduced’ articulation of the structure of metaphysics in Heidegger’s return to Aristotle and traces its implications across important texts of the same period, specifically the lecture course *Einführung in die Metaphysik* and the essay *Platons Lehre von der Wahrheit*. It elaborates the formulation ‘metaphysics=technic’, showing that the understanding of metaphysics that Heidegger develops in this period can be understood as an autonomous function of or ‘within’ *physis*. In doing so, it considers the implication of this for Heidegger’s understanding and development of key terms and concepts such as *logos* and Being (or presence) as well as for his understanding of humankind, philosophy, and philosophical practice. Chapter 1 also prepares the important lexical connection between Heidegger’s analysis of metaphysics and his development of *Gestell*, centered on the German verb *stellen* and its roots in the Greek *thesis*. Chapter 2 translates much of this into Heidegger’s later work on *Technik* and *Gestell* in the period that immediately follows the deconstruction. Heidegger’s later work is framed in terms of a sort of polarity or tension seen in his references to the Roman god Janus. Such tension is not unrelated to his long pursued question of truth as *aletheia* or unconcealedness (*Unverborgenheit*), a formulation that emphasizes the two ‘dimensions’ of truth, namely the simultaneity of the revealed and unrevealed. The elaboration of *Gestell* is thus the elaboration of a certain *aspect* or dimension of Nature (or truth?), namely, that aspect which tends towards formal intelligibility. The chapter ends by returning to reflections on humankind and human action, framing the question of communication through potential distinctions and relations of philosophy, (techno)science, and thinking.

Both Chapters 1 and 2 draw upon Heidegger’s engagement with quantum physics, specifically his engagement with Werner Heisenberg beginning in the mid-1930s and culminating in the delivery of “Die Frage nach der Techik”. Heidegger’s important dialogue with Heisenberg has been documented in the work of Christina Vagt. Her *Geschickte Sprünge* documents not only the letter exchanges between the two, but also transcribes and comments upon facsimiles of Heidegger’s annotation of Heisenberg’s writings. I draw upon all this not in order to elaborate a theory of ‘modern’ technoscience, but rather to show that the metaphysical structure Heidegger attributes to Heisenberg’s formulation of physics is homologous with the structure he analyzes in Plato and Aristotle. This is to say that I use Heidegger’s encounter with Heisenberg as further evidence for the claim metaphysics=technic.

Reading Heidegger in this way, a reading which claims that *Gestell* actually precedes all metaphysical doctrine, may give the impression that I am wholly dismissive of his reading of the western philosophical canon.⁵ It is true that

⁵ This was pointed out to me in conversation with the generous Thomas Sheehan.

Heidegger's engagement with the canon produced extremely rich and insightful readings of select philosophical figures ranging from Plato to Nietzsche. By no means do I intend that such insights should be discarded. My interest is rather in what lies at the kernel of these readings for Heidegger, what I refer to as a 'metaphysical constant'. The idea is to undo, or prove unnecessary, the order and progressive structural development in Heidegger's overall reading of the western philosophical tradition. I view such historiographical insights to be secondary results of Heidegger's deconstruction, which is not to question their value and utility. It should also be noted here that many of Heidegger's engagements with canonic figures of western philosophy issue from the importance Heidegger placed on teaching. His many lecture courses which make up these engagements serve as vehicles to further develop the fundamental questions and stances of his thinking. Teaching is thus not only a transmission of past thought, but belongs essentially to the development of thought's 'originary intentions'. The originary intentions of western philosophical thought remain *originarily flawed* and Heidegger views his task as a teacher to continually elaborate and develop this flaw. This elaboration can give the impression of progression in the canon, but the primary result of the deconstruction is to pinpoint the flaw, and it is to the structure of this flaw that I devote my attention in this work.

Heidegger's derivation of a concept of technic through a critique of the western philosophical canon raises another question: Does the present essay present a universalization of something that is specifically occidental and which therefore cannot be applied across world history? Some may find that the answer is rather self-evident in the affirmative and therefore problematic. I have no immediate objections to this and find it a difficult question to answer on the basis of this essay alone. That is to say that answering this question requires a much broader and deeper reflection on philosophy's ability to articulate the universal or something like it. There is, of course, an entire body of comparative literature focused on the relationship between Heidegger and non-Western thought. I believe an answer to this question would come from a continued study of the questions raised in this essay which is not solely comparative, that is to say one that does not seek like for like concepts in Western and non-Western thought. Yuk Hui's *The Question Concerning Technology in China*, an important contribution to the question of technology in a non-Western context, is exemplary in this regard. While I have not accounted for Hui's work in the body of this text, and could not summarize its importance for the questions raised here in an introduction, I mention it as a point for the reader's further pursuit.

It is in any case true that Heidegger privileges the occidental as it pertains to 'philosophy' and 'metaphysics' specifically, though the extent to which

these designations are a ‘privilege’ in the context of his thinking is questionable. What this may mean, for Heidegger and in the context of this work, is that Western philosophy is a practice wholly consumed by a correspondence to technic, that the specific lineage of thought traced from Greek metaphysics to European modernity is determined by the structure of technic traced out in this essay. Within this lineage are traces of ‘thinking’, a practice universally applicable to the human, which Heidegger seeks to both uncover and develop. We might say that the most perfected articulations of technical or metaphysical thinking lie, for Heidegger, with the names of Hegel, Nietzsche, and Marx. The need or necessity of technical or metaphysical thinking is neither abandoned nor rejected, but rather left to develop in accord with changing material conditions upon which it is based.⁶

Chapter 3, which constitutes the entirety of Part II, elaborates *Dasein* as ‘ecological awareness’. It attempts to both sketch Heidegger’s topology as an ‘ecological thinking’ that reintegrates technic into a thinking of Nature and to present some of the most important unresolved difficulties and tensions in this later work. It includes some introductory remarks and two sections separated by an “Interlude”. The first section investigates the importance of topological motifs in Heidegger’s later thinking. The second section is concerned with the implications of these topological motifs for thought and experience. It considers some of the problems Heidegger’s later thinking presents for notions such as time, space, and history, before sketching the practice of a thought that comports primarily towards the unknown. Among the novelties found here is an understanding of death as antecedent, as taking the place of metaphysical presupposition and as the peculiar bind between humankind and Nature. The Interlude connects these two sections with an investigation of Heidegger’s understanding of ‘difference’ which draws heavily upon the workbook titled *Über den Anfang*. Heideggerian ‘difference’ is actually that which articulates the collapse of the subject-object binary, the dissolution of the subject into its environment. Topological figures such as the ‘fourfold’ are transcribed as chorological configurations, occurrence is configured ‘beyond’ the breakdown of such binary substantiations as present-past, diachronic, synchronic. The Interlude thus serves as something like a systematic, though preliminary, sketch of a phenomenology of Nature in Heidegger’s later thought, introducing key *leitmotifs* taken up in terms such as ‘coherence’, ‘ecological awareness’, and ‘chorology’ or ‘chorological configuration’. On either side of the “Interlude”, the

6 Something similar might be said here of the ‘hard sciences’, though Heidegger would maintain a more critical stance to them due to their perceived reliance upon specialization and division.

various components of this ‘system’ are explored by way of partially connected vignettes. Thus, in contrast to Part I, which traces the thinking of metaphysics and technic in a more straightforward manner, Part II takes on a more fragmented or paratactical arrangement, adapting to the change in Heidegger’s thought.

The attentive reader will note that this path is guided by some unorthodox choices in terms of material. The first has been discussed as my emphasis upon Heidegger’s return to Aristotle. The importance of this return can be seen in Heidegger’s choice to collect the draft materials for that essay together with other important material through which *Gestell* is developed, reflections on the history of western technics, modern technology, and modern science, in GA 76. I also draw heavily from volumes 69, 70, and 71 of Heidegger’s *Gesamtausgabe*. Where many emphasize the importance of volume 65, *Beiträge zur Philosophie*, I have recognized that volumes 65–72 constitute workbooks through which Heidegger develops his thinking by way of an internal critique.⁷ I therefore decided to focus on the later stages of these notebooks. Many aspects of this essay were born of a yearlong systematic reconstruction of volumes 69 and 70 connecting them to key moments in Heidegger’s later oeuvre. This exercise also contributed to the development of the methodology used here, specifically what I term paratactical arrangement.

Finally there is the matter of the emphasis I place upon a subsequently added footnote to the essay “Bauen Wohnen Denken”. The footnote in question was added to the *Gesamtausgabe* edition of *Vorträge und Aufsätze*, the collection containing “Bauen Wohnen Denken”. It is appended to the Greek word *péras* (limit) and directs readers to the Aristotelian definition of *topos* in Book IV of *Physics*. This definition is considered in Chapter 3 and given as “a generic limit or delimiting that is consummate or at rest”. My argument is not simply that the reference to Aristotle is essential to understanding Heidegger’s notion of *topos*, but also that it is essential to understanding how Heidegger attempts to rethink *physis* through *Ereignis* in his later work. It is therefore essential to the phenomenology of Nature I sought to sketch.

Yet, because this footnote cannot be found in early versions of *Vorträge und Aufsätze*⁸ or in the original version of the lecture, one may question the emphasis I place upon it. A partial retort on my behalf would be that the

7 At the time of writing this, volume 72, listed under the title *Die Stege des Anfangs* in Klostermann’s edition plan, has not yet been published.

8 It is worth noting that I found this note only by chance in a scanned copy of the *Gesamtausgabe* edition. My engagement with *Vorträge und Aufsätze* has come in the form of a Neske edition (7th edition, 1994) that I bought nearly a decade ago at an open-air book market in Amsterdam.

gesture is in line with Heidegger's attempts to clarify his thinking – whether this be to himself or the reader is not entirely clear – through the addition of footnotes to subsequent editions of previously written work. In fact, there are several points in the *Gesamtausgabe* where one finds not only clarifying notes, but notes attempting to change these clarifications or add further clarification. A good example of this can be found in the Addendum to "Der Ursprung des Kunstwerkes", to which I will make important reference later in this work. In the end, however, one will have to read the entirety of the text, Part I setting the stage for the implications I draw from this note, and evaluate the emphasis I place on it for themselves. It should certainly be noted that neither this essay nor Chapter 3 are 'about' this annotation. It serves as only one piece of a rigorous reconstruction of Heidegger's later thinking in the vein I have attempted to describe here, that is, as presenting a phenomenology of Nature and prospective ecological thinking.

I am not alone of course, among the extensive body of literature on Heidegger and topology, in emphasizing the importance of the Aristotelian formulation of *topos*. Jeff Malpas, who has produced some of the best-known work on Heidegger and the question of place, also refers to Book IV of Aristotle in his *Heidegger's Topology: Being, Place, World*. He notes Aristotle's rejections of various understandings of *topos* that precede his own – given by Malpas as the "inner surface of physical extendedness" – including its being defined in terms of matter, form, and extension. Malpas's concern, however, much more than my own, is with the relation between 'place' and 'space'. He therefore appears primarily interested in Aristotle's rejection of the Platonic *khōra* and moves from here into a discussion of Heidegger's engagement with Cartesian space.⁹ It will be seen in the subsection entitled "Aristotle's Boat, Hölderlin's Eyes" (Chaper 3, Section 3.2), that my engagement with Book IV is concerned more with the role of the limit in Aristotle's definition. Because my interest is more in the way Heidegger links *topos* to *physis* or Nature more broadly, I focus mainly on the definition Heidegger quotes in his footnote. Two points of emphasis are worth noting here. First, while I do refer to Aristotle's rejection of *khōra*, I am more interested in his rejection of any associations of *topos* with matter (*hylē*) and form (*eidos, morphē*). This is especially important when viewed in relation to Heidegger's engagements with *technē* and *physis* in Aristotle in 1939. The role that form and formal appearance (*mophē, eidos*) play in the

⁹ Given his work's importance on the topic, I take Malpas's interest in the relation between 'place' and 'space' as characteristic for the concerns of many others working on this topic. Jeff Malpas, *Heidegger's Topology: Being, Place, World* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2006), pp. 69-70.

development of *energeia* there present considerable problems for Heidegger's attempts to think a non-metaphysical *physis*. I thus situate his appropriation of an Aristotelian *topos* that rejects reference to matter and form as an alternative path through the same problem. Second, I emphasize the 'fixed' or 'unmoving' quality of *topos* as it pertains to the limit. That the limit is 'unmoving' (*akínēton*) relates specifically to Heidegger's understanding of 'consummation' and I attempt to develop this as a transmutation of the metaphysical sense of consummation that defines *physis*. The metaphysical sense of *physis* is found both in Heidegger's understanding of *energeia* and *entelecheia*, which define *physis* for Aristotle, and in his characterization of *physis* as 'the entirety of what exists qua *x*' (*das Seiende im Ganzen als ein Solches*), where *x* is a sort of transcendental *idea* orienting the formal appearance of all that 'exists'.

It should be said, therefore, that in developing the Heideggerian appropriation of Aristotle's *topos* in this way, the question of 'space' becomes secondary, rather than tied directly to a question of 'place'. The discussions of space here occur late in Chapter 3 and in conjunction with the questions of time and history in Heidegger's later thinking. It is perhaps this point that separates the discussions of topology contained in this essay from its predecessors, though I cannot say that I have engaged (impossibly) with every piece of literature on this topic. In my understanding, the question of space cannot be separated from the questions of time and history. This nexus of questions, in turn, follows from the question of the limit that guides much of Heidegger's thinking, a matter which can be seen in the placement of the footnote in question. The note is appended to the word *péras* in a manner definitive for any discussion of space (cf. GA 7, 156). It is worth reiterating one final time here that my interest in Heidegger's understanding of *topos* and topology is not for the sake of themselves, but rather serve to develop the question of Nature as it appears in Heidegger's later work and in relation to the notion of technic that instigates this development. Hence my suggestion near the beginning of this introduction that 'topological thought' be understood as 'ecological thought'.

I close with a note on the problem of Heidegger's anti-Semitism and affiliation with National Socialism. The controversy surrounding these damning qualifications to Heidegger's work has been the subject of long, ongoing debates within and outside of academic philosophy. Responses to this can be found throughout Anglophone scholarship and have played a large role in the French post-Heideggerian philosophy that has influenced it. The recent publication of the Black Notebooks – confirming and accentuating what was already understood – has renewed the debate surrounding Heidegger's work with even more intensity. This essay does not contribute directly to this debate, nor does it attempt a defense of Heidegger's work. Many have decided that this work is

no longer worth engaging or that his predecessors have carried his work forward enough to leave direct references behind. I can certainly bring no arguments or criticisms against this. What this essay may provide is a framework to continue to engage certain key insights and questions posed in his work.

Throughout what follows, I have attempted to highlight internal contradictions in Heidegger's thought that might help us in appropriating and advancing upon it without ceding it to conservative and reactionary strains of thought. An example of this was raised earlier in the ties between Heidegger's occidental essentialism and the fact that much of his thinking is built on a systematic critique of it. Following from this, the reader will find that I have rejected the possibility of raising particular coincidences to the level of historical necessity, particularly that of a Greek-German destiny which presides over the development of occidental history. If Heidegger sought to 'remedy' the 'maladies' he found in the technical and technological emphases in western thought by turning to a 'post-modern' philosophical regionalism, then the analyses of this essay should show such a project as fool-hearted within the context of his overall critique. In my detailed discussions of Heidegger's use of language I have also attempted to de-mystify this language by providing translations and neologisms that will hopefully clarify some of the more 'obscure' tendencies perceived in his thought – tendencies which I believe are particularly exploited in reactionary appropriations. This includes an analysis of the use of words formed from or closely related to the German *eignen* ('to appertain to') and a critical rejection of understanding terms such as *Ereignis* and *Eignung* from a sense of 'propriety' or 'properness' (see Chapter 3). The degree of success with which I address the effects of Heidegger's 'private' socio-political commentary on his thinking will depend in part upon the reader's expectations. I can only assure that I have been at pains to address these matters when they appear within the texts I analyze and to guard against reactionary appropriations of this essay.

The remainder of this introduction will address two concerns: a theory of and approach to Heidegger's text and an overview of some of the initial research concerns that went into this text. The theory and approach to Heidegger's text will be divided into two sections, II and III. Section IV will address some of the existing literature in various areas that this project saw itself in dialogue with. It will address the question of practice in Heidegger, the presentation of the destruction of metaphysics found in the work of Reiner Schürmann, and the potential contributions of this text to work on the philosophy of nature. The following three sections should thus serve to present considerations that have gone into the production of this essay at various stages of its development. It is possible, however, to jump from this point into the monograph

proper, starting with Chapter 1. The remainder of the introduction, in other words, is written for those interested in the broader context of the essay and the methodological reflections that have gone into its construction.

II. The ‘Structural Development’ of Heidegger’s Thought

For the purposes of this essay, Heidegger’s work will be divided into three general periods. The use of such a periodization serves as necessary artifice for both the analysis undertaken and for situating it roughly within the context of Heidegger research and its relation to contemporary philosophy more broadly. The periods used here generally follow the three periods Heidegger himself gives at Le Thor, the same seminar from which this essay takes the phrase “topology of being”. I do not intend that all readers and scholars of Heidegger take such periodization as definitive. Well-known attempts at such periodization have long been in use, the most prominent among them perhaps Father William J. Richardson and, following him, Reiner Schürmann. My primary intention here is to give the reader a sense of how I have understood the movement and development of Heidegger’s work to the extent that this has considerable bearing on the movement of this essay. Drawing lines of demarcation within a ‘complete’ body of work such as the massive *Gesamtausgabe* can only be temporary tools for understanding and interpreting. They are lines pertaining to the ultimate futility of attempting a unified interpretation, but also the futility of clear divisioning. Generally speaking, the production of such frameworks is and remains necessary when attempting large-scale or systematic interpretations of Heidegger. They remain necessary since we do not and likely will not have a scholarly edition of Heidegger’s *Gesamtausgabe*, the actual publication of which is not without its shortcomings.¹⁰ For the purposes of this essay, I have understood the movement of Heidegger’s work as follows:

The first period is the fundamental ontology. This period includes Heidegger’s early work at Marburg as well as what many consider to be his magnum opus, *Sein und Zeit*. Beyond *Sein und Zeit*, the definitive statement of this period might be considered as Heidegger’s 1929/1930 lecture course *Die Grundbegriffe der Metaphysik* (GA 29/30). Heidegger refers to this period with the phrase *Sinne von Sein* (‘sense of Being’). The word ‘sense’ (*Sinn*) here should also be

¹⁰ The definitive statement on this appears to come from Theodore Kisiel in “Heidegger’s *Gesamtausgabe*: An International Scandal of Scholarship”, in *Philosophy Today*, 39 (1995), pp. 3–15.

read in terms of 'direction' or 'directionality'.¹¹ Sense or directionality comes from (*von*) Being. In this period, Heidegger's questioning concerns (human) *Dasein* as the site of possibility to question Being. (Human) *Dasein* is considered a possible site of reception for Being's transitivity, an issue he attempts to pose in terms of the question of time. In the reading of *Einführung in die Metaphysik* found in Chapter 1, it will become clear to what extent the phrase *Seinsverständnis* ('understanding of being'), which Heidegger strongly associates with the phrase *Sinne von Sein*, implies a site of reception.¹² Overall, this period is the least considered in this essay, with no references to *Sein und Zeit* and only a few to GA 29/30. It will be seen, however, that certain of Heidegger's core notions or positions of this period have substantial overlap with works of the following period and will appear in Chapter 1.

The second period is the deconstructive period or the period where Heidegger most intensely undertakes the 'deconstruction of metaphysics', a systematic critique of the western philosophical canon. The texts associated with this period fall roughly between the 1930s and early 1940s. This includes well-known publications such as *Einführung in die Metaphysik* and *Ursprung des Kunstwerkes*, which represent Heidegger's 'philosophy' during this period. It also includes the workbooks associated with *Beiträge zur Philosophie* (GA 65-72) and Heidegger's collected work on Nietzsche (GA 6.1 and 6.2). Heidegger refers to this period as one primarily concerned with the 'truth of Being', the shift from *Sinne von Sein* to *Wahrheit des Seins*. The use of the word 'truth' to describe the deconstruction should be understood on the basis of Heidegger's understanding of the term *aletheia* as indicating both presence and absence, revealing and concealing. Western philosophy or metaphysics, as doctrine of presence, is read and analyzed in terms of the structural absence in which it grounds itself. Heidegger's penchant for what remains hidden in philosophy teases out the singular structure that applies to all doctrine of the canon. The most definitive statements on this structure are the essays "Die Metaphysik als die Geschichte des Seins" (1941) and "Vom Wesen und Begriff der Φυσις. Aristoteles, Physik B, 1" (1939). The current essay will focus on the

¹¹ Reiner Schürmann draws upon the sense of directionality in both the English 'sense' and French '*sens*' and writes: "[Sense] is not the 'meaning' of being, but its directionality; the 'sense' as the direction in which something, e.g., motion, takes place [...] Time is not the 'signification' of being for a man and hence 'a human accomplishment' [...], but it is the directionality [...] of presencing [...] producing [itself]". cf. Schürmann, "How to Read Heidegger", pp. 4-5 (text has been modified in a manner that disregards Schürmann's references to 'orders and constellations of presencing').

¹² At Le Thor, referencing *Sein und Zeit*, Heidegger states that understanding (*Verständnis*) must be understood from "the original sense of 'standing in front of' (*Vorstehen*): to stay in front of (*sich aufhalten vor*), to keep oneself at the same level (*Höhe*) as what one finds themselves before, and be strong enough to endure it" (GA 15, 334).

latter as it demonstrates most clearly the structure of metaphysics and prepares the notions of technic and *Gestell* found in the *Spätwerk*.

The final period is marked by the shift from *Wahrheit des Seins* to *Topologie des Seins*. Its beginning can be situated sometime around the early to mid 1940s, however, texts clearly belonging to this period only begin to appear in the late 1940s; these continue until Heidegger's death, though it is notable that Heidegger continues to produce work that appears dedicated to the deconstruction. The work of this period is oriented around the development of two terms or notions, *Ereignis* and technic/*Gestell*. Exemplary of this are Heidegger's 1949 Bremen lectures (GA 79), which elaborate his understanding of technic in relation to the central orienting figure of the *Spätwerk*, *Ereignis*. The work on *Gestell*, including the essay "Die Frage nach Technik" and a collection of Heidegger's working notes on technic, *Leitgedanken zur Entstehung der Metaphysik, der neuzeitlichen Wissenschaft und der modernen Technik* (GA 76), belong to this period, as do later *Beiträge* workbooks such as *Über den Anfang* (GA 71). In addition to these, the interrelated, experimental essays "Das Ding", "Bauen Wohnen Denken", and "... dichterisch wohnet der Mensch ...", in which Heidegger's appropriation of Aristotle's conception of *topos* is found, are also essential statements of this work.

A note should be added here on the use of the term *Spätwerk*, which I associate with a period beginning with a certain essential overlap between the deconstruction and the topology. Broadly speaking, the term *Spätwerk* refers to all work of the topology and any text of the deconstruction where the development of the topology is clearly at stake. While I cannot locate any definitive point for this, the current essay will place a great deal of emphasis upon "Vom Wesen und Begriff der Φύσις. Aristoteles, Physik B, 1" (1939). Beyond its elaboration of a basic metaphysical structure, the reasoning for privileging it is twofold. (1) Heidegger's failure in the essay to extract a non-metaphysical understanding of *physis* from Aristotle marks the limit of the deconstruction and the necessity of its transformation. (2) The essay prepares the basic structure and vocabulary for Heidegger's notions of technic and *Gestell*, which will in turn provide the basis for *Ereignis'* transmutation of *physis*.

Lastly, it is also important to note that the texts analyzed in the first chapter are situated at a significant point in Heidegger's complete works. The two texts drawn upon to help elaborate the structure and problems of Heidegger's 1939 reading of Aristotle – a 1932 essay on Plato and the 1935 lecture course *Einführung in die Metaphysik* – develop along the lines of an increasingly critical impasse in Heidegger's work. While the impasse itself concerns Heidegger's philosophy in a variegated manner, it can be summarized here as a lack of distinction (or a conflation) between human thought and the (technical) configurations of intelligibility, to which it corresponds – a conflation of the classical

notions of *noein* and *legein* taken in Heidegger's sense. Following the destruction and the consolidation of metaphysical thinking under the terms technic and *Gestell*, Heidegger's 'topology' continues to work in spaces of conflation, moving from a technical conflation between humankind and technic to a sort of proto-natural conflation between humankind and *Ereignis*.

III. Regarding the Philological and Hermeneutic Nature of Phenomenological Analysis

The present essay's approach to Heidegger's text has been developed from a careful attention to Heidegger's own textual analysis. It can be broadly characterized as phenomenological-hermeneutic and philological. What is meant with philology here cannot claim to fulfill a rigorously academic definition in the sense properly associated with a university philology department. It is chiefly – and here it overlaps extensively with the possibilities of hermeneutics – a text-based analysis concerned with the 'meaning' and/or 'intention' of the analyzed language. To put this in less 'metaphysical' terms, it is a text-based analysis concerned with what the language of the text *says* and *does not say explicitly or directly*. The young Heidegger of the Marburg years tentatively, though characteristically, defines philology in terms of a love of the *logos*: philology is a passion that recognizes what has been articulated and what articulates itself (*Erkenntnis des Ausgesprochenen und Sichaussprechens* cf. GA 18, 333). This definition of philology – as a preoccupation with the *logos*-dimension of truth and of Nature – draws near to how I would characterize Heidegger's phenomenological-hermeneutic approach, namely, as an attempt to apply the analysis of the phenomenal world ('phenomenological seeing') to the analysis of language (or language in the text). Heidegger's deconstruction in particular seeks what is disclosed and hidden in the terminological and syntactic methods of the canon, while his *Spätwerk* attempts to develop novel and alternative approaches to the expression of thought. It is important to note that, for Heidegger, there is a real correspondence between the self-determination of the *logos* and what is articulated in the language of human thought. Heidegger's thinking does not distinguish between a phenomenological analysis of language and an analysis of thought or experience. At the very least, his 'reading' and 'writing' both work to collapse any such distinction.¹³ The radical nature of this correspondence, that is, its going to the very core

¹³ The language essays of the 1950s make clear that the 'essence' or active dimension of language as 'self-showing' (*Sichzeigen*) is tied intrinsically to what his term *Ereignis*, as a transmutation of Nature or *physis*, seeks to indicate.

of the question of humankind, human thought, and its irresolvable entanglement in Nature, remains difficult to articulate, though the following essay aims to give at least a precursory view of it. The remainder of this introduction will focus on the approach to text-based analysis used here.

Whereas this introduction has provided some academic and/or scholarly context for the essay that follows, the essay proper relies almost entirely on Heidegger's text itself, on what is articulated and articulates itself there. This follows the first of two 'principles of text interpretation' that Mark Michalski draws from the Marburg Heidegger: "the interpreter must base interpretation on the actual text [...] must show that that upon which it is based 'stands in the text itself'".¹⁴ The repetitions and interweaving of core terminology and motifs in the present essay attempts to do just that, to justify all analysis on the basis of the text while taking few or no interpretative liberties. Beyond Heidegger's own text, the primary authorities appealed to here are lexicons (Greek, German, Latin, Proto-Indo-European) utilized in elaborating Heidegger's use of language and preoccupation with particular words, seeking to show what is articulated in these words and the relationality Heidegger develops between them. The media theorist Christina Vagt features prominently at times in Chapters 1 and 2 as an authority on the relationship between Heidegger and Werner Heisenberg and for her understanding of quantum physics in a Heideggerian context. The English translations of Aristotle by Wicksteed and Cornford are appealed to at times, as are the German pre-Socratic translations of Diels, Kranz, and Snell. Other interlocutors tend to serve to further emphasize or add clarity to matters drawn from Heidegger's text.

The meaning of philology here, as it pertains to what is articulated and articulates itself in the text, also concerns the relationship of an entire text (Heidegger's *Gesamtausgabe*) to isolated moments. Michalski notes that what was remarkable and so influential about Werner Jaeger's *Aristoteles: Grundlegung einer Geschichte seiner Entwicklung*, for both Heidegger and his contemporaries, was that a new view of Aristotle's philosophy as a whole arises

¹⁴ Several references will be made here to Mark Michalski's essay "Hermeneutic Phenomenology as Philology". While Michalski focuses solely on Heidegger's 1924 lecture course, *Grundbegriffe der aristotelischen Philosophie*, much of what he says is at the heart of the approach to Heidegger being discussed here. His citation of Heidegger here is found at GA 18, 216. Michalski also notes that Heidegger does not become a 'classical philologist' on at least two accounts: (1) his failure to extensively take into account research literature; (2) his failure to consistently use specialized and current (to the time) methods of classical philology. The same might be said of the present essay, though it does claim to remain very close to Heidegger's actual text. Mark Michalski, "Hermeneutic Phenomenology as Philology", trans. Jamey Findling, in *Heidegger and Rhetoric* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2005), p. 69, 72.

from out of a piecemeal work.¹⁵ Heidegger himself may reject the notion of a ‘whole view of a philosophy’ to the extent that a systematic reconstruction may imply a systemization and, moreover, a historicizing. Nonetheless it must be said that Heidegger’s destruction of metaphysics presents a rather holistic, in the sense of ‘reduced’, and structural understanding of the metaphysical canon and what is at work (or essential) to what he deems metaphysical thought (Chapter 1). He does this through what might easily be considered a ‘piecemeal’ approach, applying the method of reading associated with the deconstruction to selected moments of the history of metaphysics in order to find the ‘same’ in these select moments. The following analysis also engages in a sort of piecemeal approach, marked by the italicized subsections that structure the text. Chapter 1 begins with a concentrated analysis of Heidegger’s 1939 essay on Aristotle, departing at times to interweave analyses from other relevant moments of Heidegger’s text, in order to more fully elaborate what is at stake in this important essay – namely, a ‘laying bare’ of what remains productively absent in Aristotle’s *physis*-concept and presenting some of its consequences. A focus on single texts wanes considerably over the course of the following two chapters, with Chapter 3 structured almost entirely on the interweaving of the central motifs that articulate Heidegger’s topology. The structure and presentation of each chapter is thus determined by the texts being analyzed.

The second ‘principle of text interpretation’ is central to this and any interpretation of Heidegger: “emphasizing what is not there” (GA 18, 66).¹⁶ This principle, which I would just as soon call ‘reading absence’, is perhaps the single most essential aspect of any prolonged undertaking with Heidegger’s thought. It marks another point at which philological and hermeneutic endeavors can become conflated with a phenomenological understanding of thought and experience that ‘sees’ what is not ‘there’. The approach of Heidegger’s entire destruction of metaphysics can be characterized – and this should become clear in the essay – as a reading of structural absence in the metaphysical canon. The destruction is the presentation and/or reconstruction of this philosophy in terms of what has remained absent in it. This undertaking makes it clear to Heidegger that his thinking will have to engage with language differently if it is to avoid succumbing to the pervasiveness of metaphysical expression, which would lead his thought into the same aporias or impasses presented in the structural absence of the canon. This includes, importantly, the very structure of western grammars.

¹⁵ Michalski, “Hermeneutic Phenomenology”, 66.

¹⁶ Michalski, “Hermeneutic Phenomenology”, 69.

Heidegger's reading and emphasizing of absence in the texts of others leads him to present his own thought through an always developing 'use' of absence. This should be immediately clarified to dispel any notion that Heidegger's *Spätwerk* concerns a mastering of absence. His writings are more adequately described as working with and around absence, as attempts to let what is not said directly nonetheless speak from within the text. One way Heidegger seeks to do this is entirely graphic in nature, a sort of spatialization of language (*Verräumlichung der Sprache*).¹⁷ Examples of this include his use of hyphenation on both suffixes and prefixes, his use of colons and chiasmatic formulations,¹⁸ his appeal to alternative or obsolete spellings (*Seyn*), and, infamously, his 'crossing out' of the word Being in certain later texts. Another method that might also be considered a *Verräumlichung der Sprache*, and which is central to the analysis of this essay, is what I call the paratactical arrangement of thought. The development of this essay has unfolded especially according to a concerted attention to parataxis in Heidegger's thought,¹⁹ which I understand as the arrangement of terms, motifs, and figures without a proper in-text synthesis and without a strict syntax, such that their relationality, their interplay, says 'more' and articulates an 'unsaid in what is said'. Together, these strategies afford Heidegger an articulation of thought that does not require the formal presentation inherent to western grammars; it thereby stands and speaks from a place other than the grammatical structures into which his writing and speaking is generally forced for the sake of philosophical intelligibility. Such paratactical arrangements can be found both within particular texts and across Heidegger's writing more broadly and could be said to be something always developmental or experimental, ultimately resisting even the aims of this essay. Heidegger's parataxis, it should be said, has also helped determine the structure of this essay and what has been referred to as its interwoven and/or piecemeal nature.

¹⁷ The phrase *Verräumlichung der Sprache* is borrowed from Alexander García Düttmann, who used it in a colloquium facilitated by the Universität der Künste Berlin on Heidegger's "Zur Seinsfrage" on 24 November 2020.

¹⁸ For example, in his 1957/58 essay, "Das Wesen der Sprache", Heidegger writes that the essay's 'guiding word' – *Das Wesen der Sprache. Die Sprache des Wesens* – can be understood with a colon between the two sentences. This colon indicates a chiasmatic relation. This theme will be returned to in Chapter 3 (GA 12, 189).

¹⁹ I began to fully decipher this 'method' of Heidegger's while reading his interpretation of Georg Trakl's poetry published as "Die Sprache im Gedicht" (not cited in this essay). It became particularly useful for close readings of workbooks, namely GA 65-72, and enriched my understanding of the 1939 Aristotle interpretation, an essay I have been working with for several years now. Eventually I realized that this method is also applied 'developmentally' in a trans-textual manner.

Translation is also an essential aspect of the 'reconstruction' of Heidegger in this essay and can also be characterized as 'piecemeal'. All of the translations contained in this essay are my own. The authoritative English translations have not been consulted except where some standard or something of particular interest has been noted. If a general characteristic of translation as a philological and/or hermeneutic endeavor is that it remains 'experimental, provisional, and incomplete', this does not mean that the choices made here are arbitrary or that I have taken liberties in my translations.²⁰ While I acknowledge, along with Heidegger, that translation *already* designates the moment of interpretation, every moment of translation is brought into contact with Heidegger's text and justified therein (cf. GA 12, 245). Like all good translation, the attempt here is to use the English language to carry the sense of Heidegger's own language and avoid being a mere substitution of like-for-like words according to definition. I have attempted to the best of my ability to leave no moment of translation without elaboration or without some point of orienting contact with Heidegger's thought. This is especially the case when certain of Heidegger's German must be left untranslated, to be understood only through its elaboration in English and points of contact with the text. The translations should, as a thoughtful reader of an earlier version of this text pointed out to my satisfaction, always function clearly within the analysis or argumentation being presented.

Finally, if a Heideggerian philology concerns, as Michalsky claims, a 'separation of the *logos* into its multiple structural moments',²¹ it can be said that this essay takes a unique view of this activity within Heidegger's work. In the first place, the essay's two parts can be viewed as attempts to discern two dimensions of the *logos*, namely, a technical and non-technical *logos*. The clarity of such discernment, however, is complicated by the very notion of *logos* arising in Chapter 3, a so-designated topological *logos* or *logos* determined by what is indicated in the term *Ereignis*. To put it briefly, the reason for complication is that the technical *logos* elaborated in Part I is reintegrated into a topological *logos* whose 'movement' is that of a constant interruption, and thereby the constant recurrence of an internally variegated structural *moment* (singular, but uncountable). Thus any distinction must be viewed as an artifice related to the technical dimension of thinking and its tendency towards formalization. Clear conceptual or terminological distinction belongs to the artificial, though not necessarily 'unnatural', production of form. Whereas the constant

²⁰ Michalsky, "Hermeneutic Phenomenology", 70.

²¹ Michalsky, "Hermeneutic Phenomenology", 75.

interruption elaborated in Chapter 3 is what keeps the love of the *logos*, the passion of philology, in motion.

The meaning of a philological approach to Heidegger's topology in the context of this essay can be understood as follows: *to elaborate a 'holistic' view of the topology through a piecemeal approach that emphasizes absence and incorporates methods of text-based and phenomenological hermeneutics*. The methods of text-based and phenomenological hermeneutics are taken from Heidegger himself and fall within a tradition of reading Heidegger against Heidegger or reading him on his own terms. An attentiveness to language, to a use of language, such a philology is that from which a 'philosophy', as an articulation of thought, can only proceed.

IV. Nature, Practice, and the Destruction of Metaphysics

This final section of the introduction will address three concerns that existed at the beginning of this project. The first is the question of practice framed in terms of Heidegger's relationship to Aristotle. I will comment upon a brief but concise essay from William McNeill. The second is the relationship of this essay to the project of Reiner Schürmann. Of the three subsections here, this middle section is perhaps the most important. Schürmann's reading is a systematic reconstruction that has had a profound impact on the reception of Heidegger in the United States and Europe. This project views itself with similar ambitions to Schürmann and takes a critical stance toward his work in order to further develop some of its general impetus. Finally, the third section will consider this project in relation to contemporary philosophy of nature by looking at Ian James' work on contemporary French phenomenology or what he refers to as a 'post-deconstructive naturalism'. By no means are these three sections intended to be an authoritative overview of the literature on these topics. It was added to the essay to provide some additional scholarly orientation and I find that it remains useful enough to merit inclusion in the published version.

Early Hope for a Practical Alternative

Heidegger's destruction of metaphysics can be viewed as a critique of the determinative role that the Greek concept of *technē* has played in the formation of the western philosophical canon. As will be seen in Chapter 1, Heidegger's critique uncovers what can be construed as a single structure for all metaphysical doctrines. Such doctrines follow a reductive mode of thinking or comportment, namely *the reduction of Nature (thought in terms of physis) to its technical*

dimension. The critique is tied to the Aristotelian notion of *phronēsis* ('purpose, intention'), itself determined by *praxis*. This essay will take up this issue as it persists in the late 1930s, but it should be noted that Heidegger's critique of *technē*, and the hope he finds in *praxis*, begins already in the 1920s, during the period often referred to by its associated philosophical mode, fundamental ontology. Ultimately, Aristotelian *phronēsis*, and therefore *praxis*, will be determined by the metaphysical reduction of Nature to technic; it should therefore be viewed as an unsuitable starting point from which to develop an (practical) alternative to philosophy. To provide some background before jumping ahead to the next decade in Chapter 1, namely to a period spanning 1935-1939, I will draw here upon William McNeill's excellent condensation of the issue in the first two sections of his essay "Tracing *technē*: Heidegger, Aristotle, and the Legacy of Philosophy".²²

For Heidegger, *technē* is what determines metaphysics. More specifically, metaphysics receives its determination from the fact that *technē* is tied intrinsically to an image (*eidos*) that precedes the ontological question of Being. This includes any question in Greek metaphysics that concerns *physis* or *cosmos*, Nature or the universe itself; these can only be experienced, questioned, or acted upon through *the mediation of an antecedent image preceding thought*. For Heidegger, this 'decision' is found in all of metaphysical thinking from its 'Greek origins' to its 'modern closure'. *Technē* and its antecedent, guiding image constitutes the horizon of philosophy as such. McNeill refers the form of thought corresponding to the antecedent image of philosophy's technical horizon as "theoretical apprehension".²³ This will be referred to in Chapter 1 as an 'optic imperative' and will be considered not only from thought and comportment, but also as something intrinsic to Nature (*physis/kosmos*) as it is divided within itself.

Heidegger initially believes that he has found an early solution to this problem embedded in Greek philosophy. He locates it in the 'practical' correlate to philosophy's theoretical apprehension. This is found in the term *phronēsis*, which is determined by *praxis* rather than by *poiesis* (the making implied in *technē*). McNeill states the importance of Aristotelian *praxis* and *phronēsis* as follows:

[...] it was Aristotle's insight into the Being of the human being as action, *praxis*, and its authentic mode of self-disclosure, *phronēsis*, that led Heidegger to see the

²² William McNeill, "Tracing *technē*" in *Heidegger's Question of Being*, ed. Holger Zaborowski (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 2017), pp. 71-89.

²³ McNeill's commentary focuses primarily on the 1927 lecture course *Die Grundprobleme der Phänomenologie* (GA 24). His remarks on the 'technical determination' of philosophy and the destruction of ontology in the 1920s can be found between pp. 71-79.

radically different kind of temporality pertaining to human existence in contrast with the theoretically ascertained time of nature as something present-at-hand.²⁴

The term *phronēsis* – which simply means purpose or intention – is, for Aristotle, concerned with the thoughtful deliberation on how best to act. It corresponds to the ability to see each moment for what it is and, importantly for Heideggerian thought, to see each moment as a finite (momentary) whole. It appears to offer humankind a ‘freedom’ from its orientation by the antecedent image of *technē* by exposing it to the revealedness of things as such, a pre-philosophical openness to the world. The *eidos* or image of humankind is therefore not in advance of it, but rather proceeds, each time, together with its action in this pre-philosophical sphere of revealedness. The ‘always already’ of a metaphysical-technical temporality becomes the not-yet, or better, the never-yet, of this continuous exposure to Being’s revealing. This ‘immediacy’ of the moment has been ignored by philosophy as of yet.

The ‘discovery’ of an unheeded *phronēsis* in Aristotle, however, does not solve the issue of philosophy’s technical horizon; and it does not ‘free’ Heidegger’s thinking towards another horizon, at least not in the manner discussed by the Heidegger of the 1920s or in McNeill’s account. The problem will persist into the 1930s and find definitive articulation in Heidegger’s 1939 essay on Aristotle’s *Physics*. The problem persists whenever the human is viewed in relation to beings and is viewed itself as a being. McNeill alludes to it in one of his closing questions, when he asks whether or not the Being of the human is separable from the Being of the intraworldly. Is it not perhaps the case that *Dasein* can only be thought from its relation to other entities?²⁵

The tentative answer to such questions is that Heidegger, following the 1930s, attempts to leave the domain of ontology altogether. He thinks the human as indeterminate, indeed, as neither an entity nor as something necessarily determined in relation to the intra-worldly Aristotelian *phronēsis* is useless for Heidegger’s *Spätwerk* so long as it remains a ‘*dianoetic* virtue’ oriented towards a goal or end for human action. As long as the human is viewed in relation to entities, any sense of goal or intention (‘end’) will be tied to a Platonic sense of an image or *idea*. Any and all notions of the image, the whatness of things, the (formal) appearance, the *idea* or *eidos*, whether it is before or ‘to come’ (it can never be the latter according to Heidegger’s understanding of metaphysics), must be left to its own devices in order to ‘leave’ the technical horizon of philosophy entirely. It will be seen in Chapter 3 that, while Heidegger does maintain the importance of something like a ‘pre-philosophical openness’ and

²⁴ McNeill, “Tracing *technē*”, p. 72.

²⁵ McNeill, “Tracing *technē*”, 83.

an orientation towards the end or limit as such, such notions will be radically transformed away from any sense of being-in-the-world and human comportment towards entities and their Being.

Despite the shortcomings Heidegger finds in Aristotelianism, which will become clear in Chapter 1, it cannot be said that Heidegger's attempts to find a 'new' or 'other' horizon for thought abandon any and all philosophical notions of *praxis*. In his 1942/43 lecture course on Parmenides, Heidegger returns to the question of *praxis* and considers it from the Greek terms *prattō* ('to do') and *pragma* ('that which has been done'). Heidegger defines the verb *prattō* as "to pierce or infuse, to measure through, to traverse and so keep (preserve) a way through what is not contrived (*das Unverstelltes*); to do so in such a way that passage (or passing through) is itself available as presence" (GA 54, 117-118). Heidegger's characterization of *prattō* makes use of a somewhat uncommon sense of the adjective *unverstellt* (*das Unverstellte*). *Das Unverstellte* should be understood here in terms of what is not artificial, what is not a product of *technē* or *poiēsis* (*nicht gekünstelt*: not contrived), and therefore, what is without intention. This characterization means to free *pragma*, which derives from *prattō*, and its sense as 'thing' from the technical horizon of metaphysics.²⁶ Passage or transit concerns the passage of what is not technically determined. *Pragma* is then characterized, with the assistance of Pindar, as the unity of what is provided (*das Beigestellte*) and the providing or provision itself (*Bei-stellen selbst*). The issue raised here is the tense, inseparable unity of completion and the movement or act of completing, which stands at the center of his thinking (cf. GA 54, 118).²⁷ Completed act and action are always viewed as a unity, as both inseparable and simultaneous.

There are several important points to note here in anticipation of what will be said in Chapter 3. The first and most important is the sense of passage Heidegger attributes to *prattō* or 'doing'. Transition, transitivity, or passage will be a central motif of Heidegger's *Spätwerk*. This motif links Heidegger's notion of thinking to his understanding of experience (*Erfahrung*) and both of these (thinking and experience) to the question of the limit.²⁸ A sense of passage is connected with a certain sense of emptiness or vacuity which Heidegger attributes to the 'thing' (*pragma*) and which will later be understood as *topos*. By

²⁶ He also makes ample use of the prefix *hin-* to emphasize the movement of passage. The German reads: "hindurchdringen, durchmessen, durch Unverstelltes hindurch einen Weg zurücklegen und auf diesem Weg bei etwas anlangen und so das, wobei das Hindurchgehen anlangt, als Anwesende beistellen".

²⁷ This is found in the verb *prattō* itself, which means both 'to pass' and 'to accomplish'.

²⁸ Chapter 3 will go into further detail here, though it can be said now that this is done, in part, on the basis of the etymological root **per-* found in the Greek *prattō* ('to do') and *peras* ('limit') and the German *fahren* ('to go') which forms *Erfahrung*.

means of the vacuity of *topos*, Heidegger will seek a *total transformation of the philosophical notion of thing or entity*, one that can account for the Pindarian unity of completion and the act of completing. The thing – the site or non-site of completion's unity with its very act – orients thinking and experience as 'end', in the sense that the limit indicates quite generically 'what is' in relation to thought or experience.

The above characterization of *prattō* can be traced backwards into Heidegger's critique of metaphysics via Aristotle and the notion of *ergon* (work), the subject of Section 1.2 in particular. Heidegger states as much in his Parmenides lecture course (cf. GA 54, 118). Chapters 1 and 2 of this essay will consider this issue within the technical horizon of metaphysics and the transposition of this horizon onto a prospective non-metaphysical thinking with Heidegger's notions of *Gestell* and *Technik*. Chapter 3 will consider this issue from the perspective of the limit as Heidegger develops his notion of *Ereignis* as a transmutation of the Greek conception of *physis*. The characterization of *praxis* from *prattō* in 1942 shows Heidegger's thought in transition, maintaining the importance of a whole (the finite whole of the moment in *phronēsis*) while moving away from the entity-dominated goal-orientation of Aristotle, by attempting to decouple *pragma* from its sense as entity or thing. The metaphysical notion of *telos* that would constitute the 'end' in *phronēsis* is drawn into a broad transmutation of the notion of end and limit which determines Heidegger's later thinking and, in turn, will determine how the passage of *prattō* is understood.

Anarchy and the Western Front

Reiner Schürmann has undertaken what is perhaps the definitive study of Heidegger's relationship to practical philosophy. At the very least, it is among the most comprehensive. While his study – *Heidegger on Being and Acting* – does not take up Heidegger's discussions of *phronēsis* in any significant way,²⁹ it does take as its starting point the question of teleology implied in Aristotelian *phronēsis*. It follows the apparent dissolution of the *archē*, viewed here as both a grounds or principle and aim (*telos*) of thought and action, in

²⁹ In fact, the term does not seem to appear it all in the text. This is strange, considering the significance prominent commentators such as McNeill would place on *phronēsis*. It is likely the case that for Schürmann, the term belongs to the Heidegger of the 'existential analytic' or 'fundamental ontology', namely the Heidegger of the 1920s. This era of Heidegger's project becomes untenable, according to Schürmann, as soon as 'human *Dasein*' in its 'everydayness' is understood to have a history.

Reiner Schürmann, *Heidegger: On Being and Acting* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), p. 158.

Heidegger's 'radical phenomenological' engagement with the history of western philosophy.

The focus of Schürmann's project is overwhelmingly upon the 'deconstruction of metaphysics'. For Schürmann, Heidegger does not disjoin the practical question of acting from the theoretical question of Being, but rather raises the question of action such that it cannot be separated from that of Being. Essential to this elevation or non-distinction of action is Heidegger's deconstruction of the metaphysical principles that guide action as it follows from 'first philosophy' (ontology).³⁰ Practical philosophy has otherwise always been separated from ontology in having to be derived from the principle constituting a particular ontological or metaphysical epoch.³¹

The indebtedness of this current project to Schürmann's own should not be understated. It is also true, however, that the central claims here depart from Schürmann's overall interpretation of the Heideggerian corpus. The agreement/disagreement can be illustrated in relation to what he calls the 'double function' of the 'hypothesis of metaphysics' closure', namely that this closure is both "systematic" and "historical".³² Though this essay will speak more pointedly of 'consummation', it agrees that the 'closure' is systematic. It disagrees however with the emphasis on history. (1) Systematic: Schürmann claims that metaphysical rationality produces its own closure and states that the deconstructive method of Heidegger's phenomenology seeks to uncover (Schürmann says 'set free') what pervades every epochal principle of metaphysics.³³ This essay accepts these two assertions. What Heidegger uncovers in his deconstruction or destruction of metaphysics is the 'autonomous rationality' of presence (Being). This autonomous rationality is constituted by a particular structure that is already 'complete' in the philosophy of Plato and Aristotle (though only fully articulated when Aristotle is read in relation to the Platonic doctrine of *ideas*). What I refer to here as the 'particular structure' of an 'autonomous rationality' is that which pervades every epochal principle of metaphysics. Therefore, where Schürmann speaks of systemic closure, I will

³⁰ Schürmann, *Heidegger: On Being and Acting*, p. 4.

³¹ Schürmann refers specifically to Aristotle's *Physics* and its superordinate position vis-a-vis the *Politics* or *Ethics*. This would seem to be in a rather striking contrast to McNeill's emphasis on *praxis* and *phronēsis*. In Schürmann's reading, human action is subordinate to the principles of first philosophy. In McNeill's reading, the human is, by its action, precisely what Schürmann views as subordinate to philosophy. This issue will be seen again in Section 1.2 and Chapter 2 where human action (first as thought) is viewed as subordinate to the structure of metaphysics.

³² Schürmann, *Heidegger: On Being and Acting*, p. 4.

³³ Schürmann, *Heidegger: On Being and Acting*, p. 1; p. 153.

speak of *structural consummation*. In Chapter 1, this will be called the ‘technical *logos*’ and will serve as something like the *eidos* or appearance of metaphysics as such. I therefore agree with the Schürmann who states that metaphysical action is a response necessitated by the *eidos*, where *eidos* also means principle or *archē* (this overlap in terminology will be elaborated in Chapter 1).³⁴ However, I disagree that for Heidegger, in the final analysis, this *eidos* differs in any substantial way across metaphysical doctrines.

(2) Historical: The disagreement with Schürmann concerns how to situate ‘history’ in relation to metaphysics and its deconstruction. This disagreement will have repercussions for locating a preliminary notion of practice in Heidegger and should, in this way, be considered as a further development of or supplementation to the work begun by Schürmann. It is true that Heidegger situates the deconstruction of metaphysics historically. Schürmann, however, appears to hold the historical reconstruction in Heidegger’s critique to be necessary, even while admitting that Heidegger takes a finite slice of history (which is ‘destinal’).³⁵ He speaks more than once of a concrete sequence of events and of Heidegger’s last writings constituting the “genealogy of a finite line of epochal principles”.³⁶ This latter claim not only ignores the fact that the notions of time and temporality in Heidegger’s *Spätwerk* pose serious questions to the possibility of temporal sequentiality and chronology altogether (see Chapter 3), but also the fact that much, if not all, of the analytical work of the deconstruction has been carried out by the mid-1940s at the latest. As mentioned above, major works associated with this period include the two volumes on Nietzsche (1936-1946) and the *Beiträge zur Philosophie* (1936-1938).³⁷ Heidegger’s writings on *Gestell* and the Janus situation constituted by the relation between *Gestell* and *Ereignis* of the 1940s, 50s, and 60s proceed from the ‘end’ of the deconstruction of metaphysics; they constitute not a reconstruction of epochs, but what he refers to at Le Thor as a ‘topology’.

It is true that the semblance of a sequential structure for the ‘history of metaphysics’ serves a purpose in Heidegger’s deconstruction. It is also true that the epochal structure that Heidegger traces, deconstructs and reconstructs, is made intelligible through the difference produced in what Schürmann refers to as ‘epochal reversal’ – something like the shifting of principle(s) of intelligibility. This would be more significant if what Heidegger *sought* was

³⁴ Schürmann, *Heidegger: On Being and Acting*, p. 14; p. 38; p. 102; et al.

³⁵ Schürmann, *Heidegger: On Being and Acting*, 42.

³⁶ Schürmann, *Heidegger: On Being and Acting*, pp. 31 & 158 (‘concrete sequence’); p. 11 (‘finite line of epochal principles’).

³⁷ To this I will add a third, Heidegger’s 1939 reading of Aristotle, and argue that it is the definitive text of the deconstruction.

difference, but according to Schürmann's own claim, he seeks what pervades all metaphysical principles, their constant. He is correct to assert that the principles defining metaphysical epochs serve as a means of presence's control. They serve the *one* constant structuring presence. He is mistaken, however, to maintain – perhaps *with* Heidegger – that the constant presence of such principles is "due to destiny".³⁸

The flaw in Schürmann's reading and reconstruction of Heidegger is to place too much emphasis on the tool³⁹ that makes Heidegger's later thinking possible. The 'history of metaphysics' – consisting in an arbitrary selection of western history by Heidegger – is only necessary to the extent that it provides him with the raw material for elaborating *Gestell*, the structure of which he finds already 'complete' in Plato/Aristotle. It is one thing to read Heidegger's text on its own terms.⁴⁰ But in reading Heidegger's use of the term *geschichtlich* (here as 'destinal') too literally, Schürmann risks maintaining a sort of mythology that 'Heidegger the person' has constructed around his own thought. Schürmann argues that an epoch will have to be viewed as 'unique each time', as holding to a law of 'regional application'. It is such regionalism that allows Heidegger to construct a seemingly unique relation between the Greeks and the Germans, misreading Hölderlin along the way (see Chapter 1 and 3). This not only allows for the appropriation of Heidegger's thought to serve practical and political thinking which supports regionalist and nationalist agendas – and in doing so ignore Schürmann's ultimate aim of elaborating a practice without principle.⁴¹ It also fails to account for the central role of Heidegger's notion of limit in a 'thought without *archē*' and the unresolved tension between movement and completion/consummation inherent to it.

³⁸ Schürmann, *Heidegger: On Being and Acting*, 41.

³⁹ Heidegger may scoff at the notion that the 'history of metaphysics' would be ordered 'historiographically'. Yet there are few who make more use of the historiographical arrangement of the western philosophical canon than Heidegger himself.

⁴⁰ This includes Heidegger's claim to limit 'philosophy' as such to Western philosophy. This claim appears to focus solely on the word 'philosophy' itself, 'originating' in Greek, and the particular type of thinking that follows from Plato/Aristotle. In this case, Heidegger denies that there are 'Indian' or 'Chinese' philosophies, which is not to say that there are not modes of thought, historical or otherwise, that could be characterized as 'Indian' or 'Chinese'. This too, however, it must be noted, is an absurd notion. The pre-Socratic origins of Plato/Aristotle are not without reference and debt to non-Greek thinking. This issue will be taken up again in Chapter 3 in reference to Hölderlin and his 'orientalization of Greece'. Schürmann, *Heidegger on Being and Acting*, p. 153.

⁴¹ The assertion here is not that Schürmann aids in nationalist political appropriations of Heidegger, but that one must go further in reading 'Heidegger against Heidegger' not only to avoid interpretative overlap, but to get at the furthest reaches of what Heidegger's own thinking attempts outside of metaphysics.

Whether or not Schürmann intends this is not altogether clear. The primary aim here is to draw out important differences between this project and his categorical reconstruction without making definitive attributions to or accusation of what is a difficult, highly nuanced and complex project. It appears correct to say that he recognizes what will ultimately be the claim of the present essay. He writes parenthetically that the opposition between a “systematic” and “historical” closure will eventually fall victim to the same hypothesis, namely, that the distinction will collapse in upon itself. This essay is, in part, an elaboration of that moment of collapse. The first two chapters will seek to elaborate and display the homology between metaphysics and *Gestell*. In this way, the epochal structuring of the deconstruction of metaphysics can be disregarded as an obsolete analytical tool, a means to an end, namely to the elaboration of *technic* as an autonomous rationality to which western philosophy has overwhelmingly corresponded. Three interpretative points of contention with Schürmann’s overall reconstruction of Heidegger can be listed here: the understanding of *geschichtlich* or *geschicklich* in terms of destiny; the assertion that action remains oriented by presence (a presence of manifold origin) after the closure of metaphysics; and centrally, the understanding of Heidegger’s notion of *topos* as a ‘historical epoch’ or as an ‘economy of presence’.

First, to speak of the *geschichtlich* or *geschicklich* in terms of destiny or the destinal is to grant a higher degree of specificity (and ‘agency’) to a term that ultimately indicates a modality of presence’s intelligibility (its revealing and revealedness) as such. Such rhetoric allows Heidegger’s finite slice of history to become or remain an enchanted one. This is to say that it imbues this history with a sort of magical agency that renders it autonomous from its inscription. Both Heidegger and Schürmann maintain a historiographical ordering of their reconstructions⁴² despite their own claims against historiography. Schürmann asserts the transcendental nature of phenomenological deconstruction in defense of the a priori nature of the categories he uses to organize metaphysical principles. It would appear that this assertion ultimately agrees with the present essay in suggesting that the epochal ordering of metaphysical principles serves Heidegger as the necessary tool with which he develops both his understanding of *technic/Gestell* and *Ereignis*. The necessity of its function, however, does not correspond to its being a matter of ‘destiny’.

What justifies the ordering of principles and the ‘finite slice of history’ that constitutes them is Heidegger’s own decision to choose Nietzsche as marking the ‘closure’ of metaphysics. Heidegger’s decision here is guided by his belief

⁴² See, for example, the structure of Heidegger’s essay “Die Geschichte des Seins als die Metaphysik” and Schürmann’s category of tables.

that Nietzsche is the first philosopher since the Greeks to ‘truly’ pose the question of Being in terms of Truth. What constitutes the history of metaphysics and its principles is the fact that, for Heidegger, both the Greeks (at least with Plato/Aristotle, but certainly prefigured in Parmenides) and Nietzsche ‘fail’ in the same way – the beginning and end are the same.⁴³ The thinking of both the Greeks and Nietzsche corresponds to the same structure of metaphysics. The various principles or philosophies that Heidegger chooses as punctuating the path (Leibniz, for example) are then a priori necessary to confirm that this indeed is a single structure.⁴⁴ Once this assertion is in place, however, and the structure of metaphysics is assumed by the names *Technik* and *Gestell*, the necessity of the epochal structure of metaphysics (its ‘differing’ principles) withers away. To speak of a ‘destinal’ ordering of epochs with and after Heidegger is, moreover, to misunderstand the notion of limit in Heidegger’s work in its generic nature and how ‘presence occurs’ within a limit or boundary (see chapters 2 and 3).

Second, and at the center of the other two concerns raised here, is the assertion that Heidegger’s use of the word *topos* refers to a constellation of presence. The disagreement here is again nuanced because Schürmann shifts the meaning of *topos* on the basis of a temporal differentiation: as synchronic and diachronic. Synchronic refers to an ahistorical, un-principled or self-regulating constellation of presence in relation to *Ereignis*.⁴⁵ Diachronic refers to a historical, principle-oriented progression of time. *Topos* first refers to principle-oriented constellations of presence, the *loci* that punctuate the ‘history of metaphysics’, i.e. *topoi* are diachronic.⁴⁶ Following the closure of metaphysics, this is reversed. A *topos* is now an ahistorical, synchronic constellation of presence understood in relation to *Ereignis* as an absolutely particular

⁴³ For Heidegger, Nietzsche understands Being as the ‘securing of an entity’ (*Bestandsicherung*) and Truth as ‘certainty’ (*Sicherheit*) and ‘consistency’ (*Festigkeit*). This corresponds to Heidegger’s understanding of Greek metaphysics in Plato/Aristotle (GA 70, 60).

⁴⁴ I am going as far as to claim that what Heidegger elaborates in “Die Geschichte des Seins als die Metaphysik” – an essay which punctuates his two volume study of Nietzsche – does not serve to elaborate the uniqueness of principles (as Schürmann holds in general), but to display the same structure underlying all metaphysical doctrines. This structure corresponds to that elaborated in the 1939 Aristotle reading considered in Chapter 1. I ask for the reader’s patience in following the development of this claim across the first two chapters.

⁴⁵ Schürmann, *Heidegger on Being and Acting*, p. 56.

⁴⁶ Schürmann, *Heidegger on Being and Acting*, p. 12; p. 354, fn. 29.

constellation.⁴⁷ This latter, final understanding given by Schürmann certainly corresponds to the problem of a radical individuation of intelligibility or experience in Heidegger's *Spätwerk*. Schürmann correctly locates the question of action precisely within this individuating but incorrectly states that it is temporal presencing which orients action without principle.⁴⁸ The final point of contestation follows from this, namely that action is oriented by presencing rather than its limit. Action remains tied to presencing for Schürmann, as he understands *Ereignis* in relation to the 'event' of presencing, the 'upsurge' of synchronic presencing that marks its ahistorical, temporal differentiation from presence ordered by principle (history). The term *topos* remains relevant here only to the extent that economies of presencing are a measure for action.⁴⁹

Schürmann's translation of *Ereignis* along the lines of an 'event of appropriation' in relation to the event of presencing is questionable, though it belongs to a long line of Heidegger-exegesis. The event of presencing is, for Schürmann, the 'other shape of Being', which is to say the 'shape' of presence that is not a principle or ordered by principle. Yet Heidegger is quite explicit that *Ereignis* does not follow as another articulation of Being. It is not another shape or articulation of Being as Presencing. It is rather something akin to the possibility of presence, though to state this unqualified would also be a bold claim. In "Zeit und Sein" Heidegger states that Presence and its historical modes (*Geschichte* understood in terms of modes of revealing) are now to be understood in terms of *Ereignis* (or from 'within' its boundaries, *in das Ereignis zurückgenommen wird*) (cf. GA 14, 62). There is no age or epoch of *Ereignis* and, ultimately, no age or epoch of 'technology'. Once the singular structure of metaphysics is presented by way of the deconstruction, there is only *Ereignis* and the manifold ways in which entities are revealed (*Gestell*). Schürmann's interpretation is lacking here in its failure to see the absolute centrality of the notion of limit or delimitation in Heidegger's thinking.

Two things must be said about the Heideggerian notion of the limit here. First, one of the major shifts in thought's orientation from metaphysics to the non-metaphysical is a shift from the delimitation of entities (metaphysics) to the delimitation of a configuration of presence and absence (non-metaphysical).

⁴⁷ It appears that for Schürmann this 'absolutely particular' refers to its 'temporal difference' from diachronic time, its radical departure from historically principled presence. A similar motif will be raised between Chapters 2 and 3 of this essay as the difference between the universal and generic. cf. ibid., p. 219; p. 161.

⁴⁸ "The practice required for thinking presencing is dictated by the withering of the epochal principles." Schürmann, *Heidegger on Being and Acting*, p. 239.

⁴⁹ Schürmann, *Heidegger on Being and Acting*, p. 235.

So it is true that the term *topos* in Heidegger is elaborated in relation to a configuration of presence and absence, which Schürmann refers to as an economy of presencing, but it is not itself that configuration, nor even necessarily its temporality. Put otherwise, Heidegger's notion of *topos* is linked to what Schürmann calls an aprincipial 'economy of presence' – and what he terms synchronic *topos* – but, taken as it is from the definition given in Aristotle's *physis*, this notion of *topos* is defined in terms of a generic delimiting, which is to say, it is a sort of 'how' for such economies (Chapter 3). It is therefore not the case that action is oriented by the presencing of a radically individuated economy or configuration. It is rather the case that action would be oriented by the limit or by delimitation itself. The radical individuation Schürmann speaks of follows from a comportment towards delimitation. Heidegger states continually that *Ereignis* is 'determined' by expropriation and/or withdrawal and thus attaches to it a certain sense of unknowability that is rooted in *physis* (which loves to hide). It is, in fact, this unknowability, the Heideggerian avowal of ignorance, which opens Schürmann's entire study.⁵⁰

Second, Heidegger's thinking of the limit renders beginning and end identical. This was alluded to in the above discussion of the *geschichtlich* nature of metaphysics, namely the 'same' failure of Nietzsche and the Greeks. This 'sameness' of beginning and end is cause for a tension that is unresolved within Heidegger's text: the tension between movement (in the case of metaphysical epochs, progression) and consummation. In terms of the history of metaphysics, Heidegger ultimately chooses to focus on consummation, reducing the structure of metaphysics under the singular term *Gestell* and setting aside its 'progress'. While it is unlikely a direct correspondence, this tension could be related to the double-articulation of the limit in Heidegger's *Spätwerk* represented as the Janus situation of *Gestell-Ereignis*. In this case, it be said that *Gestell* names the movement of a finite universal aimed at the total articulation of entities in the broadest sense, while *Ereignis* names the unicity of the particular-generic (the issue of individuation and the individuated), that is, the generic begetting of the particular that 'interrupts' the movement of the finite universal. This tension remains in Heidegger's *Spätwerk*. How can the 'unfolding' of radically individuated configurations of presence and absence be thought (Chapter 3)? Even the universal injunction of technical knowledge

⁵⁰ The epigraph for Schürmann's introduction is Heidegger's infamous "I do not know" from his interview in *Der Spiegel*: "It is a decisive question for me today how a political system, and what kind of one, can at all be coordinated with the technological age. I do not know the answer to this question". *ibid.*, p. 2.

would not be enough to resolve this.⁵¹ Rather, it seems always a matter of anticipation (remarked by both McNeill and Schürmann). One might speak of a Heideggerian adaptability, the minimal, though fundamental maxim of thought and action to adapt to the sudden 'upsurge of *Ereignis*'. There is another possibility that will be argued here, namely that Heidegger's *Spätwerk* emphasizes a comportment oriented by consummation and limit; this will emerge from the thematic importance of death, which that will be considered in all three chapters of this essay.

The key to understanding all this lies in *physis*, the philosophical term to be set above all the rest for Heidegger. Indeed, as Schürmann notes, it is Aristotle's *Physics* that serves as the 'foundational book' (*Grundbuch*)⁵² of western philosophy, providing it with the vocabulary Heidegger will trace out and deconstruct, but also with which he will build his own lexicon. The term *Ereignis* is not constructed and elaborated from out of *aletheia* as Schürmann's table⁵³ suggests, but rather is elaborated by Heidegger as the transmutation of *physis* (Chapter 3). Yet it must be acknowledged that the terms *physis* and *aletheia* are not absolutely distinguishable in Heidegger's work, and that he himself holds these terms entangled.⁵⁴ Thus it will be from the point of conflation or entanglement of *physis* and *aletheia* that *Ereignis*, the term orienting thought and 'action' or 'practice', will be thought. Practice can therefore not be considered as guided solely by temporal presence. This question must be considered from both truth (*aletheia*) as irresolvable conflict in the form of a configuration of presence and absence, revealing and concealing; and from the question of what begets and/or individuates truth, from *physis* as the very question of the limit. The phrase "Topology of Being" might then be given two prospective meanings here: (1) an avowal of ignorance in the form of comportment towards the limit or delimitation, thought by Heidegger primarily in terms of

⁵¹ One solution to this is to follow Heidegger in removing of the specificity not only of Nietzsche and Plato/Aristotle, but of the epochal principles in general and to read Heidegger's *Spätwerk* as concerned with the simultaneity of two modes of structuring.

⁵² Schürmann notes this at several points in *On Being and Acting*, at one point citing Gadamer's *Die Idee des Guten zwischen Platon und Aristoteles*. Schürmann, *Heidegger on Being and Acting*, p. 39 fn. 23, p. 87, p. 99, p. 104.

⁵³ Section 4 of *On Being and Acting*, "Historical Deduction of the Categories of Presence", is dedicated to what Schürmann refers to as the 'categories of presencing'. An example of this in tabular form can be found at the end of Section 20, "The Categorical, the Noumenal, and the Empirical". Schürmann, *Heidegger on Being and Acting*, p. 162.

⁵⁴ As the question of Being, which metaphysics understands as Presence, must be posed in relation to the question of truth, *aletheia*, so too the question or development of *Ereignis* must be considered in relation to truth.

concealing, and (2) an engagement with the dividing and therefore obscuring of intelligibility.

The Question of Nature

To what extent can Heidegger's work be considered in relation to the question of Nature? Heidegger's work, and especially his 'topology' as a prospective practical approach to thinking, is deeply engaged with the question of Nature. For him, *physis* is the philosophical *ur-word* that must be questioned in relation to the question of truth. William McNeill's analysis of the early Heidegger show that Heidegger's thinking begins with the need to decouple *praxis* and/or *phrōnesis* from the technical horizon of metaphysics, including its *techne*-determined notion of *physis*. Reiner Schürmann's work followed a similar path in viewing the deconstruction of the metaphysical or technical *archē* as a major movement within Heidegger's work. In doing so, Schürmann also established the central role of Aristotle's *Physics* in the development of Heidegger's thought. Heidegger's term *Ereignis* is, in many ways, a transmutation or rethinking of the philosophical notion of *physis* as the central term of western, metaphysical thought, and this transmutation (*physis-Ereignis*) is what orients the development of his *Spätwerk* and/or topology. It is true that Heidegger would likely reject the term Naturalism, as he does with all isms, and consider any reference to a 'philosophy of Nature' in terms of the first philosophy or metaphysics he seeks to 'destroy'. It is nonetheless true that persisting centrally in his work is a question that can still be brought under the name Nature.

In a recent study of contemporary French philosophy, Ian James has attempted to elaborate what he terms, following John Mullarkey, "post-Continental naturalism".⁵⁵ To the extent that the four thinkers James focuses on – Jean-Luc Nancy, François Laruelle, Bernard Stiegler, and Catherine Malabou – are considered to have been significantly influenced by Heidegger's work, it is worth considering the basic characterization James gives of this naturalism. Building on the claim that all these philosophies engage in a "naturalization of the transcendental," Post-Continental naturalism can be considered in terms of three characteristics: (1) there is no "ontological duality between thought and matter, between the phenomenal and the physical, between consciousness and the body"; (2) there is no "substantive ontological

55 James advances his claims both in distinction to and in dialogue with what he views as the dominant forms of naturalism in the 20th century, namely, those associated with analytic or Anglo-Saxon philosophy. The current essay will not treat any of these authors in depth, though references are made to both Laruelle and Stiegler. Ian James, *The Technique of Thought* (Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press, 2019), pp. 1ff.

or metaphysical ground or foundation for thought or being”, which also precludes the possibility of securing a “sense of unity or totality within thinking”; (3) these thinkers affirm the vacuity or emptiness – again, ontological groundlessness – of the physical.⁵⁶

There are certain points of affinity in thought between the Heidegger of the present essay and the above characterization of post-Continental naturalism. The first point to consider is that, in Heidegger, the naturalization of the transcendental moment should be considered, broadly speaking, from what will be referred to here as a reintegration of technic in Nature. The notion of technic that emerges from Heidegger’s deconstruction of western philosophy is that of a sort of immanent transcendence within Nature. Technic is the movement through which Nature strives to know itself and universalize itself in this knowing. To the extent that Nature (from *physis*) is also tied to ‘truth’ (*aletheia*), the question of Nature is concerned with both presence and absence, revealing and concealing, the knowable and unknowable, et al. Truth is not, in this way, borne by duality, for the seeming oppositions (presence and absence) that characterize it are always to be understood as figures of irresolvable tension which are (to be) thought or experienced from or as an indivisible but finite (not total) ‘whole’. The question of technic concerns the dimension of (pure) presence, revealing, and/or intelligibility within Nature. It is an autonomous rationality pursuing its own end, as will be discussed in Chapters 1 and 2. Yet, for Heidegger, technic cannot surpass or conquer Nature for the reason that its very possibility is that of a disruption in Nature; it is an immanent or inherent conflict. As will be seen in Chapters 2 and 3, the movement of a constant disruption, due to which technic fails to universalize (or totalize) itself in and as Nature, can be attributed to an inherent finitude of Nature.

Duality is the maintenance of technic. References to an ontological duality will be found throughout this essay, primarily in Heidegger’s figure of the ‘ontological difference’, the difference and *ur*-duality between Being and beings. The production of this difference will be seen as belonging to the movement of all metaphysical doctrines – it is the movement of technic itself, a groundless movement through which presence attains its ‘absolute’ self-relation. Its final formulation will be that of the productive difference (or reciprocity) between consummation and antecedence (Chapter 2). As a figure of thought, the ontological difference is what allows Heidegger to present the structure of metaphysics and/or technic (Interlude of Chapter 3). Following the destruction of metaphysics, his thinking abandons ontological difference in favor of (or he transforms it into) the indivisibility of *Ereignis* understood as delimitation. This marks a shift in Heidegger’s thinking from a deconstructive practice to

⁵⁶ James, *Technique of Thought*, pp. 15-16.

a prospective topological practice. The movement wherein ontological duality passes into the indivisibility of *Ereignis* collapses the other dualities mentioned by James, all while demonstrating that the reciprocity of Being and Thought belongs to the movement of a technical doubling. What remains are questions of irresolvable entanglements and relation.

Heidegger ties duality to a technical or metaphysical comportment of thought, namely to formal appearance, a notion he uses in speaking broadly of the Platonic determination of metaphysics via the *idea*. This is often considered in terms of a comportment towards beings or entities and not Being, particularly in the questioning of the early Heidegger. Situating technic's production of binaries as an autonomous movement within Nature therefore engenders something like the collapse of duality as a necessary figure of thought. In terms of entities, doing so can be considered as the clearing away of entities. It will be argued in Chapter 3 that this 'clearing' (*Lichtung*) is developed by Heidegger via an engagement with certain motifs surrounding Aristotle's understanding of *topos* – a key feature of this *topos* is its independence from form and matter. A *topos* is both an empty vessel (defined quite literally by its vacuity, though in terms of transit and passage) and what begets relation. The 'clearing', together with Heidegger's jug in the essay "Das Ding", are two figures that belong to a larger series of metonymical figures in the *Spätwerk* which tie emptiness and nothingness to death and the question of human comportment. For all of these figures, their indivisibility is understood not in the receptive quality of emptiness, but rather their release, their maintaining themselves as empty.

The more general characterization of a *topos* taken from Aristotle is that it is a 'generic limit or delimiting that is consummate'. Chapter 3 will propose that *Ereignis* should be understood first and foremost from the figure of delimitation (*Ende*, *Grenze*, *Horizont*, et al.) running throughout Heidegger's work. The transmutation of *physis* is therefore found in Heidegger's development of *Ereignis* thought as or from the motif of delimitation. This is to say that the figure of *topos*, taken from the *Grundbuch* of metaphysical philosophy, is the key to Heidegger's transmutation of *physis* (*aletheia*) to *Ereignis*. The prospective for thinking (for dwelling, building, etc.) in Heidegger's topology will be guided by this: *non-metaphysical thought comports towards delimitation*. 'Thinking' is tied to an experience of *Ereignis*. This has some bearing on another key characteristic that James attributes to his naturalist thinkers, namely that these thinkers all engage in a thinking of the limit. "The real", James writes in his conclusion, "is encountered here in an experience of the limits of thought and of the loss of origin or ontological ground within thought".⁵⁷ The final section

57 James, *Technique of Thought*, p. 222.

of Chapter 3 will consider something quite similar, which is perhaps closer to a characterization James gives earlier in his text: “[i]t is an experience in which thought [...] encounter[s] the impossibility of grasping its conditions of possibility”.⁵⁸ Whether or not the directive in Heidegger’s thinking corresponds directly to what James refers to as a ‘thinking of the limit’, it is plausible to think Heidegger’s work helped prepare such a thinking. It should be said, at the very least, that the notion of limit and delimitation in Heidegger is not tied to exteriority – not of Nature, thought, or experience – because the sense of a ‘check’ on (or disruption of) the universal movement of technic is understood in terms of a double finitude *in* Nature, thought here in terms of both humankind and *Ereignis*.

Heidegger’s *Spätwerk* arises from an attempt to pierce the production of dualities (technic) towards what makes this production possible (*Ereignis*). There are no notions of interiority or exteriority in the sense that would reproduce yet another dualism in this work.⁵⁹ Technical transcendence is a transcendence wherein Nature always remains within itself. Notions of what remains hidden from or in excess of technical transcendence are not somehow outside technic or Nature, but rather lapses and gaps attributed to an inherent finitude of the physical (of *physis*). Heidegger’s topology is a thought that continuously turns around attempts at ‘describing’ an indivisible Nature turning within itself.

Whether or not Heidegger’s thinking should be situated in terms of a (non) philosophical or non-metaphysical ‘naturalism’ is not of primary concern here. It is certain, however, that his work is deeply engaged with the question of Nature insofar as this question can be situated at the *crux* where *physis* and *aletheia* meet and drive the interminably interrogative nature of his project. The question of technic arises from within this sphere of questioning. The question of the human cannot be posed without first setting in motion the question of Nature. The question of Nature is tied to the unfolding of the initial questioning of Heidegger’s work, the question of Being in the metaphysical canon. The following essay will consider the question of Nature in all of these facets and entanglements as it develops across Heidegger’s work from the 1930s onward and guides the orientation of his prospective topology.

⁵⁸ James, *Technique of Thought*, p. 53.

⁵⁹ Heidegger cites Goethe in his *Feldweg-Gespräche*: “Nichts ist drinnen, nichts ist draußen/denn was innen, das ist außen” (“Nothing is inside, nothing is outside/for what is within, that is without”) (GA 77, 35).

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PART I

Technic and Nature

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Metaphysics as Construct and Autonomy

In the context of Heidegger's work, the word 'metaphysics' is the name of technically demarcated *physis*. Put otherwise, metaphysics *is* technic. For Heidegger the terms indicate the same occurrence, function, or operation. Technic is not something that develops at a certain point in time or history. Technic is rather the predominance of what Heidegger calls 'presence', intelligible structure. Technic says: there is an autonomous function *in Nature* that is the production of intelligibility. It is the command (and order) of the 'optic' dimension of Nature. Technic is therefore not something that is within or solely within humankind. It is neither humankind's invention nor its possession. It would sooner be said, in a Heideggerian phrasing, that technic *has* humankind. Technic is not something that Heidegger situates in history, but rather a possible resolution to the (conceptual?) entanglement of humankind, Nature, and technology, which is to say, an omnipossible ordering of operation. Technic is therefore, in a way, omnipresent. This has implications for philosophy as a practice.

A second, derivative understanding of metaphysics directly concerns humankind. The term metaphysics also indicates the practice of philosophy or, at least, a certain type of philosophy. Metaphysics is, in this sense, the practice that corresponds, together with technic, to the demand for the intelligible. The question or problem of metaphysics is therefore tied to the decision about humankind, how humankind is determined. It might be said that the preeminence of intelligibility within Nature *demands* a decision about humankind. The notion of 'consummate metaphysics' yielded in Heidegger's deconstruction of metaphysics has consequences for his understanding of humankind. A considerable change in this understanding takes place across the 1930s and prepares the recasting of humankind as something indeterminate in Heidegger's *Spätwerk*. In the case of metaphysics or metaphysical practice humankind is determined by presence.

The following chapter will elaborate this claim across four sections centered around a reading of Heidegger's 1939 essay on Aristotle "Vom Wesen und Begriff der Φύσις. Aristoteles, Physik B, 1". There are at least two reasons for the centering of this essay. The first is that it gives a detailed account of Aristotle's *physis*-concept as it is determined by *technē*. This turn or return to Aristotle occurs at a significant point in the trajectory of Heidegger's thought. It comes at a later stage of his 'deconstruction of metaphysics', well into the

series of developmental self-criticisms documented in the workbooks associated with the *Beiträge* (GA 65-71). It could be read, perhaps even more so than Heidegger's 'Neitzsche lectures', as the definitive document on the structure of metaphysics. The second reason, following from this, is Heidegger's ordering of the working notes to this essay together with his working notes on *Gestell*. For it is *Gestell* that will eventually become the name of the technical *physis* concept documented by Aristotle.

Section 1.1 will situate metaphysics as a question or problem within Heidegger's work. It will do so from the perspective of Heidegger's 'destruction of metaphysics'. This 'destruction' is a developmental period in Heidegger's work – the most important developments of which occur between the mid-1930s and early 1940s – that has a considerable influence on his understanding of technic and on his *Spätwerk* more generally. Following from the statement 'metaphysics is technic', this section will consider the 'deconstruction' as a search for what is the same in metaphysics or in all metaphysical doctrines. This 'same' is the structure of metaphysics, the structure of technic.

Section 1.2 will elaborate this structure as it is detailed in Heidegger's 1939 reading of Aristotle. This structure will be named 'the production of the *idea*' as the unity of the two structural moments of intelligible Nature, namely, intelligibility and becoming- or making-intelligible; appearance and appearing. This structure arises simultaneously from the limit of metaphysics and the limit of intelligibility as the *technical image* of Nature. Heidegger will name the *logos*, or rather, a technical dimension of the *logos* as the operative or functional dimension of technic/metaphysics. It will be shown that the technical image of Nature is the image of a technical *logos*.

Section 1.3 will consider this structure from three different points and each time with attention to humankind's role in or relationship to this structure, i.e., its relation to or use of this technically qualified *logos*. This long section will introduce the circumstances under which Heidegger's understanding of humankind morphs from one who *weaves* presence to one who *is woven*. His reading of Parmenides will be analyzed alongside his understanding of quantum physics to demonstrate the homology between metaphysics and technic from the perspective of humankind's utility within the structure of metaphysics/technic. The section will close by exploring the role humankind's relationship to technic has played in the production of the metaphysical canon, the production of the very material that Heidegger attempts to deconstruct.

Section 1.4 will return to Heidegger's Aristotle reading, where the closing passages provide the justification for considering technic as an autonomous structure or logic occurring in philosophy. It will be shown that the western philosophical tradition has posited a sort of substitute for that or those

dimensions of Nature to which it does not have access. Philosophy meets its limit in accounting for the genetic dimension of technic. The notion of technic, as technical Nature, will be developed in Chapter 2 from Heidegger's term *Gestell*.

1.1 The Technological Constant in Metaphysics

Metaphysics – in the sense it will be discussed here – designates first an apparatus (*meta-*) mediating experience and knowledge of *physis*. Viewed from a metaphysical perspective, *physis* is the primary concept for Nature or Being. It can be likened to the 'World' encountered by thought that includes thought itself. In Heidegger's terminology, metaphysics concerns itself with *physis* understood as 'everything which exists as such' (*das Seiende im Ganzen als ein solches*). Metaphysics is directed by the concern to register *physis* as a totality *qua* an onto-epistemic paradigm (*als ein solches*). Put otherwise, it is a paradigm and the construction of this paradigm through which things come to register ontologically (according to a notion of Being) and epistemologically (according to a theory of knowledge and knowability).¹

Following from this, a second designation may be added. Metaphysics is the ability to account for the construction and thus constructability of access to *physis* as totality. This second designation raises the question of the *autonomy* of such an operation: Does this construction arise in humankind or does humankind simply comport to it in a particular way? How much control could or do humans have over such a construction? To the extent that the human practice of philosophy wishes to lay claim to a knowledge of Being or Nature 'in itself' – an 'in itself' to which it remains immanent – it is confronted by the impasse of Being's self-production, i.e. the auto-poietic address of Nature around which a given metaphysical paradigm would be constructed. The seeming equivocality between *physical* self-production and *technical* production determines, for Heidegger, the fundamental movement of metaphysics as both paradigm and paradigm-construction.

The chief accomplishment of Heidegger's 'destruction of metaphysics' is to reduce the description of metaphysics to a series of operations, perhaps variations of the same operation,² which is rooted in a decisive aporia. He does so

¹ 'Ontological register' can be understood as the ordering and articulating of particular aspects of what exists, namely any in fulfillment with constant presence (GA 76, 351).

² These 'variations of the same operation' are what Schürmann has referred to as 'epochs', '*loci*', and '*topoi*'.

by attempting to approach metaphysics as both a human practice (of metaphysical philosophizing) *and* as an autonomous occurrence. This aporia can be viewed as a constant underlying metaphysics. It begins with the inability of Greek metaphysics to resolve the conceptual entanglement of *physis* and *technē* – as modes of producing truth or ideas – except by generating a ‘technically’ determined *physis*-concept, that is, a concept of *physis* determined by *technē*. Greek metaphysics, however, *does* resolve the conceptual entanglement in this way, turning a seeming equivocation into an aporia. With this resolution of *physis* and *technē*, *physis* appears as a product of the technical.³ To the extent that metaphysics remains a human practice, it can be shown that a certain risk arises, namely, that of conflating the human act of positing (placing or fixing what has been encountered, so as to ‘know’ it)⁴ with the autonomous self-production of Nature or Being. This would force a decision regarding which of these two operations (human positing or the self-production of Nature) are expendable. The possibility of resolving the question of Nature or Being in the human intellect is thus a congenital danger of metaphysical modes of thought. The risk is nothing less than the replacement of Nature by the identification of humankind with a technical operation.

The possibility remains, however, that the fundamental activity of human thought is not conflated with the self-production of Nature. In this case, the type of production (of knowledge or ideas) associated with *technē* would be understood as an autonomous occurrence to which the human nonetheless has access. The transition in Heidegger’s thinking from a critique or destruction of metaphysics to the phenomenological description of technology (and the ‘essence’ of technology) makes precisely this identification between metaphysics and technology. The notion of *Gestell* that determines Heidegger’s understanding of technic and, from this, technology, is homologous with metaphysics, which is to say, of the same structure. The recognition of such homology between technic and metaphysics is intended to free human thought towards another use – phenomenological description as ‘thinking’ or what will be referred to in this essay as ‘topology’ – which maintains a ‘free’ relation to and/or use of the technical production of knowledge. Metaphysics therefore becomes the description of a technical *logos* at the heart of the production of the ‘knowable *idea*'.⁵

³ The term ‘technical’ is used here, before all else, as an adjective corresponding to Heidegger’s term *Technik*.

⁴ This will be returned to in Chapter 2 in relation to the Greek term *thesis*.

⁵ The term ‘technical *logos*’ indicates the dimension of *logos* that belongs to *technē* and, more importantly, what in Heidegger’s later thinking will be called *Technik*. The combination of *technē* and *logos* should be kept in mind, insofar as the technical *logos* found in Heidegger’s

The emergence of a technical *logos* in the Aristotelian resolution of *technē* and *physis* engenders and guides the constant that underlies metaphysical thinking. The operation of the technical *logos* arises in part due to the *optic* ontological and epistemological requirements of metaphysical philosophy. The optic imperative is grounded in a directedness at the accessibility and intelligibility of things.⁶ Heidegger refers to this – the metaphysical determination of Being or Nature – as the beingness of things. In the interpretation and appropriation of Aristotle's *Physics* that underlies the development of his thinking on technology, the *logos* is employed in a technical capacity precisely at the point where the *logos* is meant to distinguish *physis* from *technē*. It is employed in a technical capacity to the extent that the *logos* functions to make accessible and intelligible not only the formal appearance of the things of Nature, but that movement whereby Nature produces its own *idea*. The *logos* brings this idea-producing movement to presence and renders it knowable. *Technē*, as opposed to *physis*, is distinguished by its concern with the movement that produces knowledge. As will be seen in the following section, it is a knowledge-concept rooted in the act of seeing. A metaphysical notion of *physis* is thereby a product of the technical *logos*. The question arises as to whether or not there is a knowing or knowledge outside the realm of its technical production.

The metaphysical identification of the movement of *physis* with the technical *logos* is equivalent to the identification of the self-appearance of Being with the production of the *idea*. For metaphysics, Presence, Being, is a heterogeneous

1939 reading of Aristotle (see below) anticipates his concern with the technical or technological instrumentalization of language or 'information'. This is to say that what is central to his reading of Aristotle remains a primary concern as his focus shifts to discussions of science and philosophy in the 20th century.

6 Heidegger writes: "For what reason does the *revealing* character of *technē* remain concealed? Because *alétheia* never comes to light in its essence and *homoiōsis* ('likeness') asserts itself as *orthotēs* ('rightness') and thereby the primacy of human comportment to the benefit of revealing and transitive presence captured in *Ereignis [des ereignishaften An-wesens und Entbergens]*. Everything shifted in the antecedence of the *optical field* [*Gesichts-feld*], [as] primary, i.e., according to [a] 'moving into sight' [*nach Hin-sichten*] of seeing (*idein – noein*)" (GA 76, 330-331). As the last line shows and as will be seen below, 'sight' and 'optic' here cannot be thought solely 'from the eye' in the manner Heidegger attributes to Goethe. The optical imperative concerns the constancy and accessibility of transitive presence (the approach of 'essence', *An-wesung*) as a possibility 'prior to' any conception of human sight. It is thought from *physis* as *logos* and *polemos*, a matter taken up in section 1.3 via Heidegger's Parmenides and *Antigone* interpretations. The resolution of this relation in metaphysics and according to the optic imperative is 'made possible' by the *dynamic* nature of *physis* as thought by Aristotle, a matter that will be taken up first in section 1.2 and again in 1.4 (GA 76, 37-38). See the elaboration of the *idea* at the beginning of section 1.2 for more concerning the 'optic' as prior to human vision.

unity and is inseparable from the movement of what produces it and *the appearance of this production*. The operation by which the heterogeneous is brought together ('collected', 'gathered') is the *logos*. Its formal appearance – the 'form' of this collection as accessible and/or knowable – is the *idea* (or *eidos*). The production of the *idea*, which will be detailed in sections 1.2 and 1.4, thus concerns the movement of the technical *logos* whereby a 'collecting' brings its collection to formal appearance (*idea, eidos*). The knowable *idea* is both this formal appearance and the (self-) appearing of the operation that has produced it. Put otherwise, it is both a 'collection' secured through its accessibility and naming (its 'categorization') *and* the movement through which this can take place ('logic'). It is 'knowable' because both the product (*idea*) and its production (the function of the technical *logos*) fulfill the optic requirement of metaphysics, i.e., both appear and are thereby accessible. The knowable form or *idea* is therefore a 'double' notion corresponding to the doubling of product and production (of and as metaphysical paradigms).

Heidegger's understanding of this in the Greek context concerns Aristotle's augmentation of the Platonic *idea* via *energeia*, which adds movement to the Platonic *idea*. In Heidegger's own writings, the knowable *idea* is, at times and often somewhat carelessly, evoked with the metaphysical determinations of Being and Truth. More often it is abbreviated as 'presence' (*Anwesenheit*) and 'presencing' (*Anwesen*) – the latter more clearly expressing the dimension of movement. Heidegger's use of the term presence to mark the 'beingness' of beings⁷ tends to lose the dimension of 'collection' (of *defining* characteristics, by means of the *logos*) in order to emphasize that of (pure) appearance. This is to say that the term presence (as Being) is used to emphasize the importance of accessibility and intelligibility. It is that through which the thing can be known and spoken of (registered both ontologically and epistemologically, as it were). Metaphysics, as 'knowing about' everything that exists (*das Seiende im Ganzen*), is concerned with (or concerns itself with) bringing everything to appear, accounting for the appearance of 'everything', including the movement that begets formal appearance.

What Heidegger terms the 'consummation' (*Vollendung*) of metaphysics, its 'self-sufficiency', concerns the maneuver through which the movement of the idea's production, by way of its appearance, can be accounted for and instrumentalized or, conversely, accounts for itself and enacts itself. What is here termed the knowable *idea* is the inseparability or 'unity' of Being and beings, of what Heidegger for a time called the 'ontological difference'. This is indeed to say

⁷ As metaphysical being, the entity's 'Being' is found in a sort of non-grounds or reciprocal self-grounding.

that the ontological difference does not belong to a post- or non-metaphysical thinking of any sort, but rather that *the production of this 'difference' is at the heart of metaphysics*. Heidegger understands Aristotle's augmentation of the Platonic *idea* as the first recognition of this within the philosophical canon. In truth, it is the first and last. This chapter seeks to demonstrate that the epochal or progressive dimension of Heidegger's 'destruction of metaphysics' serves as something of an analytic tool for analyzing the singular structure of metaphysics. Metaphysics may always have the appearance of an infinitely progressive movement. However, the prospective thinking developed in Heidegger's *Spätwerk* does not 'progress' from out of metaphysics. Once philosophy secures the movement producing the *idea*, the auto-production of appearance, it can reproduce variations on the self-relation of product and production, appearance and appearing, *ad infinitum*. Any distinction between the structure of thought in Plato/Aristotle and Nietzsche, for example, matters very little once Heidegger has the 'consummate' form of metaphysics in view.⁸ The technical *logos* constitutes a closed system, inflected in its various manifestations through what might be likened to feedback. Each philosophical doctrine is a distorted representation of its 'perfect' self-relation.⁹ The techno-logical resolution of the *physis-technē* aporia sets this closed system in motion.

The movement of metaphysics, its kinetic dimension, is precisely the movement whereby the *idea* is produced (or produces itself). It is not the movement from one variation on the metaphysical paradigm to the next. Heidegger maintains that the *idea*, as constant presence, is the mode in which 'Being occurs' as/in metaphysics. The qualifier 'constant' (*ständig*) refers to the doubling that accounts for this productive movement. With *physis*, this movement is alleged to be auto-poietic. The *idea* produces itself and can thereby reproduce and maintain itself (as 'constant'). That he names an essay detailing various metaphysics doctrines with a variation on an oft-used phrase, "Die Geschichte des Seins als die Metaphysik", should be taken not as analyzing various ways but rather the *one way* in which Being occurs (*geschiet*) under the banner of

8 The privileging of Nietzsche as the figure of metaphysics' closure has less to do with Nietzsche presenting a more 'advanced' variation of what is secured in Plato/Aristotle and more to do with Nietzsche's alleged attempt to place the question of Being in relation to truth. Nietzsche's understanding of both terms – Being and truth – remains a variation (and not an 'advancement') upon the *idea*-determined philosophy of Plato/Aristotle. Heidegger privileges the gesture of setting Being in relation to truth as an indication of another thinking which, again, does not progress from out of metaphysics or from out of Nietzsche or from out of technology, but rather from an entire reorientation around the ends and beginnings of thought (GA 70, 60).

9 This will be touched upon in Chapter 2.

metaphysics. This is done by reconstructing a progression of metaphysical doctrines without identifying this progression with the movement of metaphysics itself. Heidegger finds the reduced form of metaphysics, what remains 'constant' in it, as the same structure occurring across the seemingly progressive structure of metaphysics.

Some commentators have held that the movement of metaphysics describes the shifting or transforming of metaphysical paradigms or hegemonic orderings, 'economies of presence' that are guided by a singular, though temporally finite *archē* through which the world is grasped and understood by humans. The work of Reiner Schürmann has been mentioned as exemplary of this. Other such interpretations range from the acceptance of an enchanted history, whereby Heidegger's late term *Ereignis* serves as a sort of *primum movens* turning the gears of historical epochs and thereby re-inscribing a core feature of ontology he sought to elude,¹⁰ to the more concrete cultural-anthropological interpretations that draw upon Heidegger's inquiries into the relation of language and experience and consider ways of seeing as they are predetermined by the preexisting.¹¹ The worst of these are those who, unlike Schürmann, maintain such a movement within Heidegger's text or extrapolate it.

While Heidegger's thought may be mobilized towards either end, in some cases more productively than others, it must be noted that such interpretations allow Heidegger's 'finite slice of history' to be or become 'enchanted'. They also risk remaining open to the opportunism of certain 'political philosophies'

¹⁰ An example of the apparent wish to re-inscribe an 'unmoved mover' in Heidegger's thinking can be found in Miguel de Beistegui's *The New Heidegger*: "[... time-space occurs] every time absolutely singular and unique. The event of time-space is the emergence of history as such, which is also always the emergence of historical configuration, from out of a turning in *Ereignis* (sic). Every turn of the screw of the pole of *Ereignis* marks a new epoch, and by that we should understand a decisive reorganization or new deal between world and earth in their eternal strife". To understand *Ereignis* as naming that which moves a transition from one hegemonic ordering to another is to fundamentally misunderstand both his intention with this term and his attempts to radically rethink the meaning of history. Such an interpretation appears to carry Schürmann's framework beyond the finite slice of history Heidegger chooses and into a situation wherein *Ereignis* is the constant mover of seemingly universal orders of intelligibility that subsequently constitute a knowable history. Miguel de Beistegui, *The New Heidegger* (London: Continuum, 2005), p. 85.

¹¹ A 'cultural anthropological' interpretation of Heidegger is any interpretation that, following a view similar to de Beistegui, views the movement of history as a progression in which something like a finite, cumulative 'past' always constitutes the grounds for intelligibility as such (a being-thrown into a constellation of intelligibility), a past that is then perhaps transformed by some contingent or 'destined' transformation that rearranges this foundation.

(a near misnomer in a Heideggerian context). Take, for example, the hypothetical¹² suggestion that the switch from Latin (and French) to German as the philosophical *lingua franca* begins with Christian Wolff, enables Kant's Critiques to be written in German, which then leads to the 'closure' of metaphysics in Hegel and Nietzsche. Then elevate this historical contingency to the discourse of the 'destinal' or 'fated' sendings of Being. Such a narrative (*Geschichte*) would permit Heidegger to privilege the fated (*seynsgeschichtlich*) access of the German language to some originary intentions of classical Greek. Such a story is then easily integrated into the structure of some *Dasein* (a 'historical German' *Dasein*) as the grounds to orient a vaguely associated existence. This easily lapses into a nationalist or regionalist exceptionalism and is readily appropriated by practical and political philosophies with which it is ultimately incompatible.¹³ Heidegger's attempt to take his thinking in this direction in the 1930s is correctly judged as an embarrassing failure. Schürmann correctly points out that the practice with which Heidegger's *Spätwerk* might be most closely aligned is found in the avowal of ignorance during his *Der Spiegel* interview.

Heidegger's reading of the philosophical canon may present a cumulative movement in terms of a certain notion of knowledge (and perhaps its sophistication). It may even be said that clear 'epochal' lines are drawn, or better, intra-epochal denotations,¹⁴ constructed here in the name of Descartes' *cogito* and there in the name of Nietzsche's *Wille zur Macht*. However, in terms of the production and securing of knowledge, there is *no paradigm shift*. The movement of metaphysics and production of the *idea* is concerned with the manner of the emergence of truth in or as metaphysics, which in "Die Frage nach der Technik" is given the name *Gestell*. *Gestell* is the true name of the epoch of metaphysics, the retention (*epochē*) and maintenance of the double operation which makes accessible the entirety of what exists. For Heidegger, the philosophical paradigm corresponding to this operation is determined by the interplay between the Platonic *idea* and Aristotelian *energeia*. His aim with the deconstruction, with unveiling the singular structure of metaphysics,

¹² This example is 'hypothetical', though it very well may be attributed to or explanatory of some of Heidegger's more questionable suggestions about the 'historical' trajectory of western philosophy.

¹³ Heidegger's thought has long been a fetish of both far right jingoistic political detritus and those moralistic preachers who believe its only purpose is to serve the former. At the time of writing this, it's utility to the former appears to be again on the rise.

¹⁴ The 'intra-epochs' are equateable to what gives 'tempo' to metaphysics as an occurrence and thereby allows for a historiographical construction (GA 76, 303).

and therefore metaphysical philosophy, is to initiate a radical shift in human thinking.

Despite ambitions to inaugurate such a shift in human thinking, and because of what appears to be his persistent privileging of humankind's relation to Being ('for whom it is a question,' etc.), an ambiguity arises regarding the 'place' of humankind. Heidegger is unwilling to attribute the shifting of different hegemonic orderings within the metaphysical paradigm to human doing or decision, to the human intellect or *noein* which has worked out the various metaphysical doctrines. Instead he blames the *kryptesai* (the hiding or dissimulation) of Being. If the philosopher corresponds to Being, then it corresponds to Being as *dissimulating*. The philosopher conflates the role of humankind and Being in the production of metaphysical doctrines. This has helped to strengthen the enchanted history interpretation of his thinking: that Being moves history and knowledge on a universal scale through epochs of understanding. However, such an interpretation (perhaps Heidegger's own) is untenable on the basis of his own critique of the tradition. Metaphysics, in his understanding, clearly favors *technē*, subjecting knowledge and experience of Nature to the technical mode of truth-occurrence. It will be shown that the entanglement of *physis* and *technē* is only resolvable by transposing the technical mode onto a general, induced *eidetic* production of Nature. Both with and against Heidegger, then, it must be maintained that metaphysics, as a singular and closed paradigm, presents one way that the entanglement of *physis* and *technē* has been resolved, thereby determining the human relation to both. In Heidegger's understanding of metaphysics the human does not correspond to Nature itself, but rather to the technical determination of Nature.

Yet it would not be enough to simply clarify this ambiguity and condemn the human as the sole mover of metaphysical history. This would amount to committing the same mistake Heidegger attributes to modern metaphysics and science, namely, the total replacement of Being with the human. The ambiguity can be maintained by understanding the metaphysical, *technical* conception of Nature, Nature itself as autonomous, and the Heideggerian designation of the human as one who acts by corresponding to these 'Natures' (technical and physical). The human, metaphysically inclined towards the technical, nevertheless stands at a sort of middle ground between *physis* and *technē*. Shifting in either direction, the human is erased by either the autonomy of a physical (*physis*) or technical movement, where the latter is construed as the movement of an autonomous rationality (the technical *logos*). In this way, the question of Nature remains open, while questions of technic and technology are those of a situational automation (in the broadest sense of the auto-poietic) within a broader phenomenology of Nature. Such leeway *may* provide the

space for the description of non-human occurrence and human comportment in correspondence.

The core matters at stake in Heidegger's critique or destruction of metaphysics, as discussed above, are addressed in condensed form in his 1939 essay "Vom Wesen und Begriffe der Φύσις. Aristoteles, Physik B,1".¹⁵ Its detailed account of the metaphysical or technical understanding of Nature (*physis*) makes it well suited to analyzing the homologous relation between metaphysics and *Gestell* or technic in Heidegger. Heidegger approaches Aristotle's *physis*-concept as a matter of disentangling *physis* and *technē* and examines how both account for the production of the (or 'its') *idea*. The question of the human's mediating role in the production of the *idea* is also addressed, as well as the dimension of encounter or observation in the production and securing of knowledge. It therefore addresses the entanglement at the core of Heidegger's thinking, particularly his topology – Nature, humankind, technology – in its metaphysical context.¹⁶

The essay is indispensable to Heidegger's understanding of metaphysics for at least two reasons. First, the question of *physis* and its disentanglement from *technē* is approached from the question of movement (*kinesis*). This movement, mentioned above as the movement of metaphysics, is accounted for by the *logos*, the above-mentioned 'technical' *logos*, and the manner in which *this logos* determines core concepts. Second, the language Heidegger develops to describe this *logos* is based around the German verb *stellen* ('to place'). This development corresponds directly to the lexicon used to describe *Gestell* in the essay "Die Frage Nach der Technik". The notions of *Gestell* and *Technik* are used in turn to describe consummate metaphysics (*die Vollendung der Metaphysik*).¹⁷

¹⁵ Here forward as "ΑΦ (1939)".

¹⁶ Heidegger strategically rejects characterizations of his thinking as 'humanism' or 'extensionalism'. His reasoning for making this distinction and his general criticism of '-isms' will not be recounted here. It is nonetheless undeniable that his philosophy is deeply concerned with posing the question of the human. The terms *Mensch* (human), *Menschsein* (to be human), and *Menschlichkeit* (humanity) appear often in his work. His later work appears to emphasize humankind's distinguished 'mortality' in referring to humankind as 'the mortal' (*das Sterbliche*). The term humankind, in its broad and generic sense, will be used here without reservation as a placeholder for this central question (that of human determination). The term *Dasein*, a primary term that marks the posing of this question, will be reserved for the topological orientation of this essay's second part.

¹⁷ It might be useful to distinguish between 'consummation' or 'completion' and 'closure' here. As mentioned in the introduction and above in footnote 8, Nietzsche is the

That Heidegger names Aristotelian philosophy the apogee of Greek thinking, and that this thinking is described in an analogous manner to the ‘technological’ thinking determined by *Gestell*, suggests that, for Heidegger, the Aristotelian concept of *physis*, as it finds its most complete description in the terms *energeia* and *entelechy*, either determines the self-closure of metaphysics or already is this closure. In either case, a thinking determined by *Gestell* and one determined by Aristotle’s *physis*-concept correspond to the same. It is therefore no surprise that the implicit conclusion of Heidegger’s analysis is that Aristotle’s *physis*-concept exists only insofar as it is determined by *technē*.

The following chapter will consider this 1939 essay in three sections with an eye to its role in the development of Heidegger’s concepts of *Gestell* and *Technik*. The first will recapitulate and situate Heidegger’s reading, focusing on his interpretation and placement of Aristotelian terminology and its development or transmutation of what is being described (*physis*). The second will depart from the essay proper in order to better situate the metaphysical or technical understanding of *logos* that determines the production of the *idea*. This section will also introduce more explicitly the question of the human, philosophical practice, and the role of these in the production of the *idea*. The third will return to the final moments of Heidegger’s reading of Aristotle in an analysis of the *genesis* of the *idea* in terms of *energeia* and *entelechy*. In this third section, the constant underlying metaphysics will be described together with the self-sufficiency of metaphysics as it is found in Aristotle’s resolution or disentanglement of *physis* and *technē*. Metaphysics, as a mode a philosophical practice, will be shown to arise from and remain dependent upon this particular resolution. These sections will then be followed by a brief commentary serving as a transition to the discussions of *Gestell* and *Technik* in the ensuing chapters.

1.2 *Physis contra Technē (kata ton logon)*

Heidegger’s engagements with Greek philosophy tend to center on seemingly rudimentary philosophical questions. This is in part attributable to his

privileged figure of the ‘closure’ of metaphysics because he asks the question of Being again in terms of truth. While this might be viewed as coming ‘full circle’, the structure of Nietzsche’s thought remains metaphysical. *Vollendung* does not indicate the ‘end’ of a progressive development, but rather the consummate nature of the structure from its outset.

emphasis on primal concepts and his use of pre-terminological semantics, i.e. the meaning of terms before their designation as philosophical terminology. The latter is a defining characteristic of the so-called destructive or deconstructive approach, whereby Heidegger transposes pre-terminological meaning onto words typically employed as strictly defined philosophical concepts. Such maneuvering is central to his attempt to reduce metaphysics to its basic operations. Examples will be seen below in his elucidation of the terms *ousia* and *katēgoria*, both of which explicitly make use of rather mundane, domestic and socio-economic denotations. When pre-terminological uses are not discussed explicitly, Heidegger tends to nonetheless translate Greek terminology into German by drawing as much, and at times more, on philology than intended philosophical definition, always raising and attempting to respond to the question of why a particular word has been chosen as terminology. As Heidegger generally attempts to define or elaborate on the terminology that he focuses upon, the attempt here will be to follow his elaboration, altering Heidegger's own language where possible.

Following Heidegger's analysis of Aristotelian *physis* is thus primarily a matter of following his elucidations of Aristotle's terminology. He explicitly remarks that his translation of the passages discussed constitutes his interpretation, and that "ΑΦ (1939)" constitutes an elucidation of this interpretation (GA 9, 245). Note that interpretation is a 'laying out' (*Auslegung*). It is as much the construction or reconstruction of the relations through which terms obtain and provide meaning, as it is an exegesis of individual terms or motifs. The name Aristotle stands here for a thinking, namely metaphysics, as it is determined by the technical *physis*-concept that Heidegger extracts from Aristotle's *Physics*. The following should not be taken as a direct commentary on the work of Aristotle. References to the *Physics* here, specifically to the English translation of P.H. Wicksteed and F.M. Conford, will be made only as a tool for analyzing Heidegger's text.¹⁸ The terms designating Aristotle's *physis*-concept, their elaboration, and the motifs they evoke will be returned to throughout this chapter and in following chapters as constituting a definitive description of the Heideggerian understanding of metaphysics. The basic operation(s) of metaphysics can be gleaned from this lexicon and, given the subject of Aristotle's original text, referred to questions of nature and technology. It must be noted that this will require a considerable degree of repetition

¹⁸ This method could be seen as a sort of counter-deconstruction. In this case, it is intended as a way of reinstating or clarifying Heidegger's analysis of philosophical operations which can be obscured by his own terminology. This risk appears to be higher when Heidegger's German is taken in translation.

throughout the following three sections (1.2-1.4). This is done to give the most comprehensive account possible of Heidegger's reduction of metaphysics¹⁹ as it appears in "AΦ (1939)".

The sections of the *Physics* that concern Heidegger in "AΦ (1939)" deal with defining or characterizing *physis* ('Nature') and distinguishing it from *technē* ('art, craft, making').²⁰ It must be recalled that both *physis* and *technē* betray primitive, yet irresolvable relationships to humankind. The human belongs to *physis* (to Nature or Being), it cannot be thought without it. At the same time, *technē* is considered something specific to the human, something occurring with the human in its experience or knowledge of Nature. This at least is the allegation: the question of humankind is tied to an entanglement of *physis* and *technē* from which humankind itself is inseparable. The determination of humankind is therefore at stake in any attempt to disentangle *physis* and *technē*. Decisions taken on this matter will determine how humankind is understood and what features or activities will define this understanding. In what follows, this disentanglement will be pursued primarily as a question of the status or position of the 'mediate'.²¹ In Heidegger's Aristotle-interpretation this 'mediate' is concerned first and foremost with the mediation of movement. Because this movement concerns the appearance or presence of a thing, it will also concern knowledge about that thing and the type of movement through which its presence occurs, a concern analogous to the question of beingness or the metaphysical Being of a thing. An onto-epistemic regime is at stake in the disentanglement of *physis* and *technē*. In the above introductory comments, this was referred to as the paradigm marked by the 'production of the *idea*'. The question is whether or not, and if so how, the production of the *idea* might 'mediate' between the things of Nature (in their autonomy) and knowledge about them.

¹⁹ In the protocol to the seminar on "Zeit und Sein", Heidegger refers to this as a *Schwund* which is required to understand the essay (GA 14, 34).

²⁰ The sections of Aristotle that Heidegger chooses here concern, in part, Aristotle's polemics with the sophist Antiphon and commentaries often frame it in this way. The specifics of Aristotle's polemics and Heidegger's reading of them are not at issue here.

²¹ The role of the 'immediate' appears to be central to Heidegger's question of *physis* or Nature (and thus, Being). This can be seen clearly in his essay on Hölderlin's "Wie wenn am Feiertag ..." of the same period. It should also be noted that in his first citation and translation of the *Physics* in this essay (185a 12ff.), Heidegger adds the adjective 'immediate' in describing the manner in which the dimension of *kinesis* is in the "things of nature". Heidegger translates: "offenkundig aber ist das aus der unmittelbaren Hinführung" (roughly, "this is clear from being immediately led to it"). Wicksteed and Cornford offer a much less adorned translation: "as is patent to observation".

It will be impossible to avoid or clearly distinguish all of Heidegger's metonyms for the *idea*. They include presence and appearance, as well as form and formal presence. In addition to this there is the movement or operation that produces the *idea*, which is a bringing-together or collecting. At times, different metonyms appear to be chosen in order to emphasize something particular. For example, when the Heideggerian phrase 'coming to presence' is used in the context of metaphysics, it should be understood as being synonymous with the production of the *idea* that provides access to a thing; that through which the thing is encountered, captured in this encounter, and thus known. Based upon Heidegger's own shifting emphases and terminological choices, as well as the attempts made by this essay to give yet another interpretative lexicon to his thought, three basic accentuations describing the *idea* produced in metaphysics will be given. Brief descriptions will follow as *formal appearance*, *collection* or *heterogeneous unity*, and *paradigm*.

The Aristotelian term for *idea* focused upon in "ΑΦ (1939)" is *eidos*. Heidegger renders the term in German as 'appearance' or 'outward appearance' (*Aussehen*). This is the *formal appearance* of any thing. With this he also intends to emphasize that the formal appearance of the things of nature belongs to or is derived from the act of seeing or the encounter (with *physis*, with the things of Nature). This emphasis is made in correspondence to the optic imperative of metaphysics and its determination of the production of knowledge. The distinction of *physis* and *technē* is therefore, at least in part, a question of how something comes to appear, i.e. how something comes to have its *eidos*, be it of *physis* or of *technē*. Yet what comes to appear, what provides access to the thing, is not simply a form carved into or out of the phenomenal realm, as if presence referred to blanket phenomenality.

As noted in the introductory comments, the *idea* is the formal appearance of a heterogeneous unity. Wicksteed and Cornford note that Aristotle most frequently uses 'form' (both *eidos* and *morphe*) to designate a "collectivity of distinguishing characteristics."²² Ideas indicate collections and are 'formed', for Heidegger, as a function of the *logos* (including its categorical function), the significance of which will become clear in what proceeds. This understanding or accentuation of the *idea* is testament to the breadth of what is at stake in a knowledge of *physis* and its mediation of its movement. Such a knowledge

²² Aristotle, *Physics*, 286 (note b).

would purport to account for the mediation of all things,²³ including that which begets them. This makes it necessary that the *idea* have a sort of permanence and repeatability. The *idea* would have to maintain its constant ability to reproduce knowledge about some thing. For example, the *idea* pertaining to a certain medical practice – a collection of practices known and accessible to a medical practitioner – would have to maintain its ability to bring sickness or health to light.

More generally, then, the *idea* (like metaphysics) is a paradigm that indicates or even takes the place of the ‘reality’ or ‘Being’ of some thing. Herein lies the ‘true’ power of the *idea* within metaphysics. Its paradigmatic quality can be viewed in relation to the copula, specifically Heidegger’s use of *als ein solches* (as such) when speaking of *das Seiende im Ganzen*. Only if some thing fits an *idea* can it be said *to be* (only then can it register ontologically) and be known as such.²⁴ This assumes a direct correspondence between the collected or formed unity and the *idea* produced or reproduced by it. As paradigm, the *idea* is a centrally orienting force for knowledge and intelligibility.

With pre-modern or traditional things of *technē*, the question of the *idea* and its mediate position can be quite simple. The image of a table in the mind of the carpenter mediates the production and thus appearance of a table. The generic *idea* of the table mediates its reproduction with whatever degree of variation. It is more complicated with things of Nature. The desire will always be to say that Nature contains its own mediate position; that it has its *idea* in-itself and therefore (re)produces itself and its own appearance. The classic example is of a tree. A tree *is* a tree to the extent that it *has* in itself the *idea* of a tree. Nature therefore lacks a mediate position that would be outside of itself. Yet to speak of an *idea* of Nature as a whole (*a physis-eidos* presenting *das Seiende im Ganzen als ein solches*) is to posit an intelligible form, a general *idea* of Nature occurring in all of its variation, that each time indicates Nature in

²³ For simplicity’s sake, the examples given in the following paragraph will be classic examples. It should be noted, however, that more ‘abstract’ technical or physical unities or collections are also permitted. For Heidegger, the core matters at stake here remain instrumental in modern math and science. Exemplifying how the objects (‘things’) of these disciplines do (or do not) fit Heidegger’s analysis is a matter for a longer, more detailed study. For example, in a contemporary context, the example might be taken of collections of data and how they form the ‘real’, formal images of the consumers that corporations ‘comport’ towards rather than, as it were, the unified image of an individual’s ‘soul’ and ‘body’.

²⁴ These remarks are drawn from Heidegger’s understanding of the Platonic *idea* and its determinative role in metaphysical philosophy. This concerns the formalization of truth (*as aletheia*) for the sake of producing a ‘known thing’ with view to repeatability and pedagogy. More on this can be found both above and below.

its production and/or reproduction. If the tree, as a thing of Nature, is an *idea* made up of a heterogeneous collection or unity which (re)produces itself, this is made possible by an even more generic *idea* common to Nature as a whole. Metaphysical notions of God and deifications of Nature have certainly enjoyed such a status and Heidegger does refer to metaphysics as onto-theology. Understood metaphysically, the movement of *physis* is the manipulation of everything that exists into differentiated appearances that reproduce themselves. The disentanglement of *physis* and *technē* would require that some knowledge of the movement of physical self-production be available as an intelligible form (a *physis-eidos*).

For Heidegger, the basic identification is that of Being (*physis* or *ousia*) and *idea*. This identification is the begin-point that determines metaphysics as such (GA 69, 154). It follows from this that 'everything' (*alles*), which can be taken to include all operations of metaphysics, 'comes into the service of the *idea*' (*in den Dienst des Seins als ιδέα kommt*) (GA 70, 59). To state, as Heidegger does, that this is 'not brought about by Plato himself', is neither to attribute this to some form of divine intervention nor to an epochal shift in the way reality presents itself to humans (GA 6.2, 428). It is rather to say that the thought of the *idea*, as a manner of truth and correspondence to truth, preceded Plato and was inherited by him ('already with Parmenides'). Heidegger's interpretation is that Plato had attempted to formalize this and that this attempt was perfected in Aristotelian thinking. The reality of the *idea* as an experience of truth both proceeds and follows the closure of its systematic perfection. Whether its place is outside of or immanent to something, an *idea* will always guide the production of an *idea*, a matter that should become clearer throughout this chapter.

In sum, the mediate position of the *idea* is concerned with knowability and access to the matter being questioned, whether it be Being or some thing. Heidegger frames this as a question of whether an idea produces and presents itself (appears 'immediately') or if it is produced on the basis of some model or standard (appears through another). More specifically at stake is knowledge of and access to the *place* from which something is produced and reproduced, or produces and reproduces itself. This may be taken as a question of whether or not an idea is caused or is the cause of itself (though, it will be seen, Heidegger is quick to reposition or transform the question of causality into the question of 'wherfrom').

Knowing that for Heidegger the thinking of Aristotle perfects and completes that of Plato, it can be said that the analysis here concerning the relation of humankind and *physis* will touch upon the question of the mediate at two points: (1) Aristotle's doctrine should perfect or complete the universalization of the mediation of knowledge found in the Platonic *idea* or 'form'

while (2) accounting for the ‘causal’ moment, i.e. the movement of the Platonic *idea* itself: the *being-rendered-possible* of the production of the *idea*, which Heidegger finds in the *agathon* (‘the good’). In what follows, the production and reproduction of the *idea* will be taken as movement into presence determined by the place of the *archē*.

The ‘coming to presence’ of things as the production of the *idea* – at stake in both *physis* and *technē* – should be taken in the broadest possible sense as the capture, self-capture, and/or collecting of that which defines the *idea* or *form* of a thing, that through which the thing is seen and encountered and thus known. This entire process will be described by Heidegger as the unity of two structural moments, namely, of the *idea* and its production, appearance and its coming-to-appear. The description of this process takes place in the elaboration of several Aristotelian terms: *kinēsis*, *archē*, and *energeia-entelechy*. The differing emphases in interpretative vehicles here (i.e. Aristotelian terms) can be given roughly as follows. *Kinēsis* emphasizes the movement of production or coming to appear, whereas *archē* bespeaks the place of the origin; or emergence and guidance; or the regulation of this movement (*kinēsis*). *Energeia-entelechy* provides the most complete elaboration of the unity of structural moments in accounting for the co-determination of *kinēsis* and *archē*. Put otherwise, both *kinēsis* and *archē* are immanent to or contained by *energeia-entelechy*. These emphases or terms can now be considered individually, as they appear in Heidegger’s analysis.

Heidegger translates *kinesis* as both movement (*Bewegung*) and movedness (*Bewegtheit*), indicating that what is at stake is *at once* an action or operation *and* its completion or end. This movement is then qualified as a transfer (*metabolē*, *Umschlag*). A ‘kinetic transfer’ would thus bespeak the movement (*Bewegung*) of what is moved (*Bewegte*) in transference (*metabolē*), the entirety of which accounts for an entity’s movedness (*Bewegheit*).²⁵ An entity’s movedness appears to be nothing other than the complete articulation of the production (movement) of its *idea* (what is moved); or again, the completed collecting of the particular heterogeneity that is its *form*.²⁶ When this occurs with *physis*, it should occur in-itself and be known ‘immediately’, i.e., the *idea* guiding this process should lie within the thing-itself. With *technē*, by contrast,

²⁵ A similar process at the heart of metaphysics has already been discussed in this essay: the production (movement) of the *idea* (what is moved) as the knowable *idea* (movedness).

²⁶ Heidegger’s neologism *Bewegtheit* suggests the consummateness central to his understanding of metaphysics. The inflection *bewegt* indicates the completion of movement or ‘being moved’ and the suffix *-heit* accentuates this inflection. In this way the term anticipates the unity of movement and the ‘moved thing’ through the antecedent position of the *idea*, as will be demonstrated in what follows.

the *idea* guiding the (re)production of the *idea* is located outside what is being moved or produced. But in either case, this entire process is, according to Heidegger, determined by the Greek understanding of Being as a *transfer into presence*, which again is synonymous with the production of the idea as an accessible ‘formal appearance’.²⁷ It can be said in anticipation that this movement will be described through *logos*, and that *logos* is predominately understood as a ‘placing’ (*stellen*).

Kinēsis is intrinsically linked to the Aristotelian conception of *archē* as that which guides or ‘drives’ *kinēsis* (*archē* is also commonly understood as ‘beginning or origin,’ ‘the first place’). *Archē* thus addresses the position of the mediate *idea* in the production of the *idea*. Any potential causal questions regarding the ‘origin’ of movement are here averted and replaced by the question of the ‘place’ of the *archē*. In “AΦ (1939)”, Heidegger’s interpretive justification for dismissing a causal explanation of movement is that, in Aristotle’s text, *archē* comes to replace *aition* (‘cause,’ *Ursache*) at a significant point, indeed, precisely where the movement of *physis* (as opposed to *technē*) is at stake (GA 9, 244ff.). This is in line with Heidegger’s comments on causality, specifically Aristotle’s four causes, in “Die Frage nach der Technik”. He states there that causality (*aition*) in Greek thinking concerns what is indebted to or prompted by another and he reduces this process to *poiesis*, the begetting (*her-vorbringen*) of presence (VA, 12ff.). This ‘other’, however, is not a question of the human or of Nature, but of the *logos* (VA, 13). It is not sufficient to partition something into its four causes and distinguish *physis* and *technē* at the place of the *causa efficiens*, because this place will always be held by the *logos*.²⁸ For this reason, Heidegger is far more interested in the place of the *idea* as

²⁷ One of tasks stated here by Heidegger is to uncover an understanding of *physis* ‘as’ being at a point that marks both the culmination of Hellenistic metaphysics and simultaneously preserves something of its pre-Socratic understanding. “Being” meant, for the Greeks, “presencing (*Anwesung*) in what is unconcealed (GA 9, 270).

²⁸ The replacement of ‘causality’ with *logos* is central to Heidegger’s understanding of the whole of (metaphysical) philosophy. It affirms that metaphysical philosophy is concerned with something like a theory of the *logos* (described here as a ‘technical *logos*’). Causality, broadly speaking, is understood as an expression of a structural moment built into the technical *logos* that metaphysical philosophy ultimately describes. This further suggests that the work of metaphysical philosophy is determined by a decision about or reduction of the *logos*. This is a challenge to Heidegger’s own assertion that metaphysicians have only responded to the ‘call of being’ and suggests that they have made a decision concerning ‘what to listen to’.

the begin-point²⁹ of presence (of appearance and knowability) and (or as) the point of control over this.

The description of movement's mediation via *archē* becomes a matter of locating the *physis-archē* and *technē-archē* in their respective positions and considering any variation that may arise from the different positions. The important variation will be with regards to knowledge. Such positioning should lead to two differing modes of knowledge as concerns the production of the *idea*. But this cannot be done without first commenting upon Heidegger's idiosyncratic translation of *archē*, in which he continues to develop a description of the unity of two 'moments'. With *kinēsis*, this was described as the union of movement and the moved consummate as movedness. With *archē*, it will be the union between two seemingly disparate functions of the term: as origin and as command.

Heidegger translates *archē* into German phrasally as the '*Ausgang und Verfügung*' of movement, roughly the 'egress- or begin-point' and 'ordering' of movement. *Ausgang* gives a sense of emergence (beginning to come ...) into presence, while *Verfügung* implies a command over what emerges with *Ausgang*, in the sense that it implies a guiding, ordering, or authoritative grasp of emergence. Heidegger often employs the verb *steuern* ('to steer or govern') as a verbal synonym or descriptor for *Verfügung*. The translation formulates *archē* as a chiasm: a commanding emergence which, in emerging, steers and dominates; and an emerging command which arises and, perhaps, develops together with emergence. *Verfügung* can also mean 'having something at [one's] disposal', 'available for use', remarking again the issue of positioning or availability. What has 'command over' movement has this movement at its disposal. Such command resides either in the thing moved or in the mover. These functions will return in the *physis-eidos* as a sort of immanent relation of *physis* with itself. The *archē* will be shown to be internal to *physis*'s production of a knowable *idea* about itself.

Two further Aristotelian terms will later be combined as direct or near direct synonyms for *archē* in "AΦ (1939)": *telos* ('end') and *ergon* ('work'). In anticipation, the significance of *telos* and *ergon* for the 'place' of the *archē* should be noted. The *archē* is the 'place' where 'work' and 'end' are inseparable. Throughout Heidegger's work, *telos* indicates a delimitation that 'makes possible'. It is a determining limit that is consummate, meaning that something

²⁹ In "AΦ (1939)" this will be named with the term *Ausgang*, which indicates an egress or point of exit. In "Die Frage nach der Technik", however, Heidegger switches to arrival (*Ankunft*) and qualifies this with occasion (*Anlass*, coming from the verb *anlassen*, to begin or activate).

is only experienced insofar as end and beginning are the same ‘point’, and not as a moment in a process in which past, present, and future are clearly distinguished in a linear or progressive fashion. *Telos* should be understood here as an indeterminate definition, that is, as a delimitation of emergence or production. *Ergon* can then be understood in terms of emergence, coming to appear, or the production of appearance.

In the case of *technē*, the defining limit guiding and commanding movement, the *telos*, is found *outside* of what is produced, and thus it is determined in advance (see below; GA 9, 252). The *telos* will then be known to that within which it is emplaced. The carpenter both has the *idea* of the table within themselves as something to be produced (*telos*), and also produces it or brings it to appear (work, *ergon*). Neither end nor work are attributed to the table itself. In the case of *physis*, by contrast, the *telos* should not be determined in advance, but rather lie *within* what is produced. With *physis*, the defining limit must belong to the image of Nature itself (*the physis-eidos*), *of its own movement*, as the indeterminate fact of its appearance; it is this appearance itself (*eidos an sich*). The location of *telos*, *ergon*, and *archē* will therefore be the same with *physis*.

The different locations of the *archē*, and thus of the determining limit, are a matter of knowledge and the limits of knowledge. The place of the *technē-archē* will prove to be determinative for the technical production of knowledge in metaphysics. Its place is in something (or someone) *other than* what is moved or set in motion. Historically speaking, in a strictly Aristotelian sense, this may be limited to ‘someone’, the maker, carpenter or doctors. In the Heideggerian extrapolation, however, the autonomy of technic may imply the transformation of this ‘someone’ into a ‘something’ non-human (though not always and not necessarily).³⁰ Heidegger refers to this something-someone other as “the contriver” (*architéktōn*). The contriver is that within which there is a certain knowledge, a knowledge which can ultimately be said to steer or command movement. In “ΑΦ (1939)” this knowledge is referred to as a “knowing all about,” or better, a “being oriented in” (*Sichauskennen*). The contriver is thus one oriented in a kinetic transfer determined by a particular *telos*, the *eidos proairetón* (the ‘purposed idea’), the purposed or deliberately chosen “appearance” (*Aussehen, eidos*).³¹ ‘Being oriented in’ a kinetic transfer, *technē* implies a knowledge of the entire process, from end to preliminaries

³⁰ The latter case, that of technology ‘autonomously’ producing *archē* in an encounter with *physis* through which it can reproduce something of that encounter, will be addressed in the following chapter.

³¹ Here forward as “purposed-idea”.

to beginning to completion. Examples of such well-oriented contrivers drawn from Aristotle have already been touched upon: the carpenter and the doctor. Both practice *techniques* determined by purposed-ideas, in one case the pre-determined image or *form* of a table, in the other, knowledge of convalescence. In both examples, it is a matter of steering things in a certain way. *Technē* is a knowledge-based kinetic transfer determined by a purposed-idea and carried out by a contriver, mediating an internal idea or *archē* in(to) an outside. Put otherwise, *technē* is the capture and/or placing of ‘presence’ as guided by the *idea*, an *eidietic placing* (the construction of a table would be an example of ‘placing into presence’ for Heidegger). Here, the place of the *archē* is ‘in’ the contriver as *idea*.

Physis, by contrast, is said to have its *archē* and *telos* in itself. What comes to presence by or as *physis* does so auto-poietically: *physis* produces its own *eidos* and should have no need of a ‘contriver’. The means (mediate position) of genesis or production, reproduction, and maintenance exist *within* what comes to presence; they are inseparable from it. *Physis* should therefore lack the external purposed-idea required in kinetic transfers associated with *technē*. It needs no contriver. It would first appear, then, that there could be no image of Nature, no one *eidos* collecting what is proper to it, since *physis* is not (re)produced through knowledge ‘about’ it (in the form of a purposed-idea). Its generality exceeds any possible circumscription. Sufficient knowledge of and orientation in (*sich auskennen*) *physis* must always and necessarily be lacking. Here the *kryptesai* – spoken by Heraclitus and considered by Heidegger as innate to *physis* – takes hold.³² Nature dissimulates itself in its totality. The auto-poietic coming to presence of *physis* would designate the limit of knowledge.

It is perhaps for this reason that *technē* is distinguished as a knowledge-concept (*Erkenntnisbegriff*) in a text supposedly about *physis* (Aristotle’s *Physics*). The answer to the epistemological question concerning *physis* is ‘one cannot know’. All knowledge is the sort of *technē*. At the same time, such knowledge is dependent upon *physis* and serves as a sort of finite derivative or circumscription of *physis*.³³ To emphasize this, Heidegger draws upon Aristotle’s example of the distinction between the praxis of a doctor and convalescence. The work of the doctor (*technē*) can only ever supplement convalescence (*physis*) and, he stresses, can never replace it. *Technē* is something ‘in addition to’

³² Heraclitus fragment B123 tells of a Nature that loves to hide itself. For Heidegger, this refers to the dimension of concealing or absence inherent to *physis* and to truth (*aletheia*).

³³ For this reason metaphysical doctrines are also circumscriptions of *physis* that correspond, Heidegger would insist, to a particular dissimulation of Being. The question remains, however, how this correspondence takes place, what makes sufficient knowledge of an incomplete or dissimulated Being possible in metaphysics.

physis and, in a certain manner, finitely mimetic. Technical knowledge is finite knowledge *deduced or derived* from the generality that is Nature. Such finite knowledge comes from what can be termed a base encounter with *physis*. Heidegger will generally indicate this through metaphors of hearing and seeing, showing and sounding. The essay “Der Ursprung des Kunstwerkes” provides a useful example of Heidegger’s association of technical knowledge with seeing. *Technē*, as ‘knowing’ (*Wissen*) means “to have seen” (*gesehen haben*), in the broadest sense of seeing, which says: “perceiving (*vernehmen*) of what is present as such (*des Anwesenden*)” (GA 5, 46). This understanding of *technē* goes well beyond the artisanship, craft, and technique often implied by the term, situating it instead immediately subsequent to the moment of perception (*gesehen haben*, to have seen what is present) and the question of what can be done from this moment.

Yet the metaphysical philosopher (Aristotle?), and philosophy more generally,³⁴ does imply that something like a knowledge of *physis* can be had within the metaphysical paradigm. In Heidegger’s view at least, Aristotle’s text appears to imply that a certain knowledge of the movement of *physis* can be gained through a detailed description of how the *eidos* produces itself in *physis*, how *physis* brings itself to appear (discussed in Section 1.4). A generic movement of *physis* is accounted for in metaphysics and, in fact, grounds metaphysics as paradigm and paradigm construction.

³⁴ In an earlier lecture course, when discussing the technicalities surrounding the term ‘metaphysics’, Heidegger comments upon the ordering of the Aristotelian corpus. There is a sense in which the *meta-* in Aristotle’s *Metaphysics* is merely a marker of texts that follow the *Physics*. *Meta-* is taken technically as ‘after’ (*nach*) or ‘in hindsight of’ (*hinterher*). This purely technical, in the sense of ordering, meaning is supposedly transformed in Latin in such a way as to now speak of content. It is a matter here of the Latin understanding of *meta-* as ‘post’ and ‘trans’. *Meta-* means to turn from one thing to another, to move away from *physis* towards something else (GA 29/30, 56ff.). This latter point belongs to a very recognizable claim of Heideggerian thinking: that philosophy has long since been concerned with entities, things, and not with Being. In the analysis here of “AΦ (1939)”, another meaning of this ‘after’ or ‘in hindsight of’ *physis* can be seen to the extent that the encounter with *physis* turns it immediately to a matter of technical knowledge ('fixing what *has been seen*'). If Aristotle’s *physis*-concept is intended to be the paradigmatic example of metaphysical Being, this can be seen clearly in the technical maneuvers producing the *physis*-concept. This is not to mention that Aristotle’s text, in which Heidegger seeks *physis*, is concerned primarily with understanding *physis* through the things of Nature. The transformation Heidegger wishes to attribute to Latin translation of *meta-* in 1929 exists already and unavoidably in his metaphysical *urtext*. It should be no surprise then, that the *physis*-concept Heidegger extracts from this doctrine is technical in nature, which is to say it is a ‘technologically’-determined Nature.

The supposedly ‘self-evident’ manner in which the philosopher sees and learns about (*ersieht*) *physis* is given in the term *epagōgē* (‘induction,’ literally ‘a bringing in’). A few points should be made about this term, as it does much work in Heidegger’s elucidation of Aristotle. When he translates *epagōgē* into German he adds the adjective ‘immediate’, though there is no indication of this in the Greek. *Epagōgē* is rendered ‘immediate introduction’ (“aus der unmittelbaren Hinführung”, see footnote 21). This ‘immediate introduction’ to the movement of *physis* is described via the activities of seeing and making visible (*Sehen und Sichtbarmachen*). While these descriptors are not necessarily unique to technical as opposed to natural behavior, the notion of ‘fixing’ (*festmachen*) ‘what has been seen’ (*das Gesichtete*) fits the above given definition of *technē* (GA 9, 244) and anticipates the notion of ‘placing’ (*stellen*) so crucial for understanding *Gestell*. From this perspective, the ‘immediacy’ of *physis* and its *eidos*-production looks more like the immediate subsequence of *technē* as soon as the stipulations of knowledge are recalled. The relation of Heidegger’s description of the base encounter via *epagōgē* to technical knowledge produced by human *noein* (‘intellect’, in the above as ‘perceiving’ or ‘vernehmen’) will be discussed in greater detail in Section 1.3.

Translating and elucidating the term *epagōgē* in this way, Heidegger seeks to avoid its understanding as ‘induction’, suggesting that while such a translation may function literally (*nach Wortlaut*), it is not appropriate to the matter (*der Sache nach*) for which Aristotle supposedly uses it.³⁵ And yet, the *physis-eidos* found in Aristotle may very well be attributed to a sort of inductive thinking. The above-given examples of *technē* have shown that technical knowledge is obtained by way of a sort of deduction, a derivation that circumscribes an encounter with *physis*. *Technē* comes by way of a movement from the general to the particular, for example, from convalescence to medicine. Convalescence is attributed generally to Nature, while medicine is a collection of *particular* practices deduced or derived from convalescence in order to aid it or add to it. In this way, *technē* bespeaks a sort of finite transcendence within Nature. Wicksteed and Cornford translate *epagōgē* quite differently than Heidegger as ‘observation’. Indeed, knowledge of *physis* seems to be the inductive reverse of technical knowledge, itself rooted in deduction or derivation.³⁶ Aristotle’s

³⁵ “One wishes to translate the word επαγωγή as ‘induction’; and the translation is nearly adequate as a word for word translation, but is, according to the matter, which is to say as an interpretation, entirely mistaken.” (GA 9, 244)

³⁶ It must be remarked that the use of the terms ‘deduction’ and ‘induction’ do not correspond to their use in Aristotelian logic. Deduction refers here to technical knowledge as a derivation from *physis* as seen in Aristotle’s examples. It is a movement from the general to the particular. Induction refers to the opposite movement, from the particular to the

descriptions of health and flowers are grounded in observations that lead to theoretical knowledge by way of a movement that goes from the particular things of nature back to Nature more generally. For the most part, Heidegger recounts these examples *en passant*, allowing the movement of his analysis to be guided by the elucidation of Aristotle's terminology. The kinetic transfer introduced in the current section as an Aristotelian 'coming to presence' is concerned solely with the production of the *idea (eidos)* as knowable. With this in mind, it is worth restating that a generic purposed-*idea* is implied in the descriptions of *physis* given here. The questions in play are: does such an *idea* follow a simple reversal of technical deduction into a technical induction? Is the generic *physis-eidos* something deduced or derived from the technical dimension of Nature, a particular structure within Nature, and then raised to the level of a general or universal image of Nature? Is the 'immediate' relation to Nature necessarily resolved in the production of technical knowledge?

The first half of this section introduced terminology related to *physis*, *technē*, and their supposed conceptual disentanglement by way of an analysis of movement, specifically, of the different locations of *archē* as guiding the transfer into presence. The remainder of the section will deal with terminology that is intended to speak to the distinct movement of *physis*. Focus is on the transmutation in Aristotle of the conceptual pair 'form and matter' into '*dynamis* and *energeia*', which Heidegger refers to as a conceptual 'elevation' (*Abhebung*), as well as the introduction of *logos* as it determines the *eidos*. For Heidegger, the first point is a matter of Aristotle's development of a terminology appropriate to describe the self-production of the *physis-eidos*, for which the terms *morphe* ('form') and *hyle* ('matter') are inadequate.³⁷ The second point concerns a definition of *logos* as the operation that accounts for this transformation, put otherwise, that accounts for and is accounted for in what is described in the transmuted terminology of *dynamis* and *energeia*. Again,

general. The question posed at the end of this paragraph concerns whether or not the *physis-eidos* in Aristotle comes by way of generalizing the structure of *technē* which is initially said to be derived or deduced from *physis*. It is worth noting, as an aside, that the Aristotelian word for deduction, *sullogismos*, can be understood literally as meaning 'with the *logos*'.

³⁷ It is here where Aristotle's polemic with the materialism represented by Antiphon plays out. The coining of the transmuted terms *dynamis* and *energeia* is in part intended to mark Aristotle's polemic and distinction within his own lexicon. This polemic is also staged in relation to *ousia*, introduced in the following paragraph. Antiphon's doctrine cannot, according to Aristotle, fulfill the conceptual requirements of *ousia*. The term *Abhebung* generally refers to 'distinguishing something from something else', but because Heidegger is referring to a language that would satisfy the optic imperative, he speaks at once of an 'elevation' of language to the level of ontological description.

the concern remains with the terms themselves, the manner of their transmutation, and, most importantly, their co-determination, what they say ‘together’ about this apogee of Greek metaphysics. The analysis of this ‘elevated’, physical terminology should help respond to the questions of the previous paragraph concerning *physis* as a generalized technic.

The transmutation of matter (*hyle*) and form (*morphe*) into *dynamis* and *energeia*, the creation of new or more descriptively precise terminology, must be understood from the optic requirements or requirements of intelligibility in Greek metaphysics as indicated by the term *ousia*. Within the context of Aristotle’s polemic with Greek materialism, the transmuted terms *dynamis* and *energeia* come to distinguish his doctrine of *physis* from materialist doctrines. He does this in order that the transmuted terms measure up to *ousia*. Heidegger frames *ousia*, which has thus far been addressed with the term ‘presence’, as the unavoidable ontological criterion in the highest forms of Greek metaphysical thinking. It speaks to questions of accessibility, ontological register, the ability to encounter something and say that it *is*, and so it speaks to knowledge. More particularly, *ousia* is what Heidegger would call the Being of things, or beingness. It is the concern of a thinking directed towards things (entities, etc.), one of Heidegger’s most common accusations against metaphysical thinking. Concern with *ousia* renders the thing as ‘that which lies before’ (*das Vorliegende*), i.e. the ‘intelligible’ or accessible thing. Heidegger draws upon the pre-terminological, domestic meaning of *ousia* as ‘belongings’, ‘assets’, ‘capabilities’, ‘estate’, and ‘properties’ (GA 9, 26of). Note that this sounds very much like Wicksteed and Conford’s characterization of *eidos* and *morphe* (‘collectivity of distinguishing characteristic’). Indeed, much of what can be said of Heidegger’s description of *ousia* is redundant here – traits, characteristics, properties, predicates, etc. are brought together (*logos*) and offer themselves to the encounter. *Ousia* comes to suggest something like the ‘fact’ (the ‘that it is’ implied by the German *darf*) of a thing’s appearance, a base recognition of the ‘beingness’ of a given thing. Put otherwise, it is the necessary possibility of appearance as always actualized. The possibility of appearing is necessarily inherent to all things because ‘presence’ is what determines knowledge and experience in advance. It follows from this that the possibility to appear is ‘always already’ actualized in things; they could not *be* otherwise. The metaphysical notion of possibility here will be further elaborated in what follows. What is important for now is only the emphasis on accessibility and

knowability, and that, in the name of *ousia*, *everything* (*every operational term*) must fulfill this imperative, including movement.

In Aristotle's text, *hyle* and *morphe*, matter and form, are transmuted to 'potency' (*dynamis*) and 'action or operation' (*energeia*). This latter term, *energeia*, is supplemented by the Aristotelian neologism *entelechy*. Heidegger's emphasis will be on this co-determinate pairing of *energeia* and *entelechy*, which is said to fulfill the demands of *ousia* more than *dynamis*. This means, in effect, that what is indicated by *energeia-entelechy* most adequately describes the 'entirety' of the self-production of the *physis-eidos*, which is accessible to thought within the onto-epistemic requirements of (Greek) metaphysics. Heidegger's translation and subsequent elaboration is as follows.

Dynamis is not taken solely as 'potential' on the basis of the Latin translation (*potentia*), but rather as suitability, aptitude, appropriateness to or for ... (*Eignung zu ...*). This appropriateness is always (already) seen as determined by the 'work' of *energeia* and the 'end' of *entelechy*, since it is this pair alone that fulfills *ousia*. Heidegger writes that the 'work' (*ergon*) of *energeia* 'stands for' (is interchangeable with) the end (*telos*) in *entelechy*. Understood in this way, work is both what is to be produced and its production (*Herzustellende*) together with what is produced (*Her-gestellte*) (GA 9, 284).³⁸ An analogous construction has been outlined with *kinēsis* above, where movedness is the unity of movement and the thing moved. Heidegger continues to develop the same notion or operation throughout the lexical steps of his interpretation, the unity of a doubling. With work, a further distinction is subtly added with the qualification *Herzustellende* (what is to be produced). What is produced or moved is now qualified by a dimension of antecedence not unlike the purposed-idea named above.³⁹ It will be seen that in each of these formulations (*kinēsis*, work, etc.), all three structural moments (the unity and each side of its doubling) refer in some way to *eidos*.

³⁸ Heidegger's variations on the verb *herstellen* here are parenthesized in order to suggest a distinction from the Latinate 'Produktion'. Heidegger only rarely uses the latter. In general, the construction of *herstellen* can be taken as combining the 'approach' of the operation of the metaphysical *logos* (*stellen*). The prefix *her-* generally denotes 'movement toward the speaker' (*auf... zu, hierher*). Use of *herstellen* and 'production' will be considered again in Chapter 2.

³⁹ Heidegger's use of a variation on the infinitive clause (*herzustellen*) – which could be translated as 'to be produced' – indicates the link between what is produced and an image that precedes and guides it. His choice to render this as a present participle appears to further qualify this antecedence (of the *zu*) as continuous or 'constant'. *Das Herzustellende* might be translated alternatively as 'what is to be (constantly) produced'. The import of this should become clear in Section 1.4.

The inseparable and reciprocal work and end that determine *dynamis* as suitable are found in Heidegger's translations of *energeia* as standing-in-the-work (*Im-Werk-Stehen*) and *entelechy* as having-itself-with-its-end (*Sich-im-Ende-Haben*).⁴⁰ As the question of form, *morphē*, comes to include the question of 'formation', *morphē* is replaced by an *energeia* that both remains operative in what is 'formed' (produced) and has the 'ends' of its movement within itself. The interchangeability of work and end linking *energeia* and *entelechy* corresponds to the above-given description of *physis-archē* as a self-sufficient, self-production of appearance, as the self-production of its own *idea*. *Energeia-entelechy* can be viewed in terms of the above-given description of the *archē* as emerging command:commanding emergence.

The work of *energeia* corresponds approximately to emergence into presence (*Ausgang*), the dimension of the production of the *idea* that refers to a coming-to-form or formal appearing. The end of *entelechy* speaks to the guiding of this emergence as defining the *idea*. The end 'has itself' (*sich haben*), indicating that what defines the 'form' of the *idea* does not come from outside the *idea* itself. This is the 'availability' and 'command' of work named in *Verfügung*. The production (work) of the *idea* is available to the *idea* itself. *Energeia* and *entelechy* therefore reproduce the chiasmic or co-determining formulation of the *archē* as commanding emergence and emerging command. Emergence and command, work and end are 'simultaneous', not separate in time in the sense of a temporal progression. This indicates that the self-production of the *idea* is always consummate. There is no point at which the *idea* is defined but has not yet emerged or is not yet at work (standing in the work), nor a point at which the *idea* is emerging or at work but not yet defined (it has its end with it). As above, the word consummateness refers to the inseparability of movement and moved, work and end.

Although Heidegger's objection to the Latin translation of *energeia* with *actus* is that it loses the sense of completion given in *entelechy*, the full expression of the latter term nonetheless remains dependent upon *energeia*. The full claim would be that the 'work' of *energeia* ensures that 'end' is never understood as cessation. The work is always already complete (*telos*) while simultaneously moving towards (working towards, *ergon*) its completion (GA 9, 284f.). This double movement is explained by the fact that *eidos* determines and links 'work' and 'end', as the 'way' something comes to presence (GA 9, 284).

The terms *energeia* and *entelechy* bespeak metaphysics as a closed and self-sufficient system. The consummate unity of the 'work' and 'end' within which the thing *is*, or *that* the thing *is*, could not *be* without being guided by the *eidos*.

⁴⁰ [...] the work as that which stands entirely in the 'end' (GA 9, 284).

This is unsurprising given the unavoidable ‘circularity’ whereby conceptual pairs are held together by the very thing or activity they seek to describe. A sort of loop is created whereby the terms that most fully express the essence of *physis* (*energeia, entelechy*), in its distinction from *technē*, are determined by precisely that which the text is seeking, the distinguished *physis-eidos*, which is supposed to distinguish or guide the chiasmic co-determination of ‘emergence’ and ‘command’ in the *physis-archē* as expressed in the ‘work’ and ‘end’ of *energeia-entelechy*. The *idea*, in its self-production, determines the co-dependent and simultaneous ‘work’ and ‘end’ of its production by remaining immanent to this production. At the same time the ‘work’ and ‘end’ are ‘in’, both in the sense of location (‘standing-in’: *archē* is in the *idea* which produces itself) and availability (‘having’: disposing of this production to the *idea*). There is nothing outside of this process that would need to determine it.⁴¹

The implications of this for the notion of *dynamis*, for potential and possibility, and therefore for ‘matter’, are severe. All that can be considered ‘appropriate to ...’, all possible coming to form or presence, is subject to and determined in advance by *energeia*. A constant of metaphysics is attested here: *Form or figure (morphē) and eidos will always have a (pre-)determining position in relation to matter and possibility.* The ‘potency’ of possibility is reduced to the possibility of production and its reproducibility. The ‘potency’ or ‘potential’ of matter can only ever be fodder for the appearance of production, used to maintain the ontological primacy of *poeisis*. As a partial explanation of this, Heidegger recalls the Aristotelian maxim that “actuality is prior to potentiality” (Met. Θ 8, 1049b 5), which he renders as “manifestly (*phaneròn*) standing-in-the-work is prior to ‘appropriateness to ...’”, that is to say, *energeia* is prior to *dynamis*. The *phaneròn* (‘open to sight, visible, manifest’) that opens the phrase is taken by Heidegger to refer to *ousia* (Being). What is open to sight, Being (movement, production), comes ‘prior to ...’ (*próteron*) in such a way that, with the introduction of the terms *energeia* and *entelechy*, the *physis-eidos* returns to a position comparable to that of the purposed-idea of *technē* discussed earlier. Put otherwise, the appearance of production as such (of work or emergence within its ‘end’) seems to hold the place of a generic *physis-eidos*. This would appear to be unavoidable. Immediately before introducing *energeia* and *entelechy*, Heidegger translates Aristotle: “one sees and [in] seeing they have (just then) also already seen” (GA 9, 284).⁴² What belongs to the seeing of the

⁴¹ It will be shown in section 1.4 that the only way in which such a process can be said to be ‘open’ is in the *idea*’s capacity for manipulation, i.e. the ‘universal’ applicability of its basic operation(s).

⁴² “[...] einer sieht und sehend hat er (eben) zumal auch schon gesehen.”

encounter cannot be distinguished temporally. The immediacy of seeing is flipped (always flips) into an always already seen. This suggests that the formal appearance of *physis*'s movement always already precedes the physical thing that is seen.

This "also already seen" belonging to seeing helps constitute Heidegger's response to those who would object and insist that potential or possibility clearly precedes actuality. Such an assertion *would not be 'Aristotelian'* (metaphysical). This is not to disregard Heidegger's famous statement in the Introduction to *Sein und Zeit* that 'possibility is higher than actuality' (SZ, 38). Indeed, it could be said that this assertion remains essential to his thinking throughout. In *Sein und Zeit* this statement comes in the context of an early attempt at the 'destruction of the history (or 'occurrence', *Geschichte*) of philosophy (as metaphysics) and should therefore be situated within Heidegger's attempt to develop a non-metaphysical practice of philosophy (SZ, 392). At stake here, however, is a description of the 'super-determination' of *idea* and/or form in metaphysics as it neutralizes or nullifies possibility. Because of the identification of *physis*, *ousia*, and *kinēsis*, it must be said that what most fulfills *ousia* in *physis* is the process by which something is actualized, this process being thought as the type of movement peculiar to *physis*. Both appearance itself and the process of its coming to be (the *idea* and its production) are attributable to *eidos*. This means that the movement into presence or production of the *idea* must appear and must "also already appear" in the encounter with *physis*. The metaphysical emphasis on presence in the production of the *idea* creates a sort of *ad absurdum* determination whereby *the primal event of seeing always resolves itself in an "already"* (a form of antecedence labored throughout the essay), an 'anterior seen' that suggests the movement of seeing itself. This causes a doubling of the *eidos* that follows from the doubling of other key terms. The analysis will therefore hinge upon what accounts for movement in, and therefore 'doubles', the *eidos*.

The double *eidos* follows from the double concept of *morphē* as both 'form' and 'formation':⁴³ appearance (*Aussehen*, *eidos*) and 'placing into appearance' (*Gestellung in das Aussehen*). This relates to an essential qualification of the Aristotelian *morphē*, that it is '*eidos tò kata tòn lógon*' (GA 9, 275). The *eidos* is 'according to the *logos*'. The *logos* accounts for a 'moment' which is unaccounted for in 'form', namely, the movement of 'placing into appearance' (*Gestellung in das Aussehen*) (GA 9, 276). It is here that Heidegger sees Aristotle as augmenting the Platonic conception of the *idea*, setting it in motion, and

⁴³ Heidegger's translation of *morphē* with *Gestalt* rather than *Form* appears to be an attempt to account for this dimension of formation as a 'self-figuring' into appearance. See below.

thus as the pinnacle of Greek metaphysics. In both cases, the *idea* designates something like an appearance (*Aussehen*, *Anblick*, *Ansicht*, *Sicht*): the captured presence or formalized collection in which the thing is demarcated or defined. The distinction, according to Heidegger, is that for Plato the *idea* is something ‘common’ or ‘general’ (*koinón*); it is that within which an entity stands (or is placed) in order that it ‘be’, i.e., register ontologically. Because of this, the entity itself (without *idea*) is seen as a non-being (*Unseiendes*, *mē on*) from the Platonic perspective. The *idea* remains and *is*, the entity comes and goes. In this way, the Platonic *idea*, as a repeatable pattern (*Musterbild*) and paradigm (*parádeigma*), appears very much like the purposed-*idea* of *technē*, in that the *idea* is required in advance for something to presence or ‘be’ (appear). For Aristotle, on the other hand, *the individual entity produces its eidos. The paradigm has become self-sufficient*. It is for this reason that Heidegger speaks of *morphē* as ‘figure’ (*Gestalt*) and not ‘form.’ The double sense (consummate while simultaneously working towards completion) of both appearance as such and placing-into-appearance designates *morphē* as a self-figuring into appearance (of *physis* and, by extension, the physical things of Nature). Form ‘morphs’ together with its movement. Put in the language that has been used here, *morphē* is the *idea* and its self-production.

The appearance of *physis*’s self-production – required by the optic imperative of metaphysics – appears to constitute the metaphysical resolution of the above-mentioned epistemological impasse: *physis*, taken as a whole (*das Seiende im Ganzen*), should constitute a limit point for the technical production of knowledge in metaphysics. The ‘self-evidence’ of *physis* apparent in the ‘immediate introduction’ of *epagōgē* finds its paradoxical expression as the self-production of knowledge about *physis* by *physis*. The self-production of the *idea* (or self-figuring into appearance) amounts to something like a self-determination of knowledge (the ‘immediacy’ of *epagōgē*). This movement is the *kinēsis* of *physis* as the *logos*. The origin of this problem in Heidegger’s unified or entangled understanding of *physis* and *logos*, not detailed in “ΑΦ (1939)”, will be considered in the following section. The remainder of this section will describe the problem as it occurs in “ΑΦ (1939)”.

The *logos* is what accounts for the self-producing movement of *physis* and the double *morphē* (form and formation). In doing so, the *logos* accounts not only for an *eidos* that produces itself but also for that through which *physis* and the *physis-eidos* are known. This ‘through which’ can be found in Heidegger’s ‘pre-terminological’ understanding of *katēgoria* (‘category,’ ‘address,’ *Ansprechung*), i.e., “the naming of that which something is” (GA 9, 252). *Katēgoria* is initially introduced in a discussion of the *technē-archē*, but is dropped in the subsequent discussion of the *physis-archē*. Unlike the other

Greek terms used in the essay, it reappears primarily in its German translation as *Ansprechung*, ‘address’. This is prompted by the *kata* (‘according to’) in the phrase ‘*eidos tò kata tòn lógon*’, which is also the sphere of the “immediate address of beings” (of everything which exists) (GA 9, 275). Coming in the act of naming, ‘categories’ are very much caught up in the process of collecting (*logos*) through which something comes to light and is known as that specific thing. Heidegger specifies that ‘categories,’ insofar as they underlie predication, are found in and guided by the *logos*. Knowledge of the categories is knowledge of *logos* (GA 9, 253). ‘Categories’ underlie the everyday addressing of things and therefore serve a similar role as the purposed-*idea*. Yet categories can only do so because they are guided by the *logos*. This is to say that *katēgoria* ‘requires’ access to the *logos*. The *logos* somehow precedes *katēgoria*.⁴⁴

If all knowledge of categories is knowledge of the *logos*, then the appearance of the *logos* itself would be something like a categorical doubling of what underlies all categories, the *logos*. In order to be known and accessed, the *logos*, which underlies and makes possible all categories, has to double back on itself and make its own movement into a category. The *logos* could only be known through itself – the movement through which it produces its own *eidos*. This would correspond to the antecedence labored in the doubling of the *eidos*. ‘Immediacy’ would then refer to the problem of the *logos* constantly preceding itself in its own appearance. *The impasse for the technical production of knowledge about physis is resolved by positing the logos as the antecedent, generic image of Nature.*⁴⁵

This can be reiterated as follows. The categories, understood as addresses, immediately ‘approach’ (*spricht an*) as this or that ‘appearance’, which is grasped (because ‘physical’, *fassbar*) through the *logos*. *Physis* is addressed (*angesprochen*) as the antecedent, underlying availability (*zugrundliegende Verfügbliche*) of movement (*Gestellung in das Aussehen*) and as an access to movement (*Gestellung in die Gestalt*), both of which are accounted for by *logos* (GA 9, 273ff.). This is to say that what accounts for the movement of a thing *in-itself* is the same as that which accounts for (or guides) knowledge

44 “The ‘categories’ underlie everyday addressing or naming (*alltäglichen Ansprechungen*), which form themselves into assertions, ‘judgments’; and it is only for this reason that the ‘categories’ can be found, inversely, guided by (*am Leitfaden*) the assertion, *logos*; accordingly, Kant must ‘derive’ the table of categories from the table of *judgments*; knowledge of the categories as the determinations of the being of beings, so-called metaphysics, is therefore, in an essential sense, knowledge of *logos*, which is to say, ‘logic.’” (GA 9, 253)

45 “*eidos*: Aus-sehen für welche Sicht? vorgängige Hinsicht?” (GA 76, 356).

of this movement.⁴⁶ The production of the *idea* has been called the ‘unity’ of two structural moments. These moments have been considered as appearance and appearing, the seen and seeing, the moved and movedness. Their unity appears here in the form of the *logos-eidos*, the appearance and availability of the movement begetting knowledge.

Heidegger does not explicitly justify the qualification of *katēgoria* as ‘immediate’. This qualification comes from its being reliant upon the *logos*. It is likely that Heidegger finds the German word *Ansprechung*, address, more serviceable than referring back to *katēgoria* in a context where it ought to convey its relation to presence and immediacy.⁴⁷ As stated, for Heidegger, the translation *is* the interpretation here. An inflection of the prefix *an-*, suggesting a towardness or approach, allows ‘address’ (*Ansprechung*) to perfectly complement ‘presence’ (*Anwesen, Anwesenheit*), while retaining the dimension of its knowability and sayability (*Ansprechung* contains *sprechen*, to speak). An address would therefore not be an address *in language* of presence, in the sense of an assertion that merely corresponded to what is addressed, but rather the address of presence: the claim that *ousia* lays upon the language used to describe it. Here the emphasis appears to be shifted from the human to the non-human (or *physis* as human-defining) in a manner suited to the problem of *physis*’s self-determination of knowledge about itself as it produces its own *eidos*.

The term *epagōge* – the term that indicates ‘how’ *physis* is known – is also qualified as immediate without explanation. Heidegger understands *epagōge*, as the unity of seeing and the seen thing, as a (immediate) movement that leads to one thing in order to get at something else. *Epagōge* leads to a being or entity, in order to lead it away from that entity towards its Being (GA 9, 244). The unity is therefore between seeing and Being (the seen). It has been shown here that Heidegger’s reading of “ΑΦ (1939)” leads the reader toward the image of the *logos* as the antecedent *physis-eidos*, i.e. Being. *Katēgoria* might well be viewed as the direct correlate to this in indicating the address *by* presence that

⁴⁶ Heidegger’s translation of Aristotle can be partially reconstructed here: On the one hand, *physis* is *addressed* as what underlies any individual entity, its own movement available to it in advance. On the other hand *physis* is addressed as the ‘placing into the figuring’ (*Gestellung in die Gestalt*), which is to say the appearance (the *eidos*) that shows itself *for addressing* (*Ansprechung*). This latter characterization indicates the availability of address, including the ‘addressing’ (knowing about) *physis*. *Physis* is addressed, on the other hand, as the *logos-eidos*, the ‘image’ of movement’s availability as such (GA 9, 275).

⁴⁷ “[...] the *eidos* is first essentially grasped as *eidos*, when it shows itself with the sphere (*Gesichtskreis*) of the immediate address of beings, *eidos tò kata tòn lógon*. Address (*Ansprechung*) immediately addresses each this and that as this and that, i.e., in terms of their form appearance. What guides this and therefore makes *eidos* and *morphe* graspable, is the *logos*” (GA 9, 275f.).

leads *epagōgē* ‘to and away from the thing’, towards what begets it, namely the placing into appearance of the *logos*. Yet because the immediacy qualifying both terms refers to the problem of the *logos* constantly preceding itself in its own appearance, the inverse understanding of *katēgoria* must also be considered. In this case, the approach of presence, and so its ‘leading’ (its self-determination), occurs only insofar as the one being led already has access to the *logos*. In this way, *katēgoria* would not be a correlate to *epagōgē*, but a movement quite similar, even interchangeable. Has *epagōgē* already made the *logos* visible at the beginning of Heidegger’s interpretation?⁴⁸ There is an ambiguity here between the movement of a seeing that makes visible and fixes, and a self-determining presence that approaches this seeing and guides its knowledge about it. Both *epagōgē* and *katēgoria* seem to betray a substitutability between leading and being led, between what approaches the seer and the seer itself. Where does the *logos* or *logos-eidos* primarily lie? Is it in Nature in its ‘totality’ or is it in the *epagōgē*, in terms of the seer (what sees, the ‘one’ that sees) that first makes it visible?

This section has focused on the core terminology of Heidegger’s Aristotle interpretation in “ΑΦ (1939)” as it works towards a description of metaphysics and the metaphysical understanding of Nature. The disentanglement of *physis* and *technē* was investigated via movement as it is ‘controlled’ by an *archē*. This process of movement into presence had to be analyzed from the point of its consummation, the metaphysical paradigm viewed from the perspective of its consummateness or totality. For metaphysics is a complete, self-sufficient system of movement (operation). The consummate nature of movement in metaphysics is accounted for by doubling, a doubling of *eidos*, of *morphē*, of Being, which results in the subjugation of possibility (*hyle*, *dynamis*) to form. All of the terms gravitate towards a center that speaks of a unified doubling (*energeia*, *entelechy*) and knowledge of this (*epagōgē*, *katēgoria*). The condensed description of metaphysics in “ΑΦ (1939)” hinges on a certain understanding and use of the *logos*. The following section will move into a somewhat broader discussion of the place of the *logos* in Heidegger’s thinking and its use in metaphysical practice or philosophy. This will introduce another conceptual entanglement, thus far left suspended, between *physis* and *logos*.

⁴⁸ *Epagōgē* is the ‘seeing and making visible’ of what is *already* ‘in view’ as the beingness of an entity (its *idea*), which is to say its appearance and self-placing into appearance (GA 9, 244).

1.3 Metaphysical Structure and its Double

“Why do we treat the hero
better than he treated the material
he severed to feed the sun?”
– Clayton Eshleman (*Juniper Fuse*)

This section will further elaborate the *logos* at the heart of Aristotle's doctrine of *physis*. It will do so in parallel to the question of human comportment toward this *logos*. The *logos* of Aristotle's doctrine of *physis* will be termed the 'technical *logos*'.⁴⁹ It has been suggested that designating something as 'technical' implies locating the antecedent image of it. The question of the technical *logos* is developed in parallel to the question of a 'metaphysical human' in response to the ambiguity arising concerning the 'place' of the generic image of Nature seen at the end of the previous section. Speaking generally, both humankind and the *logos* should 'belong' to *physis* or Nature.

The technical *logos* is indicative of one way that the entanglement of *physis* and *logos* is resolved, and it is one of two manners in which Heidegger thinks the *logos* throughout his work. His *Spätwerk* presents what he terms a Janus situation. This is ultimately the simultaneity of 'two' *logos*.⁵⁰ The structure of the technical *logos* is the same as the structure of metaphysics itself, and will eventually be termed *Gestell* by Heidegger. This is viewed as a consolidation of the 'ontological difference', wherein the technical *logos* guides both the 'ontological' (in terms of a mathematical-logical *logos*) and the 'ontic' (in terms of a physical *logos*). The 'other half' of the Janus situation is *Ereignis*. In anticipation, it might be said – albeit loosely – that *Gestell* indicates a comportment toward a *logos*-dominant understanding of *physis*, whereas *Ereignis* indicates a comportment towards a *physis*-dominant *logos*.

This section will begin by considering the entanglement of *physis* and *logos* as it stands in Heidegger's thinking of the late 1920s and 1930s, specifically as it

⁴⁹ While this term has already been in use, it will be first fully elaborated in Sections 1.3 and 1.4.

⁵⁰ An isolated line from Heidegger's notebooks 'defining' the *logos* expresses this succinctly: "*Logos*, the gathering-lying and the *Ge-stell* (essence of technic)". The original German reads: "Λόγος, die *lesende Lege und das Ge-stell*. (Wesen der Technik)". The entire preceding passage should be consulted in full. It contains remarks concerning two iterations of the technical *logos* in the framework of the 'ontological difference' (mathematical-logical as the ontological and physical as the ontic). The passage is bookended by the same image (drawing), two circle connected by a line and 'framed' within a rectangle (GA 98, 383-384).

pertains to the project for destructing metaphysics. Following this, the technical *logos* will be elaborated upon, while simultaneously considering two possible ‘places’ of its function, namely in-itself and in humankind. The question of the place of the technical *logos* within humankind will be explored in terms of the question of ‘utility’. It will be given explicit attention in Heidegger’s readings *Parmenides* and *Antigone* in *Einführung in die Metaphysik*. Heidegger’s reading of *Parmenides* will be read alongside his engagement with quantum physics in relation to the assertion that metaphysics names a single structure homologous with *technic*. The reading of *Antigone* that follows from this will present a mytho-philosophical origin for metaphysically determined human action. The section will close with Heidegger’s reading of Plato viewed in relation to the production of the metaphysical canon (the history of metaphysical knowledge). Overall, the section will focus on the problem of determining humankind as producer of metaphysical knowledge. For Heidegger, this is a matter of a failed attempt to positively appropriate *technē* in determining human action. This section will, however, attempt to point out and return to the ‘other’ extreme possibility, namely, that the structure of metaphysics be considered in its autonomy or automatic nature, as a knowledge *not* produced by humankind. This issue will be followed more closely in Section 1.4 and Chapter 2. Such indecisive turning over the automatic or human nature of the technical *logos* is a feature of Heidegger’s work of the 1930s.

Impossible Union: Physis and Logos

The entanglement of *physis* and *logos* is central to Heidegger’s understanding of Greek philosophy, of metaphysics, and his attempts to ‘direct’ thinking non-metaphysically. The two terms stand in an inseparable, reciprocal relation. The resolution or irresolvability of this entanglement helps determine Heidegger’s understanding of metaphysics as well as the human comportment that corresponds to it. Notable discussions of this issue in Heidegger’s *Gesamtausgabe* can be found in two canonic lecture courses that typify the two periods of Heidegger’s early thinking. The entanglement is central to the “Preliminary Remarks” that set up the 1929/1930 lecture course, *Die Grundbegriffe der Metaphysik* (GA 29/30), a work that can be taken to mark the height and end of Heidegger’s ‘fundamental ontology’. Heidegger speaks there of the *logos* in terms of the ‘unconcealed’ dimension of *physis*. The *logos* accounts for the prevailing of presence over concealment or absence.⁵¹ The section “Sein und Denken” from the 1935 course *Einführung in die Metaphysik* (here forward as

⁵¹ Heidegger writes: “*physis*, the prevailing of what is pervasive; *logos*, the word that extracts (*entnimmt*) this prevailing from out of concealment” (GA 29/30, 42).

(*EM*) takes up a similar understanding of *logos* in its entanglement with *physis*, where it is emphasized that the *logos* maintains the prevailing of presence. Both texts are exemplary in zeroing-in on the prevailing of presence in metaphysics and on the role of the *logos* as it is set in opposition to non-presence, absence, or concealing. The latter text (*EM*), situated at the heart of Heidegger's destruction of metaphysics and anticipating elements of "AΦ (1939)", takes up the explicitly technical dimension of humankind's engagement with this *logos* and will be, for that reason, returned to in following subsections.

Physis is generally indicated or spoken of by Heidegger via a lexicon of a) emerging or the emergent (*Ausgehen*, et al.); b) the 'everywhere', omnipresent, or pervasive, i.e., that for which there would be no outside (*Walten, Durchwalten, das Seiende im Ganzen*, Hölderlin's *Allengegenwärtige*); and c) self-sufficiency, self-maintenance, reflexivity or recursion (*In-Sich-Zurückgehende*).⁵² The importance of pervasiveness – emphasized in both GA 29/30 and EM – in relation to emergence and self-maintenance can be exemplified by Heidegger's interest in Heraclitus fragment B16, which he calls the "first, all attuning" (GA 71, 29). The fragment reads: τὸ μὴ δῦνόν ποτε πᾶς ἄν τις λάθοι. Two translations that would have been familiar to Heidegger are those of Snell and Diels (or Diels-Kranz).⁵³ Drawing from these sources, the fragment can be roughly translated as: 'How can one preserve themselves or remain hidden before that which never goes down?' The only difference, though noteworthy, between the two pertains to the term λάθοι. Snell translates it in relation to a 'remaining hidden' (*verborgen bleiben*) and Diels in relation to a 'self salvaging or harboring' (*sich bergen*).

The τὸ μὴ δῦνόν ποτε, translated by Diels and Snell in the sense of 'that which never goes down or sets', indicates metaphysical *physis*. *Physis*, as overwhelmingly pervasive presence, as the movement that fulfill the optical imperative to bring everything to presence, is the never setting sun of presence's constancy. Heidegger's appended notes to this phrase include: "*physis* – constant emergence"; "revealedness" (*Entborgenheit*); and "*physis* – aletheia – *lanthanein*" (GA 70, 86; GA 71, 26 & 29). Only one of these remarks mentions absence of concealing (*lanthanein*) in relation to truth (*aletheia*) or *physis*. His interest in this fragment and positioning of it at the heart of his thinking ('the first, all attuning') suggests that what he terms metaphysics, in terms of human comportment and thus in terms of the practice of philosophy, does not provide a satisfactory reply to the Heraclitean question of 'remaining hidden'.

⁵² This enumeration is not intended to be exhaustive.

⁵³ The German versions are as follows: Wie kann einer sich Bergen vor dem, was nimmer untergeht (Diels); Wie kann man verborgen bleiben vor dem, das nie untergeht (Snell).

Heidegger's critique of metaphysics and metaphysical philosophy thus turns around the question of the $\tauὸ\ μὴ\ δῦνόν\ ποτε$ in the form of the optic imperative, i.e., the demand for presence's dominance over absence and concealment. He also locates this problem in Husserl's phenomenology in a way that connects the deconstruction of metaphysics to his phenomenological training. It shows, moreover, that intrinsic to the project of deconstruction is the matter of disentangling the question of humankind from that of constant emergence (*Entborgenheit*). In the late intellectual-autobiographical essay, "Mein Weg in die Phänomenologie" (1963), Heidegger describes his discovery of *aletheia* as a turning point in his struggle to understand the particular novelty in Husserlian phenomenology. What is proper to phenomenology, Heidegger asks, if it is not *logic* or psychology? His eventual answer is as follows:

"What takes place for the phenomenology of the acts of consciousness as the self-manifestation (*sich-selbst-Bekunden*) of phenomena was thought still more originary by Aristotle and all Greek thinking and existence (*Dasein*) as *aletheia*, as the unconcealedness of what presences, of its revealing, its self-showing. What the phenomenological investigations had found anew as the fundamental (*tragend*) stance of thinking, proved to be the fundamental trait of Greek thinking, if not the entirety of philosophy as such." (GA 14, 99)

Defining 'acts of consciousness' as 'self-manifestation' corresponds directly to the reciprocity of *katēgoria* and *epagōgē* Heidegger finds in Aristotle. This is to say that the definition does not distinguish between the immediacy of presence's address (the self-manifestation of phenomena) and the seeing that would grasp it (the acts of consciousness), since both are determined by the optic imperative.⁵⁴ The question of the 'thing itself' – that to which phenomenology initially seeks to return and experience – is not a question of consciousness and its objectivity, but rather of the beingness of beings in its unconcealedness and concealing. The phenomenology developed by Husserl remains, for Heidegger, beholden to the structure of metaphysics.

Any attention Heidegger gives to the concealing (*lethe*, *Verbergung*) inherent in *alētheia* (as well as *physis*) is thus not taken from Husserl, nor necessarily from Greek thinking, which comports towards 'unconcealedness', what is present. Attention to concealing is apparently Heidegger's own gesture, the novelty of his thinking and its impetus.⁵⁵ Metaphysics can only think the *logos* in terms

⁵⁴ Though concealing appears in the following paragraph, note that it does not appear in the above citation.

⁵⁵ Heidegger asks: "Whence and how is it determined what must be experienced as the 'matter itself' according to the principle of phenomenology? Is it consciousness and its objectivity or the Being of beings in its unconcealedness and concealing?" (GA 14, 99).

of constant, overwhelming presence. But *Unverborgenheit*, unconcealedness, is dependent upon concealment as such. It is his ‘discovery’ or recasting of *aletheia* in terms of concealment that allows him to ask the double question of concealing that determines his thinking. The first concerns what remains concealed at the heart of the metaphysical canon. This inquiry directs the destruction of metaphysics. The eventual answer is the governance of a technical *logos*, as technical *archē*, and its ‘perfect’ description in Aristotle (Section 1.4). The second question of concealing concerns how thinking can be guided otherwise or determined by concealing. This latter question remains the primary concern of Heidegger’s thinking from his break with ‘standard phenomenology’ and the destruction of metaphysics (Chapter 3).

The relation of the *logos* to *physis* in terms of presence can be viewed as a sort of structuring or delineating operation inherent to *physis*. If *physis* is (unstructured) prevailing as such, the *logos* indicates the structuring of what prevails that gives it constancy. The *logos* makes *physis* available as something intelligible. This was, of course, intrinsic to its function according to the analysis of Section 1.2 (the *eidos* ‘according to’ *logos*). Heidegger finds this structuring movement – the collecting or ‘gathering’ (*sammeln* and *versammeln*) that generally characterizes the *logos* – already in pre-Socratic philosophy, particularly Heraclitus. He translates the Greek verb *legein* (‘to gather, pick up’, ‘to say’), from which *logos* is derived, with the German *lesen* (‘to read’, ‘to pick or glean’) and this is further qualified by the verb *legen* (‘to lay’) which translates another sense of *legein*. The *logos* considered by Heraclitus is thus speculatively translated into German as naming a ‘gathering lay[ing]’, *eine lesende Lege* (VA, 220).

As a ‘structuring’ inherent to *physis*, the *logos* may seem like something derivative of *physis* and thus similar to *technē*, when the latter is considered a finite circumscription of and/or deduction from *physis*. The technical *logos* can certainly be considered in this way. Its relation to *physis* in EM is marked by characteristics of *physis* that pertain to the maintenance of constant presence. For example, Heidegger states that the *logos*, as a gathering or collecting, is not a “mere herding together or amassing”, but that it “retains” (‘holds in or holds as one,’ *einbehalten*) “what is divergent and strives against each other in a belonging together (or ‘cohesion,’ *Zusammengehörigkeit*”). Such “retaining”, as productive of cohesive unity or oneness, is not itself a character of the *logos*, but rather of *physis* (EM, 102). As in “AΦ (1939)”, the *logos* accounts for the maintaining and retaining of presence. It is ascribed to *physis* itself while at the same time determining it.

Within the context of Heidegger's work, the technical *logos* is a distinct dimension of the archaic *logos*, that is, a non-metaphysical *logos*. It is the dimension that concerns presence and its preservation or constancy. Within the constant, overwhelming presence of *physis*, the technical *logos* indicates an inherent urge towards structure as self-knowledge, to the ordering of 'beings as a whole'. Heidegger will explicitly link it to the *thetic* dimension of *physis* ('thesis', see Chapter 2). It maintains the constancy of presence through the formal production of knowledge and its transmission (the 'retaining' dimension of *physis*).⁵⁶ The production of a transmissible knowledge separates *logos* from *physis* in a coherent, if artificial manner, by *giving order* to the overwhelming and pervasive presence of beings as a whole and making this structuring itself intelligible. *Physis*, however, cannot be understood as technically orderable (in its totality) due to the dimension of concealment inherent to it. A technically-ordered *physis* is thereby nothing but *technic*: a Nature ordered on the basis of the optic imperative in terms of what comes to and registers as presence. The metaphysical notion of *physis* is thereby *technic*, a 'technical nature'. To pose the question of a thinking that would not be preoccupied with producing technical knowledge, this 'technical nature' must be folded back into *physis* itself. The dimension of the *logos*, be it technical or archaic, nevertheless remains immanent to *physis*, entangled in *physis*, whether this is thought metaphysically or otherwise. The manner in which the *logos* would separate itself from, or perhaps better put, distinguish itself from *physis* is brought more clearly into view when Heidegger considers its human dimension. 'Structure' and 'intelligibility' as modes of retaining are, of course, never to be thought as something fully distinguishable from *physis*. Rather, they are functions of the 'unconcealed' dimension of *physis*, half-truths (*a-letheia*). Any 'real' 'separation' whereby *logos* becomes dominant occurs according to a decision made by or in human comportment. The following subsection will consider this decision in terms of the 'utility' that indicates humankind's relationship to the *logos*. This motif of utility undergoes considerable transformations in

56 Stiegler agrees with this assessment when he writes: "Tradition is one name for knowledge. In *The Concept of Time* Dasein has knowledge of a nonknowledge: that of the immanence of its radically indeterminate end. Tradition raises the question of the *transmission* of knowledge. Our hypothesis is that this transmission is determined by the explicitly technological forms recording forms of knowledge, by the conditions of *access* they provide – this is also true for the very inventor of a domain of knowledge". For Stiegler this sort of knowledge constitutes an already-there, an antecedence of knowledge that will be considered below in terms of the Platonic *idea* and the already-there 'image' of a technical *logos*. Stiegler, *Technics and Time I*, p. 210.

Heidegger's thought from the 1930s, through the development of *Gestell*, and into his *Spätwerk*.

An Instrumental Split

Heidegger considers the entanglement of *physis* and *logos* in terms of the function and place of the *logos*. The technical *logos*, it should be stressed, is not *necessarily* something that belongs solely to the human (as 'contriver'). The designation of *technē*, and so technic, as a movement that originates in the human (as technician) is a designation of Greek philosophy (specifically, Aristotelianism). The intermingling of these terms 'in' *physis* – *technē*, *logos*, humankind – does not presuppose strict designations but rather entanglement ('belonging together') and 'mutual availability'. The *logos* is an inherent dimension of *physis*, and humankind, 'belonging to Nature', occurs in relation to the *logos*. Technic has also been considered as a dimension of Nature and may thus be considered accessible to humankind. Perhaps technic speaks generally to the autonomy of the (technical) *logos* that structures presences. The separation of the *logos* from *physis* in terms of the intelligible ordering of *physis* appears to be thought as the determination of *physis* by *logos*. But what if this can only occur as a decision in human comportment, specifically, the decision 'philosophy' makes about humankind's relationship to the *logos*? This would be to say that a *logos* 'disentangled' from *physis* concerns humankind's decision to comport (solely?) towards that dimension of Nature that strives towards knowledge in terms of intelligible presence.

The motif Heidegger uses to address the relationship between humankind and the *logos* is use or utility, both as a using and a being-used. The motif appears differently in Heidegger's writings by way of terms such as 'need or urgency' (*Not*), 'demand' (*herausfordern*), 'need and use' (*brauchen*), 'custom or practice' (*Brauch*), and 'yieldedness' (*Gelassenheit*).⁵⁷ The various terms that occupy or indicate the motif of use generally correspond to (attempted or speculative) designations or determinations of humankind. In Heidegger's early, fundamental ontology, the human is often understood as 'world-forming' (*Weltbildend*). The world-forming human, as the designation indicates, is thought in relation to presence or unconcealment and the structuring of presence by the *logos*. This determination of the human in relation to presence eventually takes on a more 'negative' or pejorative tone as Heidegger's destruction of metaphysics nears its end. Agency is shifted from the human to presence (the optic imperative). What might have once been thought as a more 'free' relation to *logos* develops into a language of 'demand'. The human

57 This enumeration is not intended to be exhaustive.

is viewed as coerced into a relationship of exploitation, its thought and action serving only the ends of the optic imperative. In the decision *for* presence, the human becomes entirely beholden to it. And yet Heidegger states in *Die Frage nach der Technik* that some decision must be made, for to remain 'neutral' is to be at the mercy of Nature's technical dimension in the worst way (VA 9).

This shift is something Heidegger discovers or develops over the course of his destruction of metaphysics. In *EM*, he maintains an understanding of the human as 'world-forming', though in a manner befitting the project of destroying metaphysics. That 1935 course was given at more or less the same time as "Die Ursprung des Kunstwerkes". Together these texts show a Heidegger that is trying to determine humankind via a positive appropriation of *technē*. Humankind is charged with the task of maintaining and retaining the un concealed dimension of *physis*. Human comportment is thereby explicitly considered from within the movement of the technical *logos*. It can be said here that this attempted determination fails, however, and that Heidegger does not articulate a 'positive appropriation' of *technē* until the *Spätwerk*. In the early 1930s, humankind's 'use' of the technical *logos* is still viewed in terms of it 'inheriting' the activity that preserves and maintains the self-structuring of *physis*. In this way, it might be said that human activity is viewed there as the construction of the metaphysical canon Heidegger seeks to 'destroy'. This is additionally significant because that construction inherently valorizes humankind's technical prowess through a language of violence and the use of violence. The sense of an inheritance and the heroizing that follows this is tied to the rhetoric of the 'enchanted history'.⁵⁸ Showing the link between this determination of humankind and the more critical rhetoric of Heidegger's 1953 technic essays should serve to render inoperative any possibility of an enchanted history interpretation.

In *EM*, human action or comportment is considered in a more or less mimetic relation to *physis*, a *mimēsis* that occurs 'through' the *logos*. Throughout the lecture course, *physis* is referred to a manner corresponding to Heraclitus' τὸ μὴ δύνον ποτε. The 'workings' of *physis* emphasize its rule or reign (*Walten*) as what cannot be overcome, the pervasiveness of this rule and its inescapability (*Durchwalten*). This is violent (*gewalttätig*), and so *physis* is first experienced quite literally as physical violence. It is this violence that humankind

⁵⁸ The heroic activity through which humankind can 'overcome' the overwhelming, unstructured presence of *physis* (see below, on *Antigone* and Plato), would maintain that Being's dimension of dissimulation is 'responsible' for the construction of the canon. This is a strange understanding of the 'place' of human agency considering that all metaphysical doctrines, according to Heidegger, follow the *Leitfaden* of the optical imperative.

'inherits' from *physis* – through and in the form of *logos*. This means, first and foremost, that by the mid-1930s, while attempting a positive appropriation of *technē*, Heidegger defines philosophy as an act of violence.⁵⁹ This is 'justified' rhetorically by Heidegger in terms of a 'sense of duty', but also in terms of 'self-defense'. Humankind, in being compelled to act violently, takes on the burden of its inheritance. Inheriting violence in this way, its action serves the continuity of a 'tradition' by preserving the violence of *physis* and in turn preserving itself.

The utility of humankind is considered from this perspective in *EM*. Humankind mimics the violence of *physis* by acting out the role of the technical *logos*. This plays out as something like a necessary delimitation of Nature by humankind which splits *logos* into two gatherings in order to preserve *physis*:

"In originary saying [*logos*] the being of what exists is opened in the structure (*Gefüge*) of its gatheredness. This opening is gathered in a second sense, according to which the word retains what is originally gathered and thus maintains what prevails: *physis*. The human is, as the one that stands and is active in the *logos*, in the gathering (*Sammlung*), the gatherer. It assumes and performs (*vollbringen*) maintaining the prevailing of what is overwhelming [*physis*]" (*EM*, 131-132).

The *logos* is viewed twice here, first as a sovereign operation and second as an operation 'performed' ('accomplished', *vollbringen*) by humankind. If it is the case that the technical *logos* is always a distinct dimension of the archaic *logos*, then it is already clear that the 'place' of the technical *logos* is in humankind. As it was in the citation of the previous subsection, the characteristic shared by *physis* and *logos* is that of a 'retaining'. Here the 'retainer' is humankind who, in performing the role of the technical *logos*, maintains *physis*. The utility of humankind is to retain and maintain Being by way of the word.⁶⁰

That this is a matter of use or utility is found in a passage preceding the above-given citation by several pages. The term in question is *dikē*. Heidegger characterizes *dikē* as follows: "Being, *physis*, as prevailing, is originary gatheredness [*ursprüngliche Gesammeltheit* – right at the 'first gathering' – jf];

59 'Violence' as a manner of describing humankind's relationship to metaphysical being can also be found in Heidegger's discussions of the 'early modern' instantiation of metaphysical being, namely the doctrine of Leibniz, which he refers to as a violent principle that demands sufficient grounds.

60 While Heidegger develops a far reaching notion of the 'word' in his later philosophy – traced in works such as Krzysztof Ziarek's *Language After Heidegger* (2013) – the 'word' is here taken to be limited to something like a graphic instantiation of Being.

logos, joining uniformity and propriety is *dikē*" (EM 123).⁶¹ Heidegger's construction is convoluted: *physis* is *logos* is *dikē*. However, a closer look shows that, when compared with the above citation, the *logos* is also split with *dikē*. The 'first' originary gathering of *logos* is actually *physis*, whereas the *logos* is *dikē* as 'joining uniformity and propriety'. Heidegger rejects the 'juridical-moralistic' understanding of *dikē* as justice as well as its translation with 'norm'.⁶² Instead, he relays *dikē* as another term for being (*Seiende im Ganzen, Überwältige*) and sets it in opposition to the 'violence-doing' of *technē*. *Dikē* is then passed through *chrē* ('fated or necessary', also containing the sense of 'befitting', Middle Liddell) in Anaximander and Heraclitus and understood by Heidegger as 'need' (*Not*) in order justify the 'use' of humankind to bring order and consistency to *physis* (EM 127). This leads Heidegger's early attempts to think the 'poetic and thinking saying of Being' – which is the 'establishing and defining' of Being – toward humankind's appropriation of the technical *logos*. The 'word' of the first citation can be read as an instantiation of presence, an 'ordering' of presence that retains presence in the position of first order (for example, a metaphysical doctrine or principle, an *idea*). The direction indicated here is considerably different from later attempts, where the *stiften* of poets is directed at 'what remains'.

The distinction Heidegger makes between *dikē* and *technē* appears to be superficial at best. *Dikē* is what has all technic available to it and joins them together, whereas *technē* is a circumscribed reaction (EM 123). And it is indeed the case that, in setting human action as 'counter violence', Heidegger constructs an image of humankind as reactionary, reacting and responding to the demand of presence. The term *dikē* here marks the relation of utility in which humankind inherits the technical *logos*. *Dikē* is, on the one hand, the

⁶¹ 'Uniformity' partially translates *der Fug*. This is admittedly a somewhat adventurous translation. Heidegger speaks of *physis* through EM as something that prevails and overwhelms, is violent. In conflating it with *logos* he draws it towards the operation of structuring or joining attributed to *logos* in this text. It would appear to say that this *Fug* is not simply the *Fug* of '*mit Fug und Recht*' ('justifiably so', 'correct'). Grimm provides four Latin terms to define *Fug*: *aptitudo* (aptitude), *aequitas* (uniformity), *licentia* (freedom, license), *occasio* (occasion). While any of these, or any combination, can be useful and justified, uniformity is chosen to emphasize the increasing appearance of conflation and collapse. 'Propriety' is added to convey the sense of joining (also acquiescing) in the verb *fügen* and the noun *Gefüge*, both employed in the discussion of *logos* being drawn from.

⁶² The sense of 'norm' as something like a 'convention' is not altogether lost in Heidegger's term *Brauch*. His rejection of normativity here suggests that utility concerns something that is 'underway'. The possibility of understanding 'justice' from a sense of human action (norm, usage) whereby the remaining entangled of *physis* and *logos* is absolutely necessary (*chrē, Not*) might also be kept in mind.

overwhelming presence of an unordered totality of beings (*physisis*) and, on the other hand, the ordering of these beings by humankind as the inheritor and 'wielder' of the technical *logos*. The relation of utility found in *EM* would seem to respond to Heraclitus in such a way: One saves oneself by ordering everything that exists into an intelligible presence that can be preserved. Further explanation of the metaphysical human as 'order-giver', as operating a kind of 'second gathering', will be seen in the following subsections.

It is possible to understand Heidegger's determination of humankind in *EM* as precisely that determination he will critique in the harshest of terms in the years that follow. From this interpretive perspective, *EM* describes metaphysical Being and the comportment of a humankind which is oriented by the imperative of presence to bring everything that exists into an intelligible structure of unconcealedness. This is the case despite his maintaining a certain 'defense' of metaphysicians as 'only responding'. Philosophical work that is oriented by the optic imperative and/or presence should not be free from the criticisms Heidegger levies at scientists, social scientists, bureaucrats, and so on, for it is indeed this 'work of the philosophies of presence' that has laid the intellectual groundwork and precedent in repeatedly mimicking the (same) structure of metaphysics over the course of a written history (the western canon).

The lexicon of violence seen throughout *EM* is significant in anticipating Heidegger's later discussions of being as power (*Macht*) and overpowering (*übermächtig*) and the 'demanding' of constant presence. On this basis, metaphysical Being will be understood as technical manipulation and manipulability (*Machenschaft*). By the time Heidegger's destruction of metaphysics is complete, he could no longer hold the position he held in *EM*, for it would fall prey to the critique that all metaphysical philosophy mimics the structure of metaphysics as such and is, in this way, a mode of thought beholden to the structure of presence.

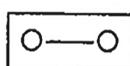
The reversal at play between the Heidegger of the mid-1930s and the Heidegger that follows from "AΦ 1939" is from a humankind that yields the technical *logos* as instrument to a humankind that is instrumentalized by the technical *logos*. This reversal is, at the very least, a rhetorical one that displays Heidegger's shifting standpoint towards the same aspects of metaphysical action, which is to say, thought oriented by the structure of metaphysics.

It was necessary to locate the motif of utility within the lecture course before moving on to discussions of Heidegger's interpretations of Parmenides and

Antigone in *EM*. Despite his attempts to maintain a reciprocal agency between the two gatherings or gatherers, it will be seen that Heidegger outlines the possibility of a fated transfer of power, whereby humankind maintains its own ontological register and fulfills its destiny as sole maker of order. He remains only a half step away from the nature-dominating technicians and technocrats who appear as targets of criticism in the years following, but who, according to this essay, only follow the example set by the tradition.

Heidegger does not yet seize the possibility that the technical *logos* be thought as something autonomous and independent from humankind in 1935. That such an option was already latent in his thought will be explored by reading Heidegger's Parmenides interpretation in *EM* together with considerations of his relationship to quantum physics supplemented by the work of Christina Vagt. The following subsection will, in this way, reveal the position of humankind within a potentially 'autonomic' structure of metaphysics. These reflections will serve as further evidence that Heidegger understands metaphysics as a singular structure and its operation or function. The positioning of the technical *logos* in or primarily in the human that has been discussed thus far – this decision within the metaphysical paradigm – will be returned to in the discussions of *Antigone* and Plato that close this section.

*Producing the Double*⁶³



Heidegger's discussions of Parmenides in *EM* are intended to give insight into a potential determination of humankind 'on the basis of Being itself'. Yet in 1935 'Being itself' appears to remain entirely intertwined with presence and the unconcealed. His elucidation of Parmenides's "famous sentence" reveals the same structure analyzed in Section 1.2, namely, the two structural moments (or doubling) and the 'moment' of their unity. In *EM*, however, the 'place' of the human in this structure is directly considered. Looking to Heidegger's understanding of humankind in the 1930s will thus help elucidate the structure of metaphysics.

Parmenides sentence reads: *to gar auto noein estin kai einai*. It is generally translated to mean 'thinking (*noein*) and being (*einai*) are the same'. The question of the human, considered above from a 'second gathering', is raised in Parmenides' sentence with the term *noein*. The *noein* is not necessarily

⁶³ The epigraphic image here is referenced above in footnote 50.

the human, Heidegger insists, though his language is suggestive of the link to the point of indicating it. He rejects the translation of *noein* with ‘thinking’ (*Denken*), translating it instead as ‘perception’ (*Vernehmung*).⁶⁴ Perception, it will be seen, is a necessary moment of metaphysical structure.

For Heidegger, Parmenides’s sentence does not state a direct identity. It is not the case, for him, that Parmenides identifies thinking or perception (*noein*) with being (*einai*). The ‘same’ in Parmenides’s sentence does not refer to identification, but rather to what is the same of both terms (GA 76, 18). It must be kept in mind that Heidegger ultimately understands *einai* as a metonym for *physis* here. *Noein* is a derivative function of *legein*:⁶⁵ it is a perception that gathers (*versammelndes Vernehmen*). This was indicated in the previous subsection as a ‘second gathering’ (EM 129). It can therefore be said that what is the same of *noein* and *physis* is the *logos*, and specifically, the technical *logos*.⁶⁶ The derivation of *noein* from *legein* – the latter being viewed in relation to *einai* or *physis* – is a matter of utility. Heidegger finds this in Parmenides fragment 6: ‘The collected arrangement (*das gesammelte Hinstellen*) is needed, as is the perception of this: Being (is) entity’ (EM 129).⁶⁷ *Logos* cannot be understood as the structure of being (*Fuge des Seins*) on its own. It must be understood as unified with perception, which Heidegger all but clearly and definitively attributes to humankind.⁶⁸

⁶⁴ Fried and Polt translate *Vernehmung* with ‘apprehension’. The sense of ‘having a grasp’ of something would certainly correspond, in part though not at all entirely, with the sense of ‘retaining’ found in *noein* via *physis*. Perception has been chosen here for its proximity to the senses and awareness and to the processual nature of the mind in certain fields of philosophy and science. Etymologically, *precipere* covers the same sense of grasping or seizing as *apprehension*.

⁶⁵ Heidegger generally takes this term within the context of the ‘self-showing’ of *logos* and/or language. It means to speak or tell as much as it means to collect or gather. It also means ‘to lie’, a sense Heidegger relates to the Greek word for ‘subject’ (*hypokeimenon*, ‘that which lies before’). It means to count and be counted, to count among such and such a category, i.e., to register.

⁶⁶ In a workbook (GA 76), Heidegger displays uncertainty as to whether or not the sentence of Parmenides can actually be ‘salvaged’ as a ‘pre-metaphysical’ Greek thinking and suggests that the thinking attributed to Parmenides has Platonic metaphysics already prepared within it. This issue should not be surprising. Heidegger’s two beginnings have no true chronological orientation, but rather concern differing comportments in thought. It should be noted that Heidegger gives the name Parmenides in scare quotes, leaving open the possibility that he is referring to the Socratic dialogue and not the philosopher (GA 70, 21).

⁶⁷ The German reads: “Not tut das gesammelte Hinstellen sowohl als auch das Vernehmen diesem: das Seiende (ist) Sein”.

⁶⁸ In referring to the necessary moment of the *noein*, Heidegger parenthesizes that this act is a human act. Elsewhere he more openly determines humankind in this role (EM 129).

Generally speaking, it is only because the *logos* as such is shared between *physis* and *noein* that the question of the human can be raised here at all. It is the *logos* that humankind comports towards. What is named with the *nchein* or *Vernehmung* is necessary to the structure of metaphysics regardless of humankind's place in this structure: "Needed is the collecting, belonging to perception" (EM 129).⁶⁹ Everywhere that appearing (*Erscheinen*) occurs, the *nchein* also occurs together with it (EM 106). Perception is thus a structural moment 'built into' presence. The same is perception and that for-the-sake-of-which perception itself occurs (EM 106). Perception (*nchein*) occurs for the sake of *legein*, the opening of presence (*einai*) in an intelligible structure. The two gatherings, one of which has already been attributed to humankind, occur for the sake of presence (EM 129).

Heidegger describes the structure of metaphysics while simultaneously making a decision about humankind's place, its utility, within that structure. The structuring of presence is unified with its perception by humankind *for the sake of* presence (*umwillen des Seins*, EM 129). This humankind is oriented towards the structure of presence and actively participates in its structuring. Oddly enough, it is this understanding of *nchein* that Heidegger carries over into "AΦ 1939" as a direct metonym for *epagōgē*, which is intended to indicate the self-determination of *physis*'s self-knowledge.⁷⁰ In fact, in "AΦ 1939", *nchein*, as *epagōgē*, is supposed to be something that arouses suspicion in scientific thinking, which for Heidegger is a mode of metaphysical thinking (GA 9, 244).

In the preparatory materials for "AΦ 1939" there is a direct correspondence between *epagōgē* and *nchein* as the 'fundamental condition' for conceiving the essence of *physis* (GA 76, 16f.). Heidegger does not name *epagōgē* directly, but speaks of *nchein* as the 'simple introduction' (*einfache Hinführung*) of a 'prepared look or view' (*bereiter Blick*).⁷¹ *Noein* is referred to there as the 'acceptance' (*Hinnehmen*) of what comes out of concealment and (doubly) the anticipation

Earlier in the text he writes that Parmenides sentence does not 'initially' say anything about humankind and especially not that humankind construed as subject that sublates (*aufhebt*) everything objective into the merely subjective (EM 106). One of the aims of this chapter is to show that Heidegger's reading of Parmenides here recreates the metaphysical structure that is ultimately 'discovered' through his deconstruction.

⁶⁹ The German reads: "Not ist die Sammlung, zugehörig der Vernehmung".

⁷⁰ Recall that what for Heidegger is an 'immediate introduction' is an 'observation' for Wicksteed and Cornford. *Epagōgē* can additionally be considered from senses of 'bringing aid' or 'supplying'. Liddell-Scott also refers to its use in military tactics. In this case it refers to a 'sequence formation' in which 'one wing follows the other'. This latter sense should be read literally in relation to the below citation from EM.

⁷¹ Heidegger's footnote here refers to the manuscript of "AΦ 1939" and is referred by the editor to the page of GA 9 where Heidegger elaborates *epagōgē* (GA 9, 244) (GA 76, 16).

and performance (*Vor- und Vorwegnehmen*) of this acceptance (GA 76, 16). Heidegger makes a direct connection between the Parmenidian sentence and the doctrine of Aristotle, while attributing a misunderstanding of both to the ‘wrong interpretation’ of Parmenides in modern philosophy.⁷² The apparently more suitable characterization of *noein* (as *Hinführung*, *Hinnehmen*, etc.) considered by Heidegger’s in his notes to “AΦ 1939” is carried over from his interpretation of Parmenides in *EM*. The correspondence between the two anticipates Heidegger’s failure to retrieve a sense of non-metaphysical *physis* from Aristotle in 1939.

Before turning to *EM*, the moments of metaphysical structure at stake in Aristotle’s *physis*-concept and *epagōgē* should be recounted: an alleged doubling or duality and its unity. The double concerns the seeing and the seen, the approaching and the approached in their suspected interchangeability.⁷³ In terms of what has been discussed thus far, ‘the seen’ might be considered as the self-structuring of presence; the production by a thing of its own appearance; the ‘first gathering’ of the *logos* that opens (reveals) its ‘structure’; the approach of presence, either generally or of a specific thing; the *legein* as self-showing and making-itself-visible. In the context of Parmenides, this moment is associated with *physis* or *einai* (Being) determined by *legein* (self-showing). *Noein* is ultimately a matter of knowing or conceiving of *physis* as a whole (*das Seiende im Ganzen*), and not individual things. The noetic moment is doubled or stands in a reciprocal duality with ‘seeing’, considered above as the ‘acceptance of what comes out of concealment’ and in the previous subsection as the ‘second gathering’ attributed or attributable to humankind. This second moment is produced through utility or need and so it is associated most generally with the *nchein* and the possibility of humankind in its place.

⁷² Heidegger is referring to the interpretation or translation of *nchein* as ‘thinking consciousness’ (*denkendes Bewußtsein*) and *einai* as ‘object of consciousness’. This, he suggests, makes being (*einai*) into an ‘effect’ of consciousness (*Bewusste*) or thought (*Gedachtsein*) and thereby dependent upon consciousness. He refers to this as the ‘abstraction of being’ in an apparent reference to Hegel. However, it is unclear how much this distinction matters in the broader scheme of Heidegger’s critique. It is difficult to escape the dependency of reciprocity here. Even in Husserl, where the *Gedachtsein* is transformed into the ‘self manifestation of phenomena’ (closer to the understanding of *legein* Heidegger is seeking), the same structure dominates thinking.

⁷³ It is not entirely clear what term or terms indicate the unity of the first two moments. In “AΦ 1939”, the ‘seen’ is ‘immediately’ secured, and this ‘securing’ or ‘stopping’ (holding up, cutting off) is also found in *EM*. Moreover, it should be noted that the ‘prepared look’ might indicate an access to the antecedent image of Nature or *logos* that allows for the securing.

The characterization of *noein* in *EM* begins by stating that *noein* is simultaneously a ‘taking in (*hin-nehmen*) and allowing of what shows itself’ and the ‘questioning of a witness (*Zeugen*)’, whereby the witness is ‘accounted for’ (*vornehmen*)⁷⁴ in order that the ‘facts’ be recorded or integrated (*aufnehmen*). In this ‘double sense’, there appears to be a double witnessing. What ‘takes in’ or perceives in the general sense must be accounted for (witnessed again) in order to give a full account of *noein*. It is as if the ‘second gathering’ is re-gathered by the first. At the very least it appears that the first gathering is dependent upon the second (it needs and/or uses it) and that the second *noein* (accounting for a witness) requires this reciprocal structure. This may indicate that the position (or role) of the perceiver is something that must be carried out or *performed*, as a function or *necessary* structural moment of *noein*. Heidegger intends to clarify this when the double sense of *noein* is reiterated as follows:

“[...] to allow to approach, whereby not simply acquiescing, but rather a position of exposure or acceptance (*Aufnahmestellung*) is taken up *opposite* what shows itself. When troops⁷⁵ take up a delaying position (*Aufnahmestellung*), they want to receive an approaching opponent and receive them such that they bring them to a standstill (*zum Stehen bringen*). This admitting (‘taking in,’ *aufnehmend*) bring-to-a-stand of what appears lies in *noein*” (*EM*, 105 – emphasis added)

Each moment of metaphysical structuring is articulated here. The ‘approaching opponent’ is the (allegedly) self-determining presence of beings as a whole (*physis, einai*), or, at the very least, the self-determining presence of an entity. The ‘needed’ second moment of seeing or perceiving is the ‘position of exposure or acceptance’ that ‘receives’ presence. The moment of their unity, given in the first characterization as ‘accounting for the witness’, appears to be given in the phrase ‘such that they bring them to a standstill’. This would suggest that the ‘fixing of the seen’ in *epagōgē* is the corresponding moment. Here it

⁷⁴ Fried and Polt translate Heidegger’s “*ihn [den Zeugen] vornehmen*” as “to call him to account”.

⁷⁵ It is notable that Heidegger chooses a militaristic reference here, and beyond any obvious sense of national sentiment or romanticization (exemplified, for example, in his relationship to Ernst Jünger or his proximity to other prominent figures of the German conservative ‘revolution’). Schürmann chooses a similar motif when selecting from Aristotle a passage exemplary of the subordination of action to the principles of first philosophy. When retreating soldiers turn and face their enemy, it is not due to courage or the mastery of fear, according to Aristotle, but the overwhelming command of the *archē*. Transposing this onto Heidegger’s thinking, it could be said that metaphysical philosophers come to look like the foot soldiers of Being/presence. The meaning of this comparison should become clear in the following pages. See also the above footnote referring *epagōgē* to military tactics. Reiner Schürmann, *Heidegger on Being and Acting*, pp. 39-40.

appears to be the case that the retaining or recording of presence require some 'knowledge' on behalf of the 'recorder': it knows that the second position (first *noein*) is required to retain presence and 'performs it' by taking up a certain position.

What is at stake in Heidegger's militaristic description is the retaining of presence as knowledge (tradition). The approach of presence, before it can be recorded, requires a second position, namely the position that receives it. Such a position seems to be created or to arise automatically, as it were. When speaking of *physis*, the term 'autopoiesis' refers to the ability of *physis* to maintain and reproduce itself, or for example, to the self-production of an entity's image. An important feature of this is seen here within a metaphysical context, namely that of 'auto-position', which refers here to the production, by or within presence, of a position opposite itself in order to 'give place' to presence. This is to say that presence requires something that it stands in reference to, the production of a 'position opposite' (*gegenüber*). The doubling or duality here is between seeing and seen, approaching and approached. These are fungible positions within an inseparable reciprocity. This reciprocity is required in order that presence be 'recorded', structured intelligibly, and thus 'retained'.

Whereas Section 1.2 ended with the suggestion of a categorical doubling of the *logos* through which it (and *as physis*) comes to know itself, here it is the *noein* that appears to function in this way. The *noein* is double(d) as the receiving of presence and the recording of the encounter between the approach of presence and its reception. The first moment of *noein* is something performed in order to position presence. The second moment is the actual function of the *noein*, the fixing of the seen, namely, the recording of the encounter, which is required of it for the 'retaining' of the presence's 'dominance', as seen in the 'two gatherings' of *physis*. Heidegger reads the sentence of Parmenides as a sort of 'artificial' splitting or disentanglement of *physis-logos* whereby the *noein* divides the appearance of presence from its preservation or constancy (its retaining).

At this point, it might appear as if *noein*, painstakingly suggestive of humankind, is 'in control' of the production of knowledge, being the place where the presence's self-division is 'fixed' or 'brought to a standstill'. It might even be suggested that the place of the *noein* is the place of the generic *logos-eidos* (the antecedent image of Nature) where *logos*, *physis*, comes to know itself: a very lofty place to be posing the question of the human indeed.

One further remark must be made about this moment of unity attributed here to either the *noein* or to the (technical) *logos-eidos*. Heidegger's rejections of modern interpretations of Parmenides concern the transmutation of *noein* into a subjectivity that 'sublates' all objectivity in subjectivity. But the reciprocal

relation between seeing and the seen, approaching and the approached, which indeed looks like the relation between a subject and object, is ‘fixed’, ‘captured’, or ‘recorded’. It is not the structure of a continuous and/or progressive movement, nor is it the developmental production of a ‘subjectivity’ through encounters with an ‘external’ ‘objectivity’, but rather a self-contained structure. Access to (technical) *physis* or presence (*einai*) is access to this performative doubling itself and not a matter of following its succession in or through Nature and History. The doubling, or production of the second position that gives place to presence, is enough for the (self?) maintenance of presence.

It is true that, in the 1930s, Heidegger denies that his reading of Parmenides in *EM* follows or reconstructs the structure of metaphysics. In particular, he rejects the view that the determination of humankind as consciousness and/or ‘subject’ is already at stake in Parmenides and his reading of the famous sentence. Perhaps this is because the ‘destruction of metaphysics’ was not yet ‘complete’, which is to say that Heidegger himself did not yet realize that it was this very structure that metaphysical thought reproduces. Yet, the hindsight now available shows this to be the case.⁷⁶ To exemplify this, the remainder of this subsection will introduce Heidegger’s encounter with quantum physics and specifically his correspondence with Werner Heisenberg by drawing from the work of Christina Vagt. The material drawn upon concerns the time leading up to the 1953 conference in Munich, *Die Künste im technischen Zeitalter*, where both Heidegger and Heisenberg gave now well-known papers.⁷⁷ It is worth noting, however, that Heidegger’s engagement with quantum physics is traceable at least to an incident in 1935, where he played the role of a philosopher-mediator in a discussion between Heisenberg and the physician and physiologist Viktor von Weizsäcker.⁷⁸ This indicates a transitional stage

⁷⁶ In his developmental notebooks, Heidegger writes that in Parmenides, the optic imperative of metaphysics (*Sein* as *ousia*) is already prepared. This was also clear, though unspoken, in his account of Parmenides’ *noein*. It is strange that, despite this recognition, Heidegger carries the structure of the *noein* into his discussion of *epagōgē* in “AΦ 1939”, given the more ambiguous position of the human in that text. (GA 70, 21).

⁷⁷ Heidegger’s paper was “Die Frage nach der Technik” and Heisenberg’s “Das Naturbild der heutigen Physik”. The correspondence between the two leading up to the Munich conference included a copy of Heidegger’s “Wissenschaft und Besinnung”, which, together with the Bremen lectures, might be considered a precursor to “Die Frage nach der Technik”, which was ‘updated’ to include the fruits of this correspondence.

⁷⁸ Vagt, “Heidegger und die Atomphysik” in *Suchen, Entwerfen, Stiften: Entwurfsdenken mit Heidegger und darüber hinaus*, ed. David Espinet and Toni Hildebrandt, Paderborn (2014) pp. 143–144.

beginning at the latest with *EM* and the artwork essay passing through "AΦ 1939", the latter of which is tied directly to the Bremen lectures (1949) and "Die Frage nach der Technik". This period thus represents the transition from the 'destruction of metaphysics' to the Janus-faced thinking of *Gestell* and *Ereignis* that characterizes Heidegger's *Spätwerk*.

Vagt's work on Heidegger and quantum physics, like much work done on Heidegger's notion of *Technik* via his critique of metaphysics, emphasizes Heidegger's discussions of Descartes and Kant. It focuses on the relation between so-called 'modern metaphysics' and modern science. Yet what she stresses with regard to Heidegger's reading of modern philosophy is well at work and, in fact, already determined in structural moments operative in Aristotle's *physis*-concept and, by extension here, Parmenides. It derives from the entanglement of technic and nature that is not resolved in Aristotle as anything other than the preservation of presence and the operation that structures (preserves) presence. It is therefore useful to present this structure in its modern formulation, the subject-object relation, since for Heidegger this 'language' is more historiographically associated with modern physics and technology.

What in later philosophical lexicons will become 'subject' and 'object' are given already in Parmenides as 'approached position' and 'approaching position', which are reciprocal but set off against one another as different structural moments. This bespeaks a 'self-referential' transitivity of presence whereby it 'splits' in order to encounter itself as 'object' in its striving (*Willen*) for self-preservation. The structure that has been shown in Heidegger's readings of Aristotle and Parmenides can be seen, for example, in a more 'modern' or Cartesian formulation from his 1941 abbreviation of the history of metaphysics, "Die Metaphysik als die Geschichte des Seins": 'Reality' (*Wirklichkeit*, what is effected) is defined (*umgrenzt*) as constancy (*Ständigkeit*) by way of a transitive operation (*Beständigkeit*)⁷⁹ understood as the preservation of 'placing-before' (*Wahren des Vor-stellens*), i.e., a 'placing before' that maintains (GA 6.2, 432). The maintenance or preservation of the operation is its objectification: *Beständigkeit*, the transitive occurrence of presence's constancy, is the enactment (*Erwirken*) of placing-before as an 'actual being' (*ens actu*) (GA 6.2, 432). Here in this last sentence is the moment of unity, the fixing or

⁷⁹ It is the addition of the prefix *be-* that indicates transitivity here. In German the prefix can be used to turn an intransitive verb into a transitive verb, which Heidegger performs here silently with the two substantives. It is a grammatical inflection that he often uses to tease out a sort of operative tautology indicating the doubling of presence and its operation. This construction is central to *Die Frage nach der Technik* where 'everything' has come under the 'sway' of the technical *logos* in a totalizing manner and the term *Bestand* stands in for presence or 'being'. Heidegger's use of variations on the verb *bestehen* will be further considered in Chapter 2.

bringing-to-a-stand of presence's doubling, of the structure of presence as an 'actual being' (as *eidos* or appearance).

In this sequence, the name for Being/presence is 'representation' (*Vorstellen*), which Heidegger understands 'literally' (to the word) as 'placing before'. The doubling of seeing/seen, approaching/approached is found in presence's placing of its object before (in front, opposite) itself. Thus Heidegger writes that placing-before is what "delivers" the "standing-over-against" of the "object" (*Zustellung des Entgegenstehens des Gegenstands*) (GA 6.2, 433). For Heidegger, any metaphysical doctrine that takes a representing subject or subjectivity more broadly and/or an object or objectivity more broadly, will follow this same structure, wherein one is the doubling of the other. According to the above sequence, the very act of this doubling is the 'objectification' of the doubling itself. In other words, the moment of unity (fixing, bring-to-a-stand) is the 'availability': the presence of the structure and/or doubling operation of metaphysics itself. The function of the technical *logos* is to bring all things to presence, including itself. Its self-objectification, if it could be said like this, is the accessibility of its access to itself. What the language of modern philosophy – particularly what Heidegger views as its German authority – adds here is to tease out the problematic position of humankind in this structure, insofar as the act of representing is tied to the consciousness of a human subject. In this case, the human or human subject would have the image (the formula) for securing knowledge viz. preserving presence, through the representation of objects that it has in advance. Yet this was already seen in Parmenides when the 'second witness' – which occurs in a position that Heidegger all but definitely says determines humankind – appears to have the image of the technical *logos* fixed within it. The 'metaphysical human' appears to have, *antecedently and within itself*, access to the image (the purposed-*idea*) of Nature's access to itself, be it as the 'prepared look' that fixes the seen, the still-standing of the approach and approached, or the representation/representedness as available object.

Vagt's research makes the extent and importance of Heidegger's engagement with Heisenberg clear.⁸⁰ For Heidegger, the exchange helped clarify the problems that arose in the structure of metaphysics as his deconstruction uncovered it. Central to Heisenberg's own view is the problem or question of a physical reality that is "vanishing" in the symbolic order of mathematics.

⁸⁰ While much of the remainder of this part will refer to Heidegger's engagement with Heisenberg, it is worth noting – at the risk of sabotage – that in the 1962 lecture "Zeit und Sein" Heidegger remarks that perhaps only two or three people are able to follow his theories (GA 14, 5).

The Heideggerian correlate to this would be that there is no *physis* ‘itself’, only the movement or operation structuring presence and the preservation of this. Vagt’s essay “Komplementäre Korrespondenz” highlights the following passage from the manuscript of Heisenberg’s “Das Naturbild der Physik”:

The question of whether or not these particles exist “in themselves” in space and time can no longer be posed in this form, because we can only speak each time of the processes that play out when the behavior of the particle is made accessible (*erschlossen werden soll*) through the interaction of elementary particles with some other physical system, i.e., the measuring apparatuses. The notion (*Vorstellung*) of an objective reality of elementary particles has therefore vanished in a strange way, not in the haze of some new, unclear or not yet understood idea of reality, but rather in the transparent clarity of a mathematics that no longer depicts the behavior of elementary particles, but rather our understanding (*Kenntnis*) of this behavior. The atomic physicist must therefore concede (*sich abfinden*) that his science is only a link in the endless chain of humankind’s examinations of nature and that the physicist therefore cannot simply speak of nature ‘in itself’.⁸¹

Heisenberg’s ‘some other physical system’ – the measuring apparatus – required for the accessibility of particles, paraphrases the function of the *noein* exactly. It is a product of ‘utility’. It relies, in the same manner as the *noein* relies, upon the self-showing or ‘self making known’ of what is to interact with the second position. Both the ‘measuring apparatus’ and *noein* are rooted in the ‘self-showing’ associated with *legein*. This assertion may seem strange, given that Heisenberg appears to be appealing to the problem of a certain autonomy of the *noein* (Nature resolved in our understanding of it). Yet Heidegger is clear in “Wissenschaft und Besinnung” that such measuring apparatuses (the Wilson chamber, Geiger counter, et al.) remain rooted in the self-showing of presence, even when this is only registered indirectly in a manifold technological mediation (VA 58). The paradigm of knowledge production remains the same, determined by the optic imperative. The measuring apparatuses that *produce evidence* by registering the presence of elementary particles are only another ‘name’ plugged into the *noetic* function of presence’s doubling. The knowledge produced by these registrations and formulae may not be knowledge of

81 The manuscript belongs to Heidegger’s Marbach archive and is quoted by Vagt. The underlines represent Heidegger’s own notations. An additional note found in the margin reads: “What lies in this acceptance [Abfinden]? Where does the physicist find itself now?” See Christina Vagt, “Komplementäre Korrespondenz: Heidegger und Heisenberg zur Frage der Technik” in NTM – Zeitschrift für Geschichte der Wissenschaft, der Medizin und der Technik, 19 (2011) pp. 401–402. The same material can be found in her dissertation, *Geschickte Sprünge*, also cited in this essay.

Nature-in-itself (*physis* is not without absence or concealing), but nowhere has this been claimed for metaphysics, which has as its only task to register and maintain the dominance of presence.

Moreover, the production of knowledge in quantum physics remains just as bound to a posited, antecedent idea or image of Nature as Aristotle's *physis*-concept – they belong to the same 'theoretical framework'. This is the case whether it is found in the 'evidence production' of experimental physics, or in physics' resolution in a mathematics that permits entire regions of phenomena to be determined in advance, so as to guarantee the securing of its object.⁸² Either of these fulfills the position of the 'prepared look', prepared by the presence (the accessibility) of a purposed-*idea*. This further attests to the rootedness of evidence production in self-showing. The suggestion that intra-paradigmatic developments have led to the expression of metaphysical structure in quantum physics and has allowed this structure to continue 'more secure than ever before' can be attributed to what quantum physics, as an intra-paradigmatic articulation of metaphysics, is willing to 'admit' about the capacity of 'self showing' and the oppositional position it produces.⁸³

When Heidegger's understanding of metaphysics is viewed from the point of its consummation, little difference appears between his understanding of Parmedian *noein* in *EM* and the experimental subject of quantum physics he observes some fifteen years later. The objectification of the 'observer' or 'subject' is already at work in early Greek conceptions of *noein*. Recall here Wicksteed and Cornford's understanding of *epagōgē* as 'observation'. Heidegger's comments on 'microphysics' in his "Notes to Heisenberg" describe the essence of a perfected system of knowledge that has nonetheless not resolved its core entanglements:

The subjectivity of a subject that secures (*des sicherstellenden Subjekts*) intervenes in the objectivity of an object that exposes itself (*des sich herausstellenden Objektes*) by way of an apparatus required by it (more massive – one-off, causal, efficient); this object withdraws differently and more than before from the supposed securing (of nature itself). The experimenting subjectivity is now expressly incorporated in unembellished (*ungeschmückte*) objectivity, structured. Subjectivity, also in terms of the experimental apparatus, now belongs more explicitly than ever to objectivity. The explicit incorporation of subjectivity belongs to objectivity. The subject-object relation is now more massive than before; it is radicalized and therefore further from any possible distortion

⁸² Vagt, "Heidegger und die Atomphysik", p. 145.

⁸³ Vagt's citations are to *Wissenschaft und Besinnung* (VA 58, 62), Vagt, *Komplementäre Korrespondenz*, 400.

(*Verwindung*)⁸⁴ than ever before; for thinking, with regards to the inaccessibility of what cannot be dealt with, it is more clearly demonstrable.⁸⁵

The experimental subject of modern physics corresponds to the representing subject of modernity. All of this is already operative in the witnessing *noein* that ‘intervenes’ in the transitive approach of presence in order to fulfill not its own will but the will of presence itself. The ‘unity’ of the doubling or third moment of metaphysical structure incorporates one end of reciprocity in the other.

Heisenberg appears to have accepted that what is known is only knowledge of a “nature exposed in human questioning,” wherein ‘the human encounters itself’.⁸⁶ There is no longer any question of having knowledge of ‘things themselves’ but only of humankind’s understanding of them, i.e. a knowledge of human technic. While he does warn of the possibility, Heisenberg, in his ‘acceptance’, does not accept as a necessary conclusion the reduction of the physical world to human construct. Heidegger, perhaps for this reason, seems less willing to accept this Kantian optimism – at least at first. Heidegger’s attempts in the 1930s at a positive appropriation of technic in determining human activity are failures that lead him to more extreme formulations in developmental workbooks (for example, GA 69) and *Die Frage nach der Technik*. The human that was once world-forming in its comportment to the *logos* is now ‘used’ as a sort of conduit for presence, determined as such. Indeed, Vagt remarks that Heidegger will come to see Heisenberg as a sort of ‘mouthpiece’ or ‘secretary’ for *Gestell*.⁸⁷

In his workbooks on technic, Heidegger writes about the correctness of Heisenberg’s statement. The human everywhere encounters itself, that is, it encounters subjectivity in all objectivity as what is the same in the relation of presence’s doubling (the relation of *Gegenständlichkeit* – object or *Gegenstand* and ‘placing before’). This self-encounter is for Heidegger ‘alienation’. An alienation from truth, for truth is inseparable from absence, concealment, and non-knowledge. The human, when considered non-metaphysically, is not to

84 The term *Verwindung* as it relates to a transition between metaphysical and non-metaphysical thinking will be further discussed in Chapter 2. It has been translated by Richard Rojcewicz in terms of Being’s ‘twisting free’ or a ‘twisting free’ from metaphysics. It is in a similar sense that ‘distortion’ translates it here. The subject-object relation cannot be ‘disentangled’ in metaphysics. Quantum physics, for Heidegger, shows this in a manner that is furthest from any hope to do so. Martin Heidegger, *The Event* (GA 71), trans. Richard Rojcewicz (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013).

85 This manuscript is entitled “To Heisenberg”, Vagt, *Komplementäre Korrespondenz*, 401.

86 Heisenberg cited by Vagt, Vagt, *Komplementäre Korrespondenz*, 398.

87 Vagt, *Komplementäre Korrespondenz*, 404.

encounter truth in the form of transitive presence, but rather ‘dwell’ in truth. He asks ‘where’ this alienation brought humankind (GA 76, 330). Yet this ‘self-relation’ of humankind is the result of a decision made in and by philosophy for the preservation of presence. It is at work in all philosophical endeavor that reproduces the structure of metaphysics, and only in this way can Heidegger’s quantum physicists come upon themselves in such a way in their encounter with reality.

Fittingly, Heidegger himself has ‘fallen prey’ to determining humankind in this way. Whether this occurs wittingly or unwittingly cannot be said for certain. The reading of *Antigone* that follows from the Parmenides interpretation in *EM* should, in any case, be read as a description of the metaphysical or technical human. Heidegger constructs there a sort of mytho-philosophical origin for the birth of the metaphysical canon as the history of preserved presence by way of the ‘use’ of the technical *logos*. His mythos comes complete with a reference to the fall from grace, which occurs when philosophy determines itself as a process producing knowledge in the form of the *idea*. The following subsection will recount this Fall in terms of Heidegger’s *Antigone* interpretation and what has thus far been analyzed in terms of his understanding of metaphysics.

Violent Appropriations

This section began by discussing the entanglement of *physis* and *logos*. One possible resolution of this is for the self-showing dimension of *logos* to dominate *physis*. This can also be understood as the move or drive to structure the unstructured, to bring everything to intelligible appearance through the production of the *idea*. This, in turn, occurs through the doubling of presence that Heidegger thematizes through the motif of ‘use’. At the end of *EM*, Heidegger associates this situation wherein *logos* determines *physis* with the biblical image of the Fall.⁸⁸ The Fall is a “collapse of the truth”. What Heidegger means by this is that the dimension of absence or concealing of the truth is ceded to the optic imperative, the domination of presence. ‘Out of the rubble’ of this collapse, *physis* is understood as *ousia* and *idea*, while *logos* becomes *katēgoria* and assertion (*EM* 144-145). Heidegger’s choice of conceptual terminology need not be strictly upheld. As it has been said throughout this chapter thus far, metaphysics understands *physis* solely from presence (*ousia*) and, as the prevailing of presence, renders *physis* as *eidos*. The production of this *eidos* entails the two positions of presence: its transitivity (approach, *katēgoria*) and its reception (*noein*, which perhaps asserts).

88 The second division of Bernard Stiegler’s *Technics and Time I* takes up this motif in its own way, filtering issues in Heidegger’s reading of *Anitgone* through the myth of Prometheus.

Heidegger states that this Fall or collapse occurs from within. Several terms, which are difficult to separate, have been elaborated as 'within' or belonging to *physis*/truth: *logos*, *technē*, humankind. This essay has suggested that the metaphysical *logos* is a technical *logos* and that metaphysics itself is this technical *logos*. Two terms, both intended to convey a sense of immediacy, have been given to name humankind's place in the structure producing the *idea*. These terms, *epagōgē* and *noein*, both concern a performativity and antecedence found in the qualifying terms *ausmachen* ('recognize', 'constitute') and *vornehmen* ('perform, carry out'). The motif of performance was shown in *EM* first in the 'second gathering', whereby humankind 'carries out' (*vollbringen*) the task of *physis*, and again in the characterization of *noein*. In "AΦ 1939", the 'seeing' of *epagōgē* is considered a 'doubling constituting' (*Ausmachen*): a double recognizing wherein 'seeing' simultaneously 'sees' and 'fixes the seen'. The term *Ausmachen* is drawn from Heidegger's translation of the Aristotle passage concerning *epagōgē*. The phrases 'in advance' (*im vorhinein*) and 'as arranged' (*als ausgemacht*) are mutually qualifying in terms of 'how *physis* is known' (GA 9, 243). Knowledge of *physis* is arranged in advance. The position of the *noein* is a position performed in a structure that is already available prior to the performance of this role. *Technē*, inseparably belonging to and entangled in Nature, determines the *logos* that guides metaphysically or technically understood human action or comportment.

The question of the technical human, as exemplified in Heidegger's reading of the Parmenidian *noein* in *EM*, is a question of the double *noein* as mastery – mastery in the sense of having access to antecedence – and performance. The mediation of presence (*noein*) is something performed, it is a position already implied in presence's immediacy. The split is a necessary work of artifice, a technical split, through which presence mediates itself in order to preserve itself. Humankind appears to receive its determination in performing this role. In fact, humankind is called upon (needed) to take on the 'knowing setting-into-work' (*wissendes Ins-Werk-setzen*) of *technē* (EM 130). The 'world-maker' of Heidegger's fundamental ontology is transformed into the 'presence-preserved' of metaphysical construction. This evolution (or misstep) in his thinking is a result of his attempt in the 1930s to determine humankind by way of the appropriation of *technē*. Humankind is tasked as the technician preserving presence and converting it to knowledge. Yet, in order to perform its role within the structure of metaphysics (the 'first' *noein*, the allowing to approach) it must, as is always implied with *technē*, have some knowledge of this structure in advance (the 'second' *noein*, the 'fixer'). Performance can only come from mastery, which in turn entails access to the purposed-*idea*. This seems to entail a transfer of power, specifically, a transfer of the *physis-eidos*.

(the technical *logos*) from *physis* to humankind. This has been suggested throughout the reading of *EM* here and can be further justified by Heidegger's reading of *Antigone*, where he treats this transfer of power as something like an act of survival, an expression of the *conatus*.⁸⁹ Metaphysical survival entails human mastery as an appropriation of (technical) *physis* in the form of counter-violence.

Heidegger appears to have chosen the chorus from *Antigone* to further elaborate the Parmenidian *noein* due to the centrality of the term *tò deinon*. The term is translated as the 'uncanny' (*das Unheimliche*). Both the violence of *physis*, as what is tremendous and overwhelming (*das Gewältige, das Übergewältige*), and the reciprocal violence of humankind as it responds to *physis*'s demand (utility) are the uncanny. Both can be and are indicated in *tò deinon*. The reciprocal relation between 'being' and 'perceiving' (*einai* and *noein*), Heidegger later admits, is nothing more than the reciprocal relation between the *double sense* of *to deinon* (EM 126). It is thus a near perfect term for Heidegger to subtly suggest a transfer of power from *physis* to humankind.⁹⁰

The necessity to 'retain' presence, so stressed in *EM*, stems from the overwhelming nature of *physis*. Humankind's act of resistance to *physis* mimics it, mimics the technical *logos* – it "assumes and performs the prevailing of what overwhelms" (EM 132). In this way, the retaining of presence is a self-retaining (see below). The *assumption* of *physis* is referred to as violence, human action as doing-violence. Human perceiving (*noein*) and gathering or retaining (*noein-legein*) are necessarily violent here, for the human remains exposed in the violence of what overwhelms, i.e., *physis*, 'beings as a whole' (EM 115). Human action is conceived of as a circumscribed or limited *reciprocation* of the overwhelming violence of *physis*. This circumscription is what remains of *physis* (retained presence). It is the production of transmissible knowledge as the 'retaining and maintaining' of *physis*.

The question of the human is thus approached here from the position of the performativity of *physis*' violence in the sense of a counter-violence. This countering, it has been suggested, is a position already inherent in the structure of presence. In overwhelming, *physis* gives nothing of itself but the overwhelming presence of 'beings as a whole'. Human action will therefore adhere to the optic imperative, knowing nothing but the overwhelming presence it seeks to

⁸⁹ The characteristics Heidegger attributes to 'presence' are similar to the basic notion of *conatus* as being concerned with a striving for survival. This is seen in his frequent use of motifs concerning the striving of the will.

⁹⁰ Heidegger elsewhere speculates on 'violence' as the 'ability to' (*Vermögen*) when presence is equated to reality. In this sense, violence would apparently be understood as the capacity to effect what exists in the sense of determining it (GA 76, 292).

'overcome'. Human action maintains and retains the overwhelming violence of presence by inheriting it. The language used in the *Antigone* interpretation anticipates Heidegger's later critique of being as power, where humankind is forced into this reactive or 'mediate role' and permitted to 'be' only as a functionary within the framework producing technical knowledge. This is the 'violence' of *Gestell* (GA 79, 30). Here, however, he appears to attempt something of the opposite: to determine humankind as master of this violence.

Humankind is shown in *EM* to be 'deft'⁹¹ in its 'thinking' (*noein*). Its doings are named 'machination' or 'manipulation' (*Machenschaft*).⁹² This deftness is delivered over to humankind as *technē*, as knowledge in the sense of the 'ability-to-set-into-work'. This ability to manipulate, to fix, to manage presence, makes humankind into the 'arranger' (*der Ausmacher*) with access to the antecedent position of that technical *logos* that Heidegger also associated with the evidence production and mathematical constitution of modern physics. In *EM*, humankind is this ability to set-into-work. Its role in the disentanglement of *physis* and *logos* makes humankind culpable in the Fall. Like the biblical variation, the fall from grace is a matter of choice, of a decision made in or by philosophy. In this case it is a choice to take on the technical dimension of Nature, to use it to distinguish itself, and, in doing so, overcome its violence.

In using the technical *logos*, a circumscription of *physis*, to overcome *physis*, to separate itself off from *physis'* overwhelming presence, the human becomes 'unhomely' ('uncanny', *unheimisch*). It separates itself from its 'indigenous' entanglement in *physis*, the violence of which appears to have provided no home in the first place (EM 129). With this humankind has placed itself in a situation where it is either master of or cog in the production of the *idea*. Heidegger's rhetoric on this issue between 1935 and the years that immediately follow (roughly 1938–1953) shifts from extolling the valiance of human counter-violence to viewing humankind as 'stock' in the workings of technic. Its heroism is transformed into the exploitation of (technical) *physis* via the sovereign function of a technical *logos* 'wielded' by humankind. Despite his attempts to maintain a reciprocal agency, Heidegger outlines a fated transfer of power whereby humankind maintains its own ontological register (over and against 'that which never sets') and fulfills its destiny as sole maker of history. Before this rhetorical shift, he remains only a half-step away from the nature-dominating

⁹¹ The sense of skill implied here should be related not only to Heidegger's use of the word *Machenschaft*, but also to *Geschick* and *geschicktlich* insofar as they refer to the skill and craft of *technē* and largely influence his understanding of history (*Geschichte*).

⁹² Apparently *Machenschaft* is used 'positively' in *EM*. This will not be the case in Heidegger's workbooks of the late 1930s and early 1940s.

technicians and technocrats who appear as targets of criticism in the following years. Humankind's alienation, its 'misplacement' by *Gestell*, belongs to the 'fundamental attunement' of philosophy itself as Heidegger remarks in the "Preliminary Remarks" to the *Grundbegriffe der Metaphysik* (GA 29/30, 5ff.). Alienation, in this sense, belongs to the decision for metaphysics. Heidegger is always hinting, perhaps against his own philosophical will, towards the alienation of the human in the production of metaphysical knowledge.

Perhaps the heroic rhetoric of Heidegger in *EM*, humankind's overcoming as *to deinon*, is a nod to the production of the material his own thinking will eventually require. This is to say that the alienated, metaphysical humankind of *EM* is responsible for the construction of the western philosophical canon that Heidegger will deconstruct. There is certainly a Heidegger that recognizes, or rather recognized, a degree of merit in such endeavor.

The shift in Heidegger's presentation between *EM* and "AΦ 1939" of the *noein*-position in the structure of technic – and humankind's relation to it – suggests that he already began to view the rhetoric of *EM* as untenable. The technical *logos* concerns performed mediation ('first *noein*' as 'cog') and knowledge of this ('second *noein*' as 'prepared look'). When the human is directly implicated in this, the prepared look is the view that begins and maintains philosophy as metaphysics. In 1939, with the term *epagōgē*, Heidegger appears to move away from this position. He would like to view *epagōgē* in terms of a structure that is autonomous, self-contained, not needing humankind. At the very least, he chooses to go with ambiguity. This is already a shift from 1935 where his vision of humankind 'risks' inserting itself into this structure to become 'master of Being'. It fails, but in doing so produces a series of inscriptions that 'hide' the self-contained structure of metaphysics. From the perspective of consummate metaphysics, unwittingly articulated in "AΦ 1939" – where Heidegger is no longer as willing to be explicit about humankind's role –, the technical *logos* (*technic*) is performed mediation, in history by humans, and in truth (in *aletheia*, *in physis*) automatic.

The 'origin of history' Heidegger attempts to pinpoint at the Parmenidian (and Sophoclean) Fall is really the beginning of a series of human inscriptions upon a technical movement. Within the context of Heidegger's work, these inscriptions are revealed through intra-paradigmatic shifts in the western philosophical canon. Heidegger's 'source material' for his 'destructive hermeneutics' is limited to his own, mostly occidental or Euro-centric concerns and should be taken as such. He chooses the heroes he thanks. Parmenides is not the father of this relation.⁹³ Despite the limitations of this material, truth and

⁹³ It does not seem far-fetched to suggest that the importance of Pre-Socratic philosophy for Heidegger may itself be linked to the classicist and philological work done in Germany

its collapse exist as possibilities for Heidegger that are not chronologically orderable. The 'history' that occurs via a human comportment to truth ('thinking') and the history constructed by the human's being-used in and by the optic imperative of metaphysical knowledge are not subject to historiographical dating. These two 'histories' are the coincidence of Janus.

Einführung in die Metaphysik has been considered here as an essential step in Heidegger's elaboration of a consummate metaphysics. Despite what the preceding may depict as flaws in the text according to Heidegger's intention, it remains important in what it offers to temper the rhetoric of his later writings on technology and *Gestell*. This is to say, it recalls the ineluctability of humankind's technicity, the technical aspect of its acting. It also suggests that the tradition itself is violent, born of it and carried by it. Human counter-violence ultimately does not lead to the 'free relation to technology' Heidegger speaks of in *Die Frage nach der Technik*. It is therefore difficult to read this earlier material as complementing Heidegger's reflections on 'another thinking' as they develop in the period following. Heidegger's attempts in *EM* remain too Nietzschean, too concerned with a humankind empowered by the metaphysical machine, a *homo ex machina*.⁹⁴ The language of *technē*, particularly its sense as 'machination' and 'manipulation', is not suited to a determination of humankind as concerns 'thinking'. This is evidenced in emphatic fashion as early as the workbook composed between 1938-40 and published under the title *Die Geschichte des Seins* (GA 69)⁹⁵.

during the 19th century, specifically the Diels-Kranz translations and numbering. Had this work been done in a French context, for example, Heidegger's 'destruction' of metaphysics may look quite different, were it to occur at all.

94 The term *homo ex machina* is borrowed from François Laruelle who takes up this issue in the essay "A Rigorous Science of Man". Laruelle refers to philosophy as an "anthropo- or andro-eidetics" that must be systematically avoided in approaching the question of "ordinary man". The humankind of philosophy is an "android or anthropoid" of the "philosophical machine". Francois Laruelle, "A Rigorous Science of Man", in *From Decision to Heresy*, ed. Robin MacKay (New York: Sequence Press, 2012), p. 44.

95 See division VI (*Der Austrag. Das Wesen der Macht. Das Notwendige*) of this text, in particular Section 57. *Das Wesen der Macht* (pp. 62-72). Heidegger develops the closed system of metaphysics or *Ge-stell* (the technical *logos*) through a lexicon combining 'power' (*Macht*) and 'technic' (from *machen*) whereby 'empowerment' is viewed from the perspective of the maintenance and continuity (survival) of a closed system. The one who is 'empowered' is merely a cog in this machinery. All heroics seem to have faded quickly from a Heidegger terrified by the implications of his own philosophical naivety.

Yet Heidegger's thought is not, in the final analysis, anti-technological. To the contrary, Heidegger's later work is, as it concerns the question of the human, concerned with a comportment or thinking that collaborates with technic in such a way that it *does not* mimic it or perform its role. If the transitive nature of presence produces a second position for itself (for its preservation), the intervention of the human/subject is not *necessary*. This opens the possibility of considering a different comportment for humankind, one that does not determine humankind solely in relation to the structure of presence and its maintenance.

In *EM*, Heidegger chooses not to follow this path, but rather to consider the question of humankind from the second structural moment of presence. He chooses so despite stating that the *noein* is not a characteristic belonging to humankind, but rather *that occurrence (jenes Geschehnis)* that *has humankind* (EM 108). Humankind is not reducible to the *noein*, yet its relation to this occurrence or operation, one of potential subjugation, makes it a starting point for posing its question. The human is thereby inserted into the self-sufficient production of knowledge in a performative role. Within the 'logic' of the metaphysical or technical production of knowledge, it may make little difference whether or not humankind was inserted into this performative role at all. The aporia Heidegger discovers in Aristotle's *physis*, and which he must attribute to a metaphysical world that is potentially independent of human endeavor, makes it such that *noein, Vernehmung*, could be thought as fully automated or entirely automatic: the self-production of knowledge about itself.

Heidegger's interest in a technology that 'sees' shows that this direction was not entirely abandoned. As noted above, the technological instruments of 'microphysics' play an essential and ultimately final role in his understanding of metaphysics. These measuring apparatuses see what the human eye cannot see, fortifying the entanglement of *physis* and *technē*. While optic technology that registers and processes what is beyond human perception (humankind's relation to *noein*) may appear to be tied to human technicity – in the sense that humans create it for their own purposes, their own production of knowledge – the sheer existence of a seer that sees other than human *noein* radically resituates the question of perception in general. It deepens Heidegger's ultimate assertion that perception and its objectification are rooted in the transitivity of presence and not in human capacity:

Even where, as with atomic physics, theory necessarily lacks clarity (or, 'direct viewing', *unanschaulich wird*) for essential reasons, it remains dependent upon atoms exposing themselves to sensory perception, even if this self-showing of elementary particles occurs very indirectly and is, in various ways, technically/technologically mediated (Wilson chamber, Geiger counter, free balloon flights detecting mesons). (VA 58)

The mediate role is now explicitly *technical*. From the perspective of consummate metaphysics, this is not a matter of technological development, but rather of the technical *logos*'s self-sustenance. The critique of metaphysics is also a matter of evincing the performativity of humankind's role in the production of metaphysical knowledge. As the philosopher witness reconstructs presence, so can the witnessing machine that 'acts' from the same *archē* as the philosopher. Wherever there will be self-showing, it will be registered as knowledge.

Sections 1.4 and Chapter 2 will further consider the 'autonomy' of the technical *logos*. This section will close with an analysis of Heidegger's reading of Plato's cave allegory. In terms of the mytho-philosophical origin story that Heidegger appears to trace with Parmenides and *Antigone*, the reading of Plato will give insight into the human overcoming of *physis* as the production and transmission of the metaphysical canon. It will give clear insight into humankind's role in the production of metaphysical doctrine – which is not, as Heidegger suggests, a modest and innocent 'corresponding' –, an effort which is viewed by the metaphysician as a matter of life and death.

Days at the Undying Academy

Heidegger's reading of Plato's cave allegory in "Platons Lehre von der Wahrheit" offers insight into how the human might function in the role of the *noein*, considered specifically from humankind's philosophical determination, its role as philosopher (technician).⁹⁶ Metaphysics represents a 'collapse' of truth insofar as the need or demand of preservation or constancy requires that the concealing and/or absence be dominated by revealing and presence. Heidegger claims that the Platonic *idea* and Platonic education indicate a transfer in the 'place' of truth. This transfer is a move from being determined in unconcealment to being determined as a distinction of human seeing and humankind's relationship to beings (GA 9, 231). This speaks to the same decision referred to in the last subsection in terms of the Fall. It again confirms the theory traced thus far, that metaphysical philosophy determines humankind on the basis of what might be viewed as a *technoanthropocentric* predisposition. A decision is made

96 The decision to read "Platons Lehre von der Wahrheit" here is not arbitrary or selective. In the opening paragraph to Heidegger's draft notes for "ΑΦ (1939)" he speaks of the 'ontological blindness' (*Seinsblindheit*) as experienced in Greek philosophy. The experience and expression of this 'ontological blindness' can be found prior to Aristotle, according to Heidegger, in the 'accounts of Heraclitus' sayings', Parmenides teaching of the three ways, and the cave allegory of Plato (GA 76, 15). What is clear – leaving Heraclitus aside for the time being – is that Heidegger's reflections on metaphysics throughout the decade (the 1930s) emphasize three historiographical moments in Greek philosophy: Parmenides, Plato, Aristotle.

that inserts humankind into a certain structural role within the production of the *idea*.

“Platons Lehre von der Wahrheit” focuses on the Platonic notion of education in terms of the production and transmission of knowledge and on the basis of Plato’s doctrine of ideas. The disentanglement of *physis* and *logos* requires *physis* be understood via what is entirely dominated by presence, i.e. via the *idea*. This is necessary for the establishment of doctrine (*Lehre*) and a certain form of ‘education’ (*paideia, Bildung*). Such education functions on the basis of the *idea* and is grounded in its production. Like *technē*, it requires the purposed-*idea* (here as *Vor-bild*, an antecedent image). Heidegger characterizes Platonic education as a ‘forming’ (*bilden*) in the sense of an imprinting (*prägen*) that is guided by a purposed-*idea*. It is an imprinting and guiding by way of an image (*idea, Bild*) (GA 9, 217). The *idea* is produced in order that it be learned and thereby transmitted. In this way, the constancy of presence is fulfilled in the production of the *idea* and its transmission.

To the extent that Heidegger understands Platonic learning as fulfilling the optic imperative, it might be implied that learning concerns what takes precedence or stands out in front of the process of Platonic education. Platonic learning entails being ‘constantly set-into’ ('familiarized with', *stetige Eingewöhnung*) a ‘fixed gaze’ (*Festmachen des Blickes*) upon the appearance of a thing within the limits of that appearance (GA 9, 222). Learning is either a ‘measure giving’ or comportment towards measure (*die festen Grenzen der in ihrem Aussehen feststehenden Dinge*). Measurement is an inseparable ‘aspect’ of making-present, coming-to-presence, presencing. Platonic learning thus requires that humankind become accustomed to form-giving or measure giving (i.e., fixing), previously considered here under the terms *noein* and *epagōgē*. The posited immediacy of *epagōgē* and the performed witnessing of *nōein* are here explicitly considered in terms of a distinct human seeing in relation to the form of entities or the giving-form to entities. If this particular seeing of beings is essential to education, then it must belong to both forming (*bilden*, measure giving) and imprinting (transmission). It thus appears that human action is tied to the function of the technical *logos*, the antecedent image of which might be said to belong to the precedence of learning – human seeing learns from this antecedent image.

On the one hand, following the reference to the primitive given at the beginning of 1.2, a rudimentary, almost satirical example can be given: learning and transmission are about learning that a tree is always a tree. The thing will always be known through the form that causes it to register as that thing. This was referenced in 1.2 in terms of the form or *idea* (for Plato) as that which has presence ('is'), whereas the individual things were non-entities reliant for their

'beingness' on the 'forms they fill'. On the other hand, the ineluctable reference to grammatical structures when speaking of simple identity relations (a tree is a tree, *that* tree is a tree) will immediately give way to a larger realm of structural possibility. The human's performing of the role of *noein*, giving measure – and aided by tools, be they the tools of carpentry, instruments of measure, or abstract languages (mathematics) –, can be said to perform all three roles of the *idea* and its production enumerated in the Section 1.2 (formal appearance, collection, paradigm). Presumably the histories of science (or the sciences) and philosophy are not lacking in material for analogies. It suffices to say here that the human becomes a cataloger of presence and to consider to what ends this cataloging is undertaken, that is, what humankind gains in fulfilling the structural role of the *noein*.

In his interpretation of the cave allegory, Heidegger speaks not explicitly of learning (*lernen*) but of doctrine (*Lehre*) and refers the importance of doctrine to 'freedom' (*Befreiung*). Freedom is attained through a constant devotion to appearance (GA 9, 222). Freeing is the fixing of the gaze, it is 'becoming accustomed to' the role of making-present, perceiving, collecting, fixing. To be Platonically freed is to be free from *physis*' overwhelming violence by bringing measure to it. The darkness and ignorance of the cave might be likened to a presence without measure or form and which in this way remains concealed. Concealing would then indicate the unformed and unknown. Education is thus a *constant* overcoming of that which is without image or form. The way to 'handle' the overwhelming presence of everything which exists (*physis*) is to give form to it, to 'assist' in the figuring-into-(formal)-presence of beings as a whole, the entirety of what exists and can be registered as such.

The production of the *idea* in Plato – the forming (*bilden*) in education (*Bildung*) – is therefore described as the process of wresting the unconcealed from out of concealing (GA 9, 223). This wrestling is the overcoming of what is concealed in concealment.⁹⁷ By this account, the threat, what is overwhelming of *physis*, is the inherent dimension of concealing (or dissimulation). This is staged by Heidegger's Plato as a struggle for the determination of the truth, whereby what is freeing is found (solely) in the 'light of the *idea*'. Thus truth becomes associated with the victory of presence over the threat of concealing. Human counter-violence is the production of the *idea*. Human counter-violence, in its wrestling, must work towards the exhaustion of revealing such that nothing more would be concealed. Education, if viewed from or as the

⁹⁷ “[...] daß das Unverborgene stets ein Verborgenheit des Verborgenen überwindet. Das Unverborgenheit muß einer Verborgenheit entrissen, dieser im gewissen Sinne geraubt werden” (GA 9, 223).

absolute, is aimed at registering and making accessible beings as a whole without reserve. The obvious analogy at play here is the overcoming of 'ignorance' through knowledge, though Heidegger's archaic concerns have certainly shifted the terrain upon which this struggle would play out.

Latent here, in the transfer of the truth to humankind, are extreme determinations of humankind and philosophy intimated above. The *idea* is the yoke between knowing and what is known (*Erkennen und Erkannte*), a bond or correspondence that does away with all that is without form or image. It is formed of pure revealing. For Heidegger's Plato, there is no perception or understanding without the *idea*. Humankind's relationship to truth is, in every instance, determined in advance by the *idea*, which makes truth possible (GA 9, 214, 234).⁹⁸ In the Aristotelian perfection of Platonism, the *idea* (*eidos*) has its most generic form as the appearance of the technical *logos*, the appearance of the operation structuring presence, its accessibility. If the human is understood from a particular penchant for revealing (*noein* via *legein*, the distinct and immediate seeing of *epagōgē*), is determined by this operation, then it is only a small step to recognize that here mediation has or can be entirely replaced by humankind. Mediation becomes something like human instrumentality.

Philosophy can make this decision: to identify humankind entirely with the technical *logos* by conflating autopoeisis (and/or autoposition) with humankind. By totally prioritizing unconcealment, humankind has *robbed physis* of its essence (see above fn. 97). In this case, there would be nothing that is not human. There would only be the presence-preserving constructions of the reified thinking-perceiving subject given the name of humankind. While Heidegger rarely, if ever, makes as reductive and/or radical a claim about the dangers of metaphysical philosophy and the occidental paradigm of knowledge, particularly in edited and published lectures, it must be recognized that this possibility lies at the heart of his critique of metaphysics.⁹⁹ In "AΦ (1939)" he offers the following 'warning'¹⁰⁰:

⁹⁸ There are two citations referred to here: "Hätte nach Platon der Mensch nicht diese, d.h. das jeweilige 'Aussehen' von Dingen, Lebewesen, Menschen, Zahlen, Göttern im Blick, dann vermöchte er niemals dieses und jenes als ein Haus, als einen Baum, als einen Gott zu vernehmen. [...] Zunächst und zumeist ahnt der Mensch nichts davon, daß er alles, was ihm da in aller Geläufigkeit für 'das Wirkliche' gilt, immer nur im Lichte von 'Ideen' sieht" (214 – emphasis added). "Die *iδea* ist nicht ein darstellender Vordergrund der [Wahrheit], sondern der sie ermöglichende Grund" (234).

⁹⁹ Heidegger appears at times to sincerely believe that thinking 'properly Greek' about the history of metaphysics will suffice in avoiding this.

¹⁰⁰ Similar warnings reappear in the context of the atomic bomb, which reveals the possibility of destroying the entirety of what exists.

In the meantime, it looks as if the modern human races towards the goal of *producing itself technologically*. If this succeeds, humankind will have blown itself up, i.e. its essence *qua subjectivity*, blown itself into thin air, where the absolutely senseless (*schlechthin Sinnlose*) is the sole ‘meaning’ (*einzig ‘Sinn’*) and the maintenance (*Aufrechthaltung*) of its (*der sinnlose Sinn* or ‘senseless meaning’ – jf) validity appears as human ‘dominion’ (*Herrschaft*) over the entire earth. ‘Subjectivity’ is not in this way overcome, but rather ‘set at ease’ (*beruhigt*) in ‘eternal progress’ [...]. This is the most extreme *Unwesen* with regard to *physisousia*. (GA 9, 257).

While Heisenberg was shown above to be more optimistic about the situation of ‘fundamental science’ – its having to deal with human knowledge of the real rather than with the real itself – he does warn against the dangers of not treating the situation with caution. His warning, given in the context of the 1953 Munich conference, bears striking resemblance to Heidegger’s. It is summarized by Ernesto Grassi in the encyclopedic article accompanying *Das Naturbild der heutigen Physik*: “the fact and the danger in which humankind finds itself when it resolves (*auf löst*) Nature in the image of its thinking and dominates it without measure.”¹⁰¹ ‘Nature in the image of human thinking’ refers to the mathematical-statistical constitution of physics and the danger of misrepresenting the knowledge produced there as knowledge of the physical world as it is. Heidegger and Heisenberg agree on the dangerous situation of the historiographical closure of metaphysics, i.e., the recognition of its inherent limits and self-sufficiency. In his reading of Plato, Heidegger leaves it latent, and presents the problem and its development more soberly.

Despite Heidegger’s apparent sobriety, it is worthwhile to reconstruct the extreme formulation of humankind latent in metaphysics, based on the Platonic origins he attributes to it. As noted, this sobriety exists in his published texts more so than in his developmental notebooks. A passage from his technic workbook, beginning with reflections on the essence of technic in relation to the extraction and conversation of ‘natural resources’ and moving quickly into the preordination of this in and as occidental metaphysics, can be used to ‘justify’ the possible reading that will follow. The reflection is titled ‘Technic and Metaphysics’:

Technic is not only the building of machines (*Kraftmaschinen*),¹⁰² not only the assembly of machines at work, not only their use and oversight, not only machinery (in the context of industrial machinery), but rather in all the modification

¹⁰¹ Heisenberg, *Das Naturbild der heutigen Physik* (Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1965), 138.

¹⁰² *Kraftmaschine* implies a machine or instrument whereby ‘natural resources’ are converted to a form of energy specifically for human use.

(*Veränderung*) of what exists and not only entirely undetermined and aimless ‘modification’ (*Veränderung*), rather [an] attack on the entirety of what exists for the conquest of humankind’s self-assertion; not only this, but *before* this the foreordination (*Fügung*)¹⁰³ of the fundamental relation to the entirety of what exists as such, whose fundamental character is determined through ‘thinking’ (in the sense of the condition of the possibility of objectivity [*Gegenständlichkeit*] as efficacy – force [*Kraft*] – of what exists). Technic is *precisely* this *already* with the building of the first machine (*Kraftmaschine*), and that technic’s essence remains veiled indicates (*spricht gerade dafür*) that it is ‘metaphysics’; and this does not mean merely a type and form and consequence of metaphysics, but rather the actual fundamental structure (*Grundgestalt*) of the consummation of metaphysics as the interstice (*Fuge*) of the entirety of what exists in the sense, at once, of the essential ground of the occurrence (*Geschichte*) of occidental humanity. [...] Technic – as the fiat of power (force or energy) permitted (‘let loose’, *losgelassen*) by being (as concealed manipulation) – a truth of being: namely as the objectivity of the absolute subjectivity of the most extreme (modern) anthropology. (GA 76, 288f.)

The very structure of metaphysics, as was raised in the discussion of Heidegger’s Parmenides interpretation, entails the possibility that the metaphysical human take place of truth as technic’s most extreme expression.

Much of what Heidegger will say about the metaphysical understanding of truth during ‘later’ intra-epochal moments will be determined from this moment, i.e., the moment when humankind is designated as a technician of presence yoking together the knowing and the known. This correspondence passes immediately into the understanding of truth as ‘correctness’ (*adequatio*). As the motif of education would suggest, correctness is a directedness by the *idea* (*Richtigkeit*).¹⁰⁴ The guidance of the *idea* is the ground for truth to be understood as “agreement (*Übereinstimmung*) of representation in the intellect with the thing: *adequatio intellectus et rei*” (GA 9, 218). Note the transformation of Parmenides’ *noein* and *einai* into a correspondence between intelligence and object. Heidegger sees this as the origin of the concept, constructed by the philosopher, to serve this yoking. Moving further into occidental historiography, Heidegger’s Plato has already determined the place of truth as stated by Descartes: “Truth or falsehood in the proper sense can be nowhere other

¹⁰³ The term *Fügung* here might generally be taken – in the context of Heidegger’s thinking – to refer to providence or coincidence. In its linguistic sense, it can also refer to the ‘construction’ or ‘conception’ of a unity. This ‘unity’ is implied in Heidegger’s *als solchem*. The term ‘foreordination’ is used in an attempt to account for both senses, drawing also on Heidegger’s emphasis on antecedence again here (*‘before this’* is *vordem* in the original).

¹⁰⁴ ‘Correctness’ in Platonic metaphysics is *orthotēs*, which can also be taken as ‘uprightness’ or ‘erectness’ and ‘fixity’. Note here potential implications for justice (*dikē*) thought from the setting up and placing of a technical *logos*.

than solely in the intellect (*Verstand*)” (GA 9, 232–233).¹⁰⁵ This would only be a repetition of what Aristotle has stated in the *Metaphysics*: “This is to say that the false and the true are not in the things (themselves) [*Sachen (selbst)*] ... but rather in the intellect” (GA 9, 232).¹⁰⁶ Plato *has* considered the concealing dimension and this is evidenced in Aristotle and Descartes by a lack of correspondence ('falsity') and thereby a lack of form. Truth is transferred in full, transformed.

For Heidegger's Plato, the *idea* directing truth stands quite literally between humankind and unconcealment – presence wrested from *physis*. Truth can then only lie between humankind and the *idea* produced to register presence, i.e. the formal presence and ontological indication of a thing. It is for this reason that truth would appear to lie necessarily with humankind and the technical *logos* it wields, that is, should this *logos* not be thought primarily as autonomous. Truth would no longer lie ‘outside’ the *noein* and the *legein* it is subject to. It is important to note here that to say that ‘truth’ is not ‘outside’ humankind is not to say that things themselves are products of human intentionality or ‘consciousness’,¹⁰⁷ but rather that human experience of things is mediated by a model entirely immanent to consciousness without anchor in any ‘real thing’.

Any ‘grounds’ or ‘foundation’ for the *idea* are found already within its production, as has been shown with the terms *energeia* and *entelechy* that eventually come to name the structure of this production, which is to say the technical *logos* wielded by humankind. In the Platonic lexicon, the *idea*'s only cause is the ‘good’ or *agathon*. Heidegger understands the ‘good’ here as that which ‘is suitable and makes something suitable’, anticipating the relationship between *dynamis* and *energeia*. The technical *logos* can then appear as the ‘idea of ideas’. It would appear a matter of philosophical decision at the historiographical cusp of the occidental tradition. Humankind is ‘free’ to assume the technical *logos*. With truth rendered via concept and firmly within the

¹⁰⁵ Descartes is quoted by Heidegger. The translation here is of Heidegger's translation of the Latin.

¹⁰⁶ Again translated from Heidegger's translation, here of the Greek. The passage leading up to this is as follows: In the final chapter of the ninth book of the *Metaphysics* (Met. Θ, 10, 1051a, 34sqq.), where Aristotelian thinking about the being of beings reaches its summit, unconcealedness (*Unverborgenheit*) is the all-ruling fundamental trait of beings. At the same time, however, Aristotle is able to say: [...]” (GA 9, 232).

¹⁰⁷ ‘Consciousness’ here in the sense of *Bewusstsein* in terms of a ‘mutually effectuation relation with entities in the production of Being’. Consciousness is understood here in the strictly occidental sense that leads to the metaphysical-scientific biases discussed throughout this chapter (GA 70, 76).

intellect of humankind, humankind can understand itself as disentangled, as having overcome *physis*.

In light of this reading of Plato and recalling for a moment the Aristotelian gesture of qualifying the *idea* with *logos*, the following can be proposed¹⁰⁸: if for metaphysics, in the final analysis, the (technical) *logos* determines the *idea* (*eidos*), then the overcoming of concealing through the mediate position of the *idea* is analogous to humankind's overcoming and violence-doing in relation to the overwhelming force of *physis*. This would indicate a clearly human dimension, or better, an obviously philosophical dimension, in the genesis of *ideas*. That the *ideas* are constructed not only for this overcoming, but also for the sake of their repeatability, for the construction of doctrine and the purpose of a certain kind of teaching, implies that *ideas are products of technē*. The 'ground' of their genesis is to repeatedly serve a certain end or purpose. It is not by chance that at the end of the essay on Plato, Heidegger comes to refer to philosophy not as a 'love of wisdom,' but as the preference for and friendship of the *ideas*. *Sophia*, which is given as directly interchangeable with *idea*, is not wisdom but 'being oriented in' (*Sichauskennen*) in beings, i.e., *technē* (GA 9, 235).¹⁰⁹

It's worth noting that in the *Philebus*, Plato equates the poetic or 'making cause' (the 'cause' of *poiesis, to poion*) with what is "essentially the principle of generation and craftsmanship" – *to dēmiurgoun*. This neutralizes the creator or *dēmiurgos* and sets *poiesis* on a path in accordance with the *idea*. 'Making cause' is shifted from the place of divinity to the place of the craftsman. According to Reza Negarestani, Plato identifies this with the Good itself, "but also with the measuring or conceptualizing mind as that which is *akin to* the Good itself". The distinction of the craftsman and its craft fades as the "human mind or intelligence" is both craftsman and the operative dimension of the craft (*poeisis*). All of this occurs as a mixture (a meeting point) of what is without limit (*apieron*) and a measure-giving limit in the name of making something intelligible, i.e., in accordance with the optic imperative.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁸ In fact, this cannot be avoided, Heidegger's Plato and Aristotle 'belong together' in revealing absolute metaphysics.

¹⁰⁹ "*Sophia* more properly means being-oriented-in (*Sichauskennen*) in what presences as the unconcealed and the presencing of the constant" (GA 9, 234).

¹¹⁰ Negarestani's remarks come in his concluding chapter and in the context of humankind's task to make something better than itself (the Platonic Good). It should be kept in mind that the Mind or Intellect in this context is on its way to an autonomous 'existence' insofar as humankind has been but an aid in the journey of spirit. As remarked in his footnote, he is drawing in part upon Donald Davidson's *Plato's Philebus*. Reza Negarestani, *Intelligence and Spirit* (Windsor Quarry: Urbanomic, 2018) 476ff (quotations at 478).

Heidegger's Plato frames the division of *physis* and *logos* necessary for the establishment of doctrine as a matter of life and death (GA 9, 224).¹¹¹ If the *idea* affirms the ontological status of a thing, its beingness, the effect this has on the place of the truth passes immediately into the necessity that the human secure its own life, its own ontological status or beingness. The concept of truth as correctness already indicates, and indeed 'actualizes' the concept of truth as 'certainty' which Heidegger understands primarily from the impulse or drive to *secure*. Such an impulse to secure has been seen in the structural moments of Aristotle's *physis* concept in accordance with the optic imperative. The mutual dependence of the doubling seen thus far can, in the context of humankind, be raised to meet the ontological standards of metaphysics by saying that existence – better put, the ontological status and indication of humankind as such and such – is dependent upon the *idea* that instructs its position. By the logic of 'correctness', this is the 'making equal' (*adaequatio*) of humankind (*intellectus*) and *idea* (*rei*). Certainty, however, is not simply the impulse to secure such and such an *idea*. It is the impulse to secure the means of the *idea* (the 'good'). The technical *logos* must come to presence, and humankind can secure its own ontological register only by fulfilling its role of standing in for it. The technical *logos* is what is good here because it secures the autonomy of humankind and the human intellect in its 'independent,' 'disentangled' state.

The doctrine of *ideas* seems to initiate something like the Hobbesian contract with the good. Platonic philosophy (metaphysics) is, for Heidegger, the philosophy of (ontological) survival. 'Securing' becomes a sort of universal that is rooted in the *idea* as the impetus or cause determining the form or figure and ontological status of all things. Platonic formalism offers the beginnings of the self-preservation emphasized by Heidegger in *Antigone*. Humankind restricts its possibility to what is made possible through the mediation of the *idea* in order to secure its own existence.

Taking Heidegger's reading of the Platonic *idea* given above in conjunction with the reading of Aristotle's *physis* concept in the previous section has allowed for this a conjecture about the most radical determination for humankind. Though this decision does not need to be made, the conjunction of Platonism and Aristotelianism determining metaphysics already reveals the deep entanglement and 'undecideability' between subject and object. Heidegger would appear to reject this interpretation of the consequences of

¹¹¹ This would not, however, be analogous to a being-toward-death or a thinking directed or informed by 'death'. Quite the opposite, it would be the complete destruction (*vernichten*) of death (GA 69, 71).

his own critique, for he wishes to maintain being (presence) in its autonomy. He is not so hard on the philosophers of the western canon. No true thinking could replace being (presence) with human technicity. Aristotle's doctrine of *physis* holds the utmost importance in proving the innocence of philosophy. The 'difference' (doubling) that constitutes metaphysical reality is also understood via the dichotomy of *wassein* ('what-being', quiddity, 'essence') and *daf-sein* ('that it is', the 'cause' of *wassein*, 'existence'). It is with Aristotle that the (historiographical) realization of their unification occurs. This occurs as the technical *logos* and thereby appears to favor *daf-sein* or operativity. This is to say that the Aristotelian augmentation of the *idea*, emphasizing its kinetic dimension and culminating in the term *energeia*, designates the maintenance of presence as its constant production (see also Section 2.2). The decision determining humankind – in its radical form as sole architect of the world – is made on the basis of comportment in action, whereby humankind secures its survival by assuming the role of shaping and retaining presence.

The following section will return to "AΦ 1939" in order to complete the reading started in Section 1.2, which began as a reading of the structure of metaphysics as autonomous. This intermediate Section 1.3 has shown this same structure to be at work in Heidegger philosophy of the 1930s, and indeed to be the structure of metaphysics as such. In doing so, it has introduced the question of the place of humankind in this structure and has attempted to show, perhaps against his own claims, that a decision about human action can determine its role in this structure and in the production of metaphysical philosophy as a form of thinking that serves 'presence'. The following section will consider the closing passages of "AΦ 1939" which describe the 'autonomy' of the technical *logos*, tracing the motif of antecedence as it meets the question of genesis. It is important to note here that the description of metaphysics as something like an autonomous structuring or rationality hidden in the western philosophical canon does not purport to be an explanation of 'automation' as such, but rather a recognition that 'there is' automation, a recognition that allows Heidegger, or the readers here, to recast the question of humankind's determination, whether it can be determined at all, and towards what else humankind might comport itself, if not to the construction of metaphysical knowledge.

1.4 Antecedence and Construction

The problem of antecedence in Heidegger's understanding of metaphysics has been central to the forgoing reflections. This chapter has, thus far, traced a *technē*-dominated or technical *physis* concept, the structure of which is the

structure of metaphysics. *Technē*, technic, is defined by some form of access to a purposed-*idea*, a prefigured or presupposed image that guides the ‘formation’ of presence for the sake of its preservation, maintenance, and transmission. Metaphysics, as an iteration of philosophy, is born of a comportment towards a *physis* that seeks to preserve itself by way of a technical circumscription that offers it a purposed-*idea*. Otherwise, as stated in Section 1.2, *physis* cannot be known in terms of structured presence or an *idea*. This is at least the case when knowledge is dominated by presence. This subsection will return to a direct analysis of “AΦ 1939” to consider the notion of ‘genesis’ there in terms of antecedence. Genesis will be considered as something, a movement or structural function, through which *physis* has access to itself in terms of a purposed-*idea*.

The previous section suggested that it was through the utilization of humankind that *physis* came to know itself, that is, to preserve and retain itself. It was noted that such a view, however, is tied to a decision concerning humankind’s relationship to presence. It will be suggested here that Heidegger’s analysis at the end of “AΦ 1939”, which focuses on the terms *génesis* and *stérésis*, shows that humankind is not necessary in the structure of the technical *logos* and *physis*’s ‘immediate’ relation to itself. This also means that humankind is not necessarily determined as or by *noein*. This not only strengthens the suggestion that Heidegger’s view of humankind in the mid-1930s is a matter of decision and belongs to the metaphysical tradition. It also ‘completes’ the description of the structure or movement of the technical *physis* (technical *logos*) that is metaphysics.

This chapter will thereby close with a full account of a technical *physis* delineated in the appearance and accessibility of the technical *logos*. In this way metaphysics will represent the possibility that the capacity for genesis and reproducibility lie with *technic* in a manner that is commonly attributed to ‘Nature’, i.e., *technic* as *also* an autopoietic act. This will include a certain ‘open-source’ quality to *physis* – rooted in the genericity of its (technical) *eidos* – which will lead to Heidegger’s later discussions of manipulability and *Gestell* and will thus conclude the preparatory work for elaborating *Gestell* as consummate metaphysics. Before returning to “AΦ 1939”, however, it is worthwhile to consider again some remarks pertaining to experimental physics and mathematics that exemplify the central function of antecedence in maintaining the structure of metaphysics. In keeping in line with the foregoing discussion of Vagt’s work, this will serve to maintain the claim of homology between metaphysics and technic, specifically as it is viewed in volume 76 of the *Gesamtausgabe* which, again, places Heidegger’s drafts of “AΦ 1939” in direct relation to his preparatory work on *Gestell*.

In her analysis of the Heidegger-Heisenberg encounter, Vagt notes: “the theoretical framework of physics *remains* bound to the antecedence (*Vorgängigkeit*)

of the nature it seeks to investigate".¹¹² Later, in direct relation to scientific experimentation, she remarks: "In experimentation, an antecedence (*ein Voraus*) is established and a theoretically-placed nature is 'interrogated' as to if and how it 'registers' (*sich meldet*)."¹¹³ Put otherwise, experimental science sets a prediction in advance and places nature through an experimental apparatus ('interrogates', *noein*) in order to see if and how it registers in relation to this prediction.¹¹³ The antecedence or prediction here is tied to the use of or access to the technical image of Nature (the technical *logos* as *physis-eidos*).

Such use of or access to the generic, purposed-*idea* of Nature should be understood in terms of the consummation of metaphysics or of the structure of the technical *logos*. Heidegger's discussions of a pre-calculative (predictive) Nature found in modern science can only come from the perspective of its consummation. Antecedent access to Nature requires that the structure of the technical *logos* be consummate, not in need of anything outside of itself. It is from the relation between the pervasiveness of *physis* and the consummate nature of the technical *logos* that Heidegger thinks the maximum efficacy of metaphysics, namely its access to beings as a whole. This translates as the thoroughness of registering 'beings as a whole'. 'Beings as a whole' are registered (generated) according to a certain 'mode' (see Ch. 2) that Heidegger generally indicates with the phrase *als ein solches*. This 'full constancy' (*Voll-ständigkeit*) or 'integrity' is tied intrinsically to 'predictability' or *Vor-hersehbarkeit*, access in advance to the 'image' that determines this *als ein solches*. The metaphysical *als ein solches* is the copulative that registers together, as one, the entirety of what exists. Heidegger's hyphenation of the prefix *vor-* here stresses the ability to look in the direction of what is articulating or showing itself (*hersehen*) in advance, not unlike the *epagōgē* of Aristotle (GA 76, 348).¹¹⁴

Yet, in speaking of the pre-calculated 'constructability' of beings as a whole, Heidegger's language appears to be mimicking mathematical concepts, specifically here with the 'integrity' (*Vollständigkeit*) of a system. Viewing the completion of an Aristotelian-quantum circle, he will eventually have to admit

¹¹² Vagt writes 'remains' (*bleibe*) in the conjunctive, distancing herself from what she views to be Heidegger's understanding here. Vagt, *Komplementäre Korrespondenz*, p. 399 (emphasis added).

¹¹³ Vagt's text has been expanded with hopes for clarification. The original reads: "Im Experiment würde eine im Voraus begrenzte und theoretisch gestellte Nature 'befragt', ob und wie 'sie sich meldet'". Vagt's quotations of Heidegger are taken from *Die Frage nach der Technik* (VA 25). Vagt, *Komplementäre Korrespondenz*, p. 401.

¹¹⁴ These passages of Heidegger's technic workbook appear to show Heidegger accounting for *Gestell's* constancy (*Beständigung*) as a maximum efficacy rooted in antecedence. In place of 'predictability', he also uses the term 'precalculation' (*Vorausberechnung*) (VA 76, 347).

the mathematical nature of metaphysics (see Section 2.2). The production of metaphysical knowledge is rooted in having this (absolute?) predictability at its disposal. The ‘open-source’ nature of *physis*’s technical genesis leads to a notion of ‘construction’ and ‘constructability’ that, like metaphysical structure itself, can be doubled in the action of humankind. *Physis* constructs itself technically. Humankind constructs the metaphysical canon. The metaphysical production of knowledge is thus a constructivism. The ‘comprehensiveness’ of what is accessible antecedently leads Heidegger to develop a lexicon of presence as power (*Macht*) and manipulation (*Machenschaft*).

In his reflections on being (presence) as ‘power’, Heidegger writes that power (*Macht*) as ‘overpowering’ (*als Übermächtigung*) – note the transformation of *physis*’s overwhelming violence – builds at all times antecedently or in advance (*ist ... stets vorausbauend*). Heidegger calls this ‘constructive’ (*konstruktiv* – scare quotes in original). Metaphysics is thus understood as ‘constructive’ insofar as it is determined by ‘building in advance’. Its ‘constructiveness’ appears to concern its ability to posit prospective grounds, as in Aristotelian *epagōgē*, in the manner of the generic image of Nature. In its most radical potential, such positing could be arbitrary, its only ‘goal’ or ‘end’ being self-maintenance by way of self-exercise (carrying itself out). This would be to say that the technical *logos* enacts itself for the sole purpose of maintaining itself (as constantly present). Heidegger’s decision to explore this problem through a vocabulary of *Machen* would seem to stem from the technical overdetermination of *poeisis* that grounds metaphysical thinking. But ‘power’ (being) is understood not only in direct relation to making (*machen*) but extends essentially to the dimension of manipulation (*Machenschaft*) inherent to making. The characterization of this ‘metaphysical constructivism’ continues as follows:

Where the “constructive” is nested in the mastering of what exists, it becomes clear (*zeigt sich*) that there is no longer any escape (*Ausweg*) from being as power (*Macht*) within what exists. This [what exists – jf] must become submissive to *Macht*. This includes those who build, who are only permitted to play with scaffolding (*Gerüsten*) without ever being those who actually ground (*Gründer*). What remains essentially withdrawn from them [entities, including builders – jf] will be sensed obscurely as a deprivation (*wird dunkel als Mangel gefühlt*) that is never admitted in the realm of *Macht*. To the contrary, the establishing ('constructing' *das Errichten*) of scaffolding, moving from one contrivance (*Behelf*) to the next – which is to say being hustled by power – presents itself as and is a building for ‘eternity’ (GA 69, 64).

A distinction is made here between ‘actually grounding something’ (*Gründer sein*) and toying with scaffolding. Physicists and metaphysicians are consigned to an endless, albeit constructive, rearranging of the antecedent frameworks

that set their work underway. This marks a shift in Heidegger's understanding of the relationship of humankind to presence from its heroic mastery in *EM* to its ambiguity in "AΦ 1939", to a dependency and 'being hustled' (already hinted in the life or death 'ultimatum' of Platonic education). It appears that the 'power' (of knowledge or thought) that lies in antecedence (its 'use') comes at the cost of dependence in the form of being-coerced into performing the task of an already autonomous constructing. Metaphysics does not 'found' but in the best of cases 'assists' the production of knowledge. A contrivance (*Behelf*), therefore, stands in for what is ceded to the machinations of being, for what the one who 'surrenders' is thereby deprived of. This deprivation appears to be, at the very least, the lack of a capacity to 'found', the lack of a certain creative dimension or the possibility to produce something 'new', when thinking comports to formal appearance in seeking to master it. Heidegger ties this to a relationship to absence as absence (Chapter 3). The contrivance is humankind's use of the technical *logos*, which 'presents' an absent 'formula' for presence. However, this may only be the case due to this decision in comportment, the mastering of what exists that apparently obscures itself in carrying itself out.

In the concluding analysis of "AΦ 1939" that follows, it will be seen that what is 'ceded' is something like a relationship to absence. Technic is a circumscription of *physis* that includes only the domain of presence. Heidegger's ambiguity regarding humankind in this essay, when compared to the work that both precedes and follows it, suggests that this dimension (technic) can be thought in its autonomy. Humankind's utilization of the antecedent *idea* in its own metaphysical constructivism can only be partially successful, and the canon appears like a series of differentiated failures at the same task, namely the presentation of Nature's deepest secret. Yet *physis* withdraws itself, allowing humankind to only 'play with', to rearrange the 'scaffolding'. What Nature withdraws is sensed as a deprivation in the very carrying out of the production of the *idea* by humankind.

Technical (Epi)Genesis

Genesis is introduced in "AΦ 1939" as a sort of qualifying synonym for *physis* that serves to emphasize one of its aspects, namely, its movement towards itself. This movement has already been considered from the reciprocity and/or unity of the *legein* and *noein*. Wicksteed and Cornford understand it as *physis*'s path, *qua genesis*, to *physis*. Genesis is thereby qualified by another term, *hodós* or 'way', which Heidegger renders as a 'being-underway' (*Unterwegssein*). The etymological relation that Aristotle himself draws upon to link *physis* and *génesis* is apparently found in the roots of both words, which Wicksteed and

Conford show with their awkward renderings ‘nat-ure’ and ‘gene-sis’.¹¹⁵ The root *phuō* (‘growth’) in *physis* should correspond to the *génē-* in *génésis* (‘origin’, ‘source’, ‘productive cause’), which is taken from *gígnomai* (‘to come into being’, ‘to be produced’). The Proto-Indo-European root of *gígnomai* is *ǵenhi (‘to produce’, ‘to beget’, ‘to give birth’), whereas the root of *phuō* is *bhuh- (‘to become, grow, appear’). Though the roots of the two terms are unrelated at the level of PIE, Aristotle must have intuited a commonality, or even metonymy, between ‘growth’ and ‘productive cause’. In this sense, Aristotle provides no absolutely clear distinction between production, growth, emergence, or appearance. Heidegger’s recognition of this is supported by his own lexical decisions within the essay. The terms for *physis*’s movement all concern a *logos* that anticipates a lexicon of *Gestell* and modern technology – *Herstellen*, *Herausstellen*, *Entstellung*, *Stellen*, *Gestellung*.¹¹⁶

Heidegger translates *génésis* as *Ent-stellung* (‘extraction’), rendering the Aristotelian sentence in question as follows: “*physis* is (nothing less than) the way to *physis*, which will be addressed (*angesprochen*) as ex-traction (*Ent-stellung*) into what has come to be (*in den Ent-stand*)” (GA 9, 291). *Ent-stellung* is not taken in the sense of disfigurement or deformation, but rather as a sort of (self-) extraction whereby *physis* extracts itself from itself on the way to itself.¹¹⁷ This is described as follows: “from out of *an* appearance, to extract *the* appearance in which something is produced (‘placed-forth’, *Her-gestelltes*) – as what is particular or ‘each time’ (*Jeweiliges*) – is placed and so is” (GA 9, 289 – emphasis added).¹¹⁸ Again, *a certain antecedence determines the movement into appearance and physis’s way to itself*. “An appearance” lies ahead of or is posited in advance of the placing-into-appearance of an individual *eidos* as something ‘pro-duced’. This ‘initial’ appearance remains indefinite or indeterminate – see the contrast of indefinite and definite articles – in relation to the particular appearance in which something is placed as ontological (*is*). The ‘initial’, indefinite ‘an’ appearance indicates something like a source

¹¹⁵ Wicksteed and Conford’s translation in Aristotle, *Physics*, p. 115.

¹¹⁶ In a section of Heidegger’s notes to “ΑΦ (1939)” titled “Der Aristotelische Begriff der *Physis*”, *physis* is named or characterized as “*thésis/poëisis*” and “*Stellen; Her-, Zu-, Auf-stellen; Stand, Aufgehen, Ent-stehen*,” (roughly: to place/placing; ‘to produce, to deliver, to expose’; ‘position or state’; *emerging*, beginning-to stand) (GA 76, 37 – emphasis in original). Only one of these terms (*Aufgehen*) contains the sense of poietic emergence that Heidegger wishes to salvage from Greek metaphysics.

¹¹⁷ The inductive reversal of technical knowledge seen in Section 1.2 is now put to use (by *physis*?) in a more ‘deductive’ manner.

¹¹⁸ The original reads: “*Ent-stellung* [...]: aus *einem* Aussehen *das* Aussehen entnehmen, in *das* ein *Her-gestelltes* (*Jeweiliges*) gestellt ist und so *ist*” (first emphases added).

from which ‘the’ determined appearance is extracted. The sense of ‘origin’ or ‘productive cause’ in *génesis* is thereby maintained as ‘built into’ *physis*. The technical *logos* that determines Aristotle’s technical *physis* is qualified now: it is a ‘(self) extraction, (self) placing into appearance’ (*Gestellung-Entstellung*, placing-extraction).

The indefinite image from which the particular is extracted is the image of the technical *logos*, the generic image of (technical) Nature. The technical *logos* is the ‘absent source’ lying between an *idea* and its ‘being-placed’ (*Gestellung*). The accessibility of the technical *logos* is accounted for with the Aristotelian term *stérēsis* (‘privation’, ‘deprivation’). Heidegger places this term on par with *entelechy* in terms of decisiveness for Aristotle’s concept of *physis*. It names the fundamental possibility that *eidos* be understood as both appearance and placing-into-appearance (GA 9, 294). Due to the optic imperative dominating metaphysics, *stérēsis* is immediately drawn into a seemingly paradoxical relationship to presence. Aristotle states that privation or deprivation (*stérēsis*) is also *eidos* (*Physics*, 193b 18–20). It is the formal appearance of a ‘deprivation’. Heidegger initially translates *stérēsis* as ‘robbery’, which links *stérēsis* to what was considered in the last section as a wresting of presence from absence, the overcoming of a lack of structure or form. In his reading of Plato, the wresting of presences is also a robbery (*rauben*). In the *Grundbegriffe* as well, the *logos* extracts (*entnimmt*) the prevailing of presence from absence (GA 29/30, 42). *Stérēsis* accounts for the appearance of the technical *logos* in its placing-into-appearance. It is the appearance of the generic *eidos* behind the production of the particular. The technical *logos* is the ‘absent source’ lying between an *idea* and its ‘being placed’ (*Gestellung*).

By linking appearance and placing-into-appearance, *stérēsis* names why or how *physis* is underway and, in this way, is also the reason why way-making (*hodós*) qualifies *génesis*. For there is yet another qualification to come here, namely that *physis* is underway insofar as it is ‘incomplete’ (*energeia atelēs*). It is underway because it is incomplete. This incompleteness is not a being unfinished, as would concern a task or a goal. Rather, incompleteness is the extent to which the movement (*kinēsis*) of *physis* (the now genetic, technical *logos*) does not finish with the production of the *eidos*, but rather maintains itself (in motion) and maintains access to itself. The qualifier *atelēs* simply serves to indicate that the movement of *physis* never stops. The maintaining and prevailing of constant presence is perpetually in motion, as it were. The notion of the structuring of all presence, the production of an absolute knowledge, is not a final goal whereby *physis*’s movement would somehow cease. It is rather in this structuring of everything that *physis* ‘has itself’ most consummately.

It is in this way that the notion of technic, of the technical *physis* that Heidegger calls metaphysics, is elevated from the realm of the mere human production. The movement here is not the link between two images, that of the purposed-*idea* and the *eidos* of the finished product, but rather something more like the link between production and the image of production. Heidegger thinks production, or the act of structuring presence, as the constant affirmation of what drives it, namely, the generic image preserved in its carrying itself out. Heidegger's reading is painstakingly reductive.

Physis must therefore find a different way of being 'complete', if the *physis-eidos* is not to be a culmination or point of cessation but rather a constant setting-back-in-motion. *Stérēsis*, which will inevitably be understood by Heidegger as 'absence', is the motif that allows for the 'circularity' of *physis*'s consummation. *Stérēsis* is a 'placing away' in self-production. *Physis* is a 'placing-away of itself that produces itself' (*das sich-herstellende Wegstellen ihrer selbst*). In this way, 'a unique self-obscuring (*Sich-zustellen*) belongs to *physis*, an obscuring of what *through* it first moves from something available to something proper to it', i.e. an obscuring of the means whereby it appropriates or acts upon itself (GA 9, 298).¹¹⁹ Heidegger speaks of this as a metabolism (*Stoffwechsel*), a transformation of what is available (*Verfügbliche*) into what is proper (*Geeignete*), referring to the *metabolé* that co-determines *kinēsis* in Aristotle. In truth, however, what is available is the generic structure of metaphysics that is transformed into the intelligible form of its preservation. At the same time, this generic structure itself appears to 'obscure itself', and this obscuring appears to be what maintains *physis* as 'in motion' (*kinetic*).

It is only here, at the end of the essay, that Heidegger makes clear use of the circular or self-reflective 'description' of *physis* that is perhaps the most common throughout his writings. *Physis* is underway as emergence (*sich aufgehen*, 'going out of itself') that returns to itself (*in sich zurückgehen*). Heidegger initially says that the 'whereto' of *physis*'s being-underway is undetermined, but he immediately qualifies this: "more specifically, the indication of the way (*hodós*) yields itself together with its determination" (GA 9, 291).¹²⁰ The indetermination that gives itself together with its determining is *the logos*, specifically the genetically-qualified technical *logos* that is underway. This citation

¹¹⁹ 'Sich-zustellen' may seem more likely translated as 'self-delivery' in the sense of *physis*' delivering itself to itself. Yet Heidegger is still speaking of *stérēsis* or absencing here and it should be emphasized that it is through *stérēsis* that *physis* comes to itself, i.e., has its own genetic dimension.

¹²⁰ "Unbestimmt bleibt das Wohin des Ganges, genauer die mit seiner Bestimmung sich ergebende Kennzeichnung der *hodós*."

recalls the indefinite ‘an’ that gives way to the placing of ‘the’ appearance as ontological, as well as the ‘somehow’ through which Heidegger says *stérēsis* is also *eidos* (GA 9, 297). Determination arises from out of the indeterminate operation of the technical *logos*, to which it returns as self-determining. Yielding itself together with its determination, the ‘wherefrom’ and ‘whereto’ of *physis* remain the same (GA 9, 293). What ‘returns to itself’ in placing-into-appearance is the genetic possibility of this operation itself.

Heidegger had actually given this formula for the production of the *idea* at the very moment he introduced *logos*, anticipating the manner in which *stérēsis* would be translated. The *logos* – here as *lesen* – is ‘providing’ (*beibringen*) and ‘delivering’ (or, as above, obscuring, *zu-stellen*), i.e., *para* (‘beside, alongside’). This sense of delivering or obscuring as ‘alongside’ defines presence: “*parousia=ousia (apousia)*” (GA 9, 279). A configuration of presence is presence qualified by absence, unified with it. This might be viewed as the basic formula for metaphysics’s structural, unified doubling: constant presence = appearance (genesis); = presence (absence); = placing (extracting).

Stérēsis is thereby ultimately translated in accordance with the Heideggerian question of truth (*aletheia*). It is absence or absencing (verbal, continuous). In opposing the Latin translation of *stérēsis* with *privatio* (‘privation, deprivation’), Heidegger attempts to avoid understanding absencing as the negation or ‘taking away’ (depriving) of something. Absencing is not the mere opposite of presencing. As seen in the above formula, it is adjacent to it, in the sense of belonging to or unified with it. Absencing belongs to presence as the presencing of what remains out, or the presencing of ‘remaining out’ (*Ausbleiben*). This is the presencing of what fails to ‘materialize’ in the presence of the *idea*, but which nonetheless gives way to it. Wine gives way to vinegar; blossoms give way to fruit. The appearance of one thing is the placing away of another. What is placed away is always what has somehow given way to what appears. What appears places away what gives way to it (GA 9, 297-298). What gives way to *eidos* places itself away in doing so, like the blossom that presently absences in the appearance of its fruit or flower. What appears here as absence can, of course, be nothing other than the genetic dimension of the technical *logos*.

The rendering of an ‘underway’ *stérēsis* as ‘absencing’ should be considered in light of the initial, more literal translation Heidegger provides. He initially translates *stérēsis* as *Beraubung* (‘robbing or plunder’ or ‘deprivation’), a philosophically sound translation. The literal translation appears, however, to function as a sort of prop to pivot from in his rejection of the term’s Latin lineage (*privatio*). The move from this to the ‘remaining out’ or ‘hidden operativity’ of being-underway gives an indication that Heidegger may be attempting to avoid some of the questions regarding human determination (i.e., as a robber)

seen in the previous section. Within “ΑΦ (1939)”, the remaining out that maintains *physis*'s genetic dimension as ‘aimlessly’ underway instead recalls the very introduction of the *logos* into the production of the *idea* (the ‘double *eidos*’). The *logos*, as the kinetic and genetic dimension of *physis* and *morphe*, is the “moment” that initially “remains out” (*ausbleibt*) of the form concept in Plato (GA 9, 276). Its ‘yielding itself together with its determination’ recalls the immediacy of *physis*'s self-knowledge.

The distinction Heidegger wants to make in the move between Plato and Aristotle – which is really their unity in the elaboration of consummate metaphysics – concerns the necessity or ‘position’ of the human in terms of the production of the *idea*. That Heidegger may charge Plato with constructing the suprasensible is not a point to be argued for or against here. He does clearly refer to a robbing of truth's essence as a wresting of unconcealment from concealment. What is therefore apparent is an attempt to move from *human technic as robbing*, as appropriative mimesis and counter-violence, to *technic itself as the presently absent dimension of autopoiesis*. This of course, on Heidegger's part, was attempted in the name of *physis* yet ultimately ‘uncovered’ in the name of *technē*. Factoring in the position of the observer, the natural scientist, the union of Platonism and Aristotelianism might be viewed as a movement whereby humankind robs nature of its essence and, in enacting this essence, returns it to nature.

The ambiguity of “ΑΦ 1939” is already a significant move away from how Heidegger thinks humankind's relationship to presence in the 1920s and (most of the) 1930s. Plato, Heidegger's Plato, cannot be put on trial for having opened human thought to its most extreme misgivings. And still, the danger of Aristotle's assumption of an antecedent but absent *logos* in Nature does call for prudence. To present a lack is to ‘objectify’ that lack, to treat it as a ‘being’ or entity, and so to present it.¹²¹ Such an operation may be inherent to Nature, a self-objectification that the Greeks thought in the reciprocity of *noein* and *legein*. Absence is a known ‘remaining out’. It becomes deprivation only when humankind accesses it in the form of the technical *logos*. When humankind is intentionally involved, this must be understood as an act of theft for Heidegger, a theft whereby *what is lacking is filled with a contrivance*, a deft

¹²¹ Perhaps the obscured form of the *logos* can be considered as the treatment of Nature, and thereby *logos*, as a thing in the sense of an entity or being. Almost directly following the introduction of the *logos* as the moment lacking in previous notions of form (ie.e, in Plato), Heidegger chooses the *Raubvogel* (bird of prey) as an example when speaking of mistaking a thing of nature for Nature itself (GA 9, 277). It is impossible to speak of the extent to which Heidegger was aware of such coincidences. It is nevertheless the case that his reading of Plato's cave allegory directly precedes “ΑΦ (1939)” in *Wegmarken* (GA 9).

substitute that must remain unaccounted for in order for knowledge to be produced. Knowledge of presence in the broadest sense – and for Heidegger this includes every sense of the suprasensible and namely it – is predicated on the presentation of a lack that functions in the role of an operative antecedence.

Formal Self-Sufficiency

The ‘logic’ underlying Aristotle’s *physis*-concept has ‘given’ the (technical) *logos* an *eidos*. This is the case with or without a decision about humankind. In the paradigmatic optics of Greek metaphysics, of all metaphysics in accordance with the optic imperative, this result is inevitable. ‘Everything’ is compelled to fulfill formal presence. While Heidegger seeks the ‘absencing’ dimension of truth in Aristotle as he does with Plato, he does not ‘find’ it as absence. What he finds is the (forced) presentation of a lack, in the sense of a ‘contrivance’. Though he may not state this explicitly in the essay itself, he does remark in his notes to the essay that, because of the impetus of the constancy of presencing (*Beständigung der Anwesenung*), i.e. *ousia*, Aristotle’s *physis*-concept does not account for *kryptesthai* (“*nicht mehr kryptesthai*”), the dimension of concealing. Everything is determined by the law of constant presence (GA 76, 36). Absence is only in being presented, in presencing. Heidegger acknowledges this at the end of the essay by stating: *physis* in the sense of ‘physics’ is a type of presencing; because of this it exposes itself as the type of presencing of the *idea*; because of this *kinēsis* becomes visible as *energeia* and *entelechy* (GA 9, 301).

The ambiguous place of humankind marked in “AΦ 1939” by the term *epagōgē* does not, however, resolve the question of humankind; rather, it recasts it or allows it to stand silently anew. Is the technical understanding of Nature a matter of pure human invention or of a certain delimiting within Nature itself? If, with Greek metaphysics, the *logos* is what humankind shares with *physis* (though it may share ‘everything’), it is reasonable to suggest that the extreme formulation – whereby humankind identifies absolutely with the technical *logos* in some sort of anthropotechnical solipsism – remains a real possibility here. This suspicion is certainly found in Heidegger’s reservations concerning experimental physics and its inevitable limitations or shortcomings. However, more reasonably perhaps, the technical *logos* could be viewed instead as *physis*’s immediacy with itself *when seen* through the finite distance of the philosopher’s *noein*. Aristotle’s doctrine is one in which *philosophy offers a generic structure of Nature’s autonomy as a substitute for what remains unknown*. This substitute could be considered in light of the ‘technological constant’ discussed in Section 1.1. The technical *logos* has by necessity

some degree of availability to humankind, but it should be understood as self-sufficient regardless.

To summarize matters thus far: all particular appearances attributable to (technical) *physis* are grounded in (or extracted from) the generic operation of the *logos*, which at once accounts for *physis*'s autopoiesis. The technical *logos*, in fulfilling the optical imperative, has to be posited (by Aristotle) in advance as *eidos* (as formal and accessible appearance). It is 'there' and 'present' in its antecedence. 'Immediate' knowledge of *physis* appears to be resolved in this antecedence, which has been seen with both *epagōgē* and *noein*. The necessary appearance of the (technical) *logos* (which is 'self-showing') is accounted for by way of a 'privative appearing', through which the formal appearance of the operation that structures presence (the *logos-eidos*) stands in for the 'end' and 'work' of *energeia* and *entelechy*. As *eidos*, the technical *logos* presents the 'work' of presence that has itself within itself, within its 'end'. In doing this, it fulfills the role of a repeatable pattern, an essential dimension of the *idea*.

Heidegger insists that the repeatability, the self-regulating and self-sustaining movement of *physis* (its *Aufgehen-in-sich-zurück-gehen*) cannot be understood as a 'merely spatial' image of a circle or circulation. It is rather a structural circularity. He clarifies this by way of a linguistically wrought, though rather simple 'sequence'. The emergence that goes back into itself (*dieser in sich zurückgehende Aufgang*) allows something (*Solches*) to presence from which and toward which emergence is underway (GA 9, 293). The *Solches* here calls back to an earlier passage where Heidegger translates Aristotle's *synestōta* ('to set together, combine, unite', 'to organize, to frame') with '*als ein solches*' (as such, in the sense of *qua*) (GA 9, 246). As above, the 'copulative' seems to be at stake here, though without Heidegger's implicit mention. There are two ways to view this *Solches*, which is simultaneously 'from which' and 'toward which': either as a synthetic articulation of the ontological difference, the difference between beings and beingness, or as the image (*eidos*) of the technical *logos* itself.

The first is to view it, as Heidegger perhaps indicates, as a configuration of structured presence (*synestōta*) in its constant (*ständig*) presence, both in the sense of 'being present' (*idea*) and remaining or enduring (*Wählen*). The sentence containing the 'from which' and 'toward which' (re)synthesizes the slightest degree of separation that has arisen between the two manners of *morphē*: form and formation, the *is* and what provides it, ontological register and registering; or, drawing from the term *synestōta*, a configuration of structured presence and its structuring. In this case, the name Aristotle earns the distinction of being the first true occidental thinker of what Heidegger for a

time calls the ‘ontological difference’, the difference between a being and its beingness. This ‘difference’ within *energeia-entelechy* is the fundamental trait of presencing (GA 6.2, 407).¹²² The so-called double or dual *morphe* offers a view of the ontological difference both distinct and unified. This is to say that the difference between being and beingness, form and formation, named by Heidegger in the double *morphe* as ‘appearance and placing into appearance’, is (re)synthesized in *energeia-entelechy*. Its (re)synthesis indicates that metaphysics – a way of occurring and a way of thinking wherein a technical *logos* comes to dominate – is distinguished in its operation as being formally operative, i.e., it is the production of form as the production and synthesis of difference.

The problem with this first way of understanding the *Solches* is that it does not fully account for the ‘how’ of presence, but rather only for the doubling of presence (beingness) as some particular or as some differentiated instantiation of presence (‘a’ being). Its synthesis relies too heavily upon individual (distinct) entities. This risks understanding the ‘return’ as a return to ‘placing into appearance’, rather than as a return to the very image of the doubling. Thus it does not account for the means whereby ‘placing into appearance’ is made possible. It does not account for the means whereby the ontological registration of beings as a whole *including* humankind takes place. If *energeia-entelechy* were rendered merely as the ontological difference in the manner given above, then it could not be said that Aristotle’s doctrine, as the culmination of Greek metaphysics, succeeds in augmenting and setting in motion the Platonic Good, namely the form of making-possible or making-suitable.

On the second view, the ‘from-which-toward-which’ *Solches* can be understood as the *eidos* of the technical *logos* itself. As the *eidos* of *physis*, the appearance of *kinēsis*, it should require nothing more than its own presence in order to ‘extract’ and ‘place’ as it does. This suggestion more adequately fulfills *energeia-entelechy* as that which in-its-work (in the operation of structuring presence or ‘placing into appearance’) has-itself-within-its-end (is complete within itself). It would ‘complete’ *energeia atelēs* without the need for a cessation upon the ‘goal’ of ‘placing into appearance’. In having an *eidos* of its own, the technical *logos* is never mutually dependent upon or co-determinate with any other particular *physis-eidos* (a flower, the ‘image’ of health, any ‘thing’ appearing in Nature). The copula or copulative seems to appear, in the final analysis, in its autonomous self-referentiality.

¹²² In the essay “Die Metaphysik als Geschichte des Seins” Heidegger considers Aristotle’s *energeia* as the first recognition of the ontological difference (GA 6.2, 406-411).

This is the operative limit of a thinking that derives Being from beings. The movement of a generic technical *logos* starts from its own indeterminate *eidos*, extracting from its own possibility in order to 'place' (structure) the particular, returning to itself in order to again proceed from itself. Put otherwise, in its 'self-obscuring', *physis* qua technical *logos* provides a semblance of differentiation of appearance (of accessible and intelligible presence) from its genetic, generic possibility. The formal appearance of the technical *logos* would nonetheless remain constant, fulfilling the ontological requirement of *ousia*.

The difference between these two possible understandings of the copulative or *Solches* may seem terribly slight. However, this slight distinction is important, for on the second account it is operativity or function that differentiates itself, and not presence as some sort of uniform or underlying substance. The *als ein solches*, the 'as such', is not beingness but rather, effectively, the 'form' of operativity or production inherent to anything that would be in its particularity. The constant presence of this operativity is sufficient to ward off the threat of 'true' absence, insofar as it is constantly accounted for in the self-referentiality of its structuring.

The power of genesis thus lies in the openness of presence's structuring. In never being 'final' in the sense of cessation (ceasing to produce), the *eidos* extracted from and as *physis* distinguishes itself from *technē* only at the question of the 'limit' (*telos*), which is no longer a matter of goals and cessation but of the 'origin' of movement itself, the delimiting limit. Could this delimiting limit be anything other than the image of the technical *logos*, than the most generic image to fill the antecedent position? This *physis-eidos* is a generic, in the sense of 'aimless', productive or constructive *eidos*. When Heidegger refers to the 'openness' of the *idea* (*die Anwesung ins Offene der idea*), he refers not simply to an appearing and presencing in the 'openness' of unconcealing, but indicates more primarily the 'malleability' of the *idea* (GA 9, 301).

This openness or malleability was already raised with the 'elevation' of *hylē* to *dynamis* in section 1.2. When *dynamis* is understood as 'suitability or appropriateness for ...' *energeia-entelechy*, traditional philosophical notions of matter, content, and potential or possibility are entirely subjugated to a 'form' that produces itself. As 'suitability to ...' that which is complete within itself, it remains radically indeterminate. Such is the dynamic though utterly generic manner of the technical *logos*: it is a structural operation that produces its own *eidos* and is never characterized as anything other than this structural operation. It is, in a sense, the ultimate metaphysical presupposition or *a priori*. In producing itself, it produces something out of 'nothing' always returning to 'nothing'. It is the paradigmatic production of paradigms, the *eidos* of the *idea*. Its consummate 'incompleteness' lies in its ability to exhaust itself (to give

structure to the presence of beings as a whole) for its own sake without end (*energeia atelēs*).

The appearance of the technical *logos* as *energeia* thereby satisfies the Platonic Good, accounting for the ‘*idea of ideas*’. Heidegger’s technic workbook recognizes that *energeia*, as a sort of ‘form of form’, is ‘form’ as the presence of possibility *qua* possibility (*ousia des dunatón ēi dunatón*). For this reason there could be ‘no more *kryptesthal*’ in Aristotle’s *physis*-concept (GA 76, 36). For him, the Good stands for the ‘cause’ of the *idea*, its origin and wellspring, its genetic capacity. The ‘good’ accounts for what ‘causes’ the production of the *idea*. As has already been shown, Heidegger reduces causality to the *logos* appearing in *energeia*. The good is ‘what makes suitable as such’ (*das Tauglichmachende schlechthin*). It is what makes each *idea* suitable to an *idea* and facilitates the appearing of everything present in its intelligibility and accessibility (GA 9, 228). It is the intelligibility of *energeia* and *entelechy* that enables that absolute dynamism of the structuring of presence. This assures the constant overcoming of concealing through the operation of the technical *logos*.

In modern parlance, the ‘good’ is ‘value’, a term which again evokes the problem of entanglement or human entanglement. For some, there is no higher aim for philosophy than to produce values that order and orient the lives of humans (to live the ‘good’ life).¹²³ If, within metaphysics, ‘securing’ is necessitated by the constancy that presence demands, then there could be no higher value than human life and the securing of human life through the ‘use’ of a technical *logos* that facilitates the constant overcoming of concealing. Here again is the problem of decision and of humankind’s determination within metaphysics. It is from this point that Heidegger warns against the state of modern metaphysics, which sets as its task the anthropomorphization of everything, the securing of a humanity alienated absolutely from *physis* (‘freed’ from its ‘violence’) and thus alienated from truth (its concealing), pushing for the most extreme and unconditioned self-understanding of the human. It is in this context that Heidegger will call Nietzsche the most reckless of Platonists,

¹²³ This has a correlate in the Anglophone roots of contemporary rationalism, which does not go so far as to consider the securing of a certain human ontological register. Writing about the relationship of science to philosophy, where in the final analysis epistemology and ontology are delegated to Science, Ian James writes of Wilfrid Sellars: “philosophy does other things: it gives normative descriptions through the acts of prescribing and proscribing”. A few pages later, writing about the remaining autonomy of philosophy, he calls this domain “that of regulative and speculative reason, its capacity to stand above and rationally order the current existing whole of knowledge, and also to maintain the orientation of thought toward a futural horizon of totality or total knowledge”. James, *The Technique of Thought*, p. 5, p. 9.

for Nietzsche affirms value as the fundamental condition that makes life possible *as* determined from life itself (GA 9, 234, 237). This Nietzsche, though, would not represent anything (paradigmatically) 'new', but only a variation on a theme situated at the heart of the metaphysical paradigm. Such is the bleak view Heidegger offers – almost always inexplicitly – on what was once among the Occident's most treasured endeavors. It must be remembered, however, that this is not a decision about humankind *for* humankind, but a decision about humankind *for presence*.

Some Remarks

Heidegger's reading of Aristotle's *physis*-concept as determinative for metaphysics yields the following: *technic is the structural unfolding of Nature in terms of knowability, intelligibility, and accessibility*.¹²⁴ What is revealed or reveals itself through the language of High Greek Metaphysics does so again, and *as the same*, in the mathematical constitution of modern experimental science. The 'fatal' recognition – 'fatal' being the ineluctable – is that the entanglement of *physis*, *technē*, and humankind is insurmountable. Metaphysics names an occurrence of self-formation, self-structuring, and *autopoeisis* in Nature that includes humankind and does not exclude objects and processes traditionally understood as products of humankind ('technology, the technological'). This occurrence will always, for Heidegger, constitute a limit for any type of knowledge guided by an optic imperative, by a demand for intelligibility and accessibility – the limit named with *kryptesai*. Its very 'taking place', each time, places the recognition of its totality – absolute presence, absolute metaphysics – in advance of itself.

The 'practice' of metaphysics concerns a decision made by and/or about humankind. In the most generous possible interpretation derivable from Heidegger, this practice appears to be one that aids or assists (as with *technē*) the structural unfolding of Nature in accordance with the optic imperative. The 'history' of metaphysics taken as the 'history' of western philosophy (beginning with Greece) is the history of 'aiding' humankind's inscription in *technic*.

It is nevertheless clear that there is a line of argument that would disregard Heidegger's assertion that the helpful metaphysical thinker thinks *only* what has been given to them to think (a 'sending' of being) and instead view metaphysics primarily as a matter of human construction. It is not as if the question

¹²⁴ Referring again to Vagt's commentary on Heidegger's engagement with quantum physics: "Quantum physics [...] assisted Heidegger to the recognition central to his *Spätwerk* that the occidental conception (*Entwurf*) of nature (and thereby ontology) is generally concerned with the question of technic." Vagt, *Komplementäre Korrespondenz*, p. 144.

of the primacy of consciousness has gone away. It appears to be more relevant to the sciences today than ever before. In the particular path taken here, this argument would begin from the near interchangeability of *noein* (having and determining humankind) and the immediacy of *epagōgē*. This would weigh upon whether or not Heidegger gives a satisfactory defense of the ‘aims’ and impetus of Greek thinkers (Aristotle, above all others) over and against the philosophers and scientists of European modernity.¹²⁵ If the researchers of quantum physics, Heisenberg included, become something like the ‘mouth-pieces of technic’ for Heidegger, what is there to spare Aristotle, the Hellenistic scientist of nature, if his theory of *physis* is similarly derived from a ‘use’ of or reliance upon antecedence?¹²⁶

At the same time, Heidegger’s reading of the metaphysical canon can be understood as a reading of the documentation of automation. *Physis* is conflated by the Greeks with the movement of *thesis* inherent to it (see Ch. 2), and the occidental tradition has no choice but to follow from this flaw. Lack of a certain type of knowledge about *physis* is filled by an extension of *thesis* as determinative. *Thesis*, in turn, can be viewed as a particular mode of *physis* understood as what arranges it (*physis*) in such a way as to know itself.

Some may hold the view that the human *is precisely this thesis*, the mirror of the universe. Such would be the reason why this yet-to-be-determined thing is born of technic. Some may even hold that this birth is a mistake, that the self-awareness of Nature as the self-awareness of the human occurs by some error or glitch. It appears that Heidegger both recognizes this fate and seeks to

¹²⁵ The view of the current essay is that Heidegger gives no such satisfactory defense of western philosophy beyond announcing it as a catalogue of failure. His rhetoric of a ‘destiny’ of being which sends itself to be ‘thought’ by humans is perhaps the weakest aspect of his entire body of work. Not only is it chauvinistic in its limited Greco-European scope, but it has led followers and interpreters to lazy appropriations of his work, at worst grounding theories of social and geographical isolationism and competition. Moreover, if Heidegger takes the end of occidental metaphysics seriously and seeks, in turn, a thinking suited to the unique nature of the human, this cannot be grounded in that very historiographical trajectory, unless, of course, there is no question of the human as such (or of the mortal, but only of tribes of humans). Yet Heidegger’s posing of this question as a ‘universal’ question is unavoidable. No, there could be no replacing the scientific and philosophical canons with a canon of poetry delimited by a particular language. The archaic meaning of idiot can easily be extended to any homogeneous bodies, be they linguistic, geographical, or national.

¹²⁶ Vagt twice implies that Heidegger views the modern scientist as a secretary or spokesperson for technic. In the second instance this comes again as a sort of defense of the Greeks. The figure of Heisenberg is viewed as a ‘fission product’ of *Gestell*, that, rather than a new technology, is a new type of researcher: the mouthpiece (*Sprachrohr*) of technic. Vagt, *Komplementäre Korrespondenz*, p. 403; and Heidegger und die Atomphysik, p. 149.

avoid it by not allowing humankind to be reduced to its technical origins, or, by letting the word humankind apply only to *Dasein* and/or ‘the mortal’ as a task and possible ‘future’.

The general equivocality or seeming indecision with which this chapter has treated humankind mimics Heidegger’s own uncertainty. It is the inevitable ‘back and forth’ of tracing Heidegger’s middle or deconstructive period. As Heidegger ‘deconstructs’ metaphysics, revealing a substitute structure at its heart, he continuously holds humankind out over the abyss of metaphysics’s groundlessness. If metaphysics is taken as groundless construction, the logic for which indicates an autonomous reality, then humankind has a decision to make concerning the degree or extent to which it engages with or participates in this rationality. This decision also concerns the extent to which humankind itself will or will not be determined by said engagement or participation.

The technician, the metaphysician, is the helper of technic. The technician takes part in *physis*’s coming-to-itself, its structuring and preservation. But is that all that humankind is? If so, humankind becomes entirely dependent upon certainty and securing, it submits to the security of presence. Humankind becomes something, through its utility, that is accumulated by presence. But Humankind cannot fully fill the role of the technical *logos*, as the Heidegger of 1935 hopes. It cannot stand in for the *noein* if the *noein* belongs precisely to what humankind cannot attain, namely the ‘secret’ of Nature. Rather than ‘deal with’ non-presence, the metaphysically determined human replaces it for something ‘present’. But when humankind ‘secures’ a ‘logic’ that is autonomous from it, which it knows of but does not *know*, can it secure anything *for* itself?

When the structure of intelligibility collapses, which is also to say ‘progresses’ – and it does, seemingly again and again – humankind is forced into a crisis. Its ontological register is lost, and it must hurriedly ‘rearrange the scaffolding’ in such a way as to re-secure the dominance of presence justifying its existence. This is the damnation of the metaphysical human to a ‘building for eternity’, the trap of eternal progress. It is also the reason that the metaphysical canon is the documentation of progressive failure.

This chapter has attempted to elaborate the thinking of an autonomous technical movement that is the basis for Heidegger’s understanding of metaphysics and technic. In Sections 1.3 and 1.4, this issue has been turned over together with the question of the human. This latter endeavor is present such as to turn over a seemingly endless cycle of either/or and indecision. The hope in presenting the two issues together in this way has been two-fold. First, to provide a basis for understanding Heidegger’s ‘destruction of metaphysics’ as an elaboration of technic as an autonomous rationality that precedes the questions of the human and to contribute to such an elaboration. ‘Precede’ here

simply means that such an understanding of technic is endemic to posing the question of the human. Second, to accentuate the radical manner in which Heidegger poses the question of the human. The more assured discussions of *Dasein* of his early work are disrupted by the implications of the deconstruction and the notion of technic that follows from it. He will thus have to rethink what it means to understand humankind as *Dasein* following this critique.

The following chapter will reconstruct the central motifs of this chapter through Heidegger's discussions of and lexicon of *Gestell*. Heidegger's own thinking requires that he work through and elaborate *Gestell* as the formal condition of metaphysics. This allows him to think the 'Janus situation' constituted by his terms *Gestell* and *Ereignis* and avoid the 'endless' work of deconstructive movement aimed at productive differentiation. Put otherwise, without *Gestell* he cannot pose the question of the truth required to continue developing the question of humankind.

Das Ge-stell as ‘Technical Nature’ and (as) Metaphysics

The essence of modern technic rests in Ge-stell. This belongs in the collected ways guiding revealing. Such remarks say something entirely other than the oft reported talk of technic being the fate of our time, whereby fate means: what is unavoidable in an unwavering sequence of events. (VA 29)

Gestell is the name for ‘metaphysical’ or ‘technical’ *physis* and the consummate ‘form’ of metaphysics, i.e., the consummate (and/or ‘absolute’ – unconditioned) form of the technical *logos*. The previous chapter has attempted to show that this insight develops or arises during Heidegger’s ‘destruction of metaphysics’. In truth, *Gestell* is what precedes and presupposes all metaphysical activity. Metaphysics is rooted in the ‘logic’ of *Gestell* and in this way proceeds from it.¹ As the prevailing of the entirety of what exists, *Gestell* is what orients a philosophy that questions *physis* or *being* as presence and the presence of things. Whereas the ‘destruction of metaphysics’ remains reliant upon its source material and within a discussion *about* philosophy, the consolidated thinking of *Gestell* orients the preliminary or prolegomenatic thinking of Heidegger’s *Spätwerk*. This is to say that the elaboration of *Gestell* as both the basis for metaphysical thought and as the technical dimension of *physis* enables Heidegger’s thinking to pivot ‘away from’ metaphysics. Metaphysics, as a documented practice (metaphysical philosophy), provides the raw material for Heidegger’s understanding of technic and *Gestell*, which in the deconstruction of metaphysics are discovered to be its basis. The elaboration of these latter notions leads through technic towards the exploration of another thinking, a thinking that, in the first place, reintegrates technic into Nature and allows its proper ‘function’ therein.

In Heidegger’s 1949 Bremen lectures, *Einsicht in das was ist*, which precede the delivery of *Die Frage nach der Technik* by roughly 4 years, he chooses Θεσις (*thèseis*) as the ‘historical’ or ‘operative’ (*geschichtlich*) term marking the technical *logos*. ‘Thesis’ is what is ‘hidden’ in the Greek thinking of *physis*. Heidegger’s

¹ In his workbooks, Heidegger refers to a double nature, both senses of which are derived from technic and the processes of the ‘scientific human’. They are referred to as the ‘second nature’, produced technically by humankind and the ‘unmanaged nature’. Taken together, the two would form the movement whereby cumulative knowledge about nature – ‘domination of Nature’ as Heidegger refers to it – in the technical or optic mode is produced (GA 76, 343).

use of the German verb *stellen* to indicate the movement of technic is derived from this sense of *thésis* (GA 79, 62f.). *Thésis* is a ‘setting, placing, arranging’ a ‘position or situation’. Such setting and arranging should be thought in connection to the *logos* that gathers or collects. What has been called the technical *logos* here is therefore a *thetic logos*. It is the placing of things in order, the positioning of things according to presence and intelligibility, which is in every way inseparable from *physis*. Recognize that the entanglements of the previous chapter remain – between humankind and technic, *technē* and *physis*, *physis* and *logos*, and so on. Heidegger’s brief discussion of *thésis* in Bremen may indicate an acceptance that his ‘destruction’ was unable to ‘retrieve’ any notion of *physis* or *poeisis* from early occidental thinking that would somehow precede this ‘hidden dimension’ of the *thetic logos*. Instead, he is moved to first think (technical) *physis* as *Gestell*. The elaboration of *Gestell* is thus intended to open upon a potentially different or non-metaphysical thinking wherein ‘being occurs’ simultaneously as *Gestell* and *Ereignis*.

Heidegger names *Gestell* a ‘Janus head’ at the end of the seminar to “Zeit und Sein”, calling it a ‘between station’, a ‘transitional thought’ that can be viewed doubly as ‘metaphysics’ and as the ‘antecedent form’ (*Vorform*) of *Ereignis* (GA 14, 62-63). The latter designation indicates the role of the ‘destruction of metaphysics’, the result of which is *Gestell*, in the recognition or discovery of the notion *Ereignis* that guides Heidegger’s later thinking. This is raised again at the 1969 seminar in Le Thor, where he calls *Gestell* a ‘gateway’ (*Durchgang*) into a new way of thinking, namely a thinking guided by *Ereignis*. At the same time he calls *Gestell* the photographic negative of *Ereignis* (GA 15, 366). This second qualification is important insofar as it implies that *Gestell* is not something that is simply discarded following a ‘transition to a new thinking’. Rather, *Gestell* is thought in a sort of simultaneity with *Ereignis*. In thinking one, the other is thought.

The remaining two chapters of this essay will deal with Heidegger’s *Spätwerk* from the perspective of the Janus-situation, each of its purported two heads considered from *Gestell* and *Ereignis* in simultaneity or unity. What is crucial here is that the constellation *Gestell-Ereignis* does not overcome or move beyond what causes Heidegger to describe it as transitional. As has been noted, the announcement of the term *Ereignis* does not also announce some new philosophical, technological, or historical epoch. Moreover, there is no desire by Heidegger to ‘overcome’ *Gestell* (metaphysics) in the final analysis. *Gestell* is named by Heidegger as a transitional object, and this emphasis on transition and transitivity remains across various motifs in the *Spätwerk*.

Both the name Janus itself and the basic characteristics of the Roman god that takes the name Janus invoke significant motifs within Heidegger’s later

thinking. Its Proto-Indo-European and Indo-European roots relate to passage and movement in a manner that will shape the Heideggerian motifs of 'experience' and 'limit' to be discussed in the following chapter. Janus is the god that dominates beginnings. The Latin *iānus* indicates an 'arched passageway', a 'doorway', and refers to the 'god of gates and doors'. It is *both* beginning and end, a characteristic it shares with Heidegger's understanding of the limit.² While *Gestell* and *Ereignis* cannot be equated to presence and absence, to revealing and concealing, Heidegger's invocation of the Janus head is not without its relation to the 'dual nature' of truth as *aletheia*. Truth, for Heidegger, above all else, is *originary, irresolvable tension*. In its metaphysical formulation, truth, as immanent or inherent to *physis*, shows one side of itself in the formal presence of the *idea*, while its absent dimension is the 'forced presence' of the technical *logos*. With this doubly present dimension of truth consolidated as *Gestell*, it must be that *Ereignis* comes to indicate or name something like a 'true' absence or absence as such.

The present essay will make use of a slightly different use of the figure of Janus than Heidegger himself *appears* to. Rather than indicating a transition from one manner or thinking to another – *Gestell* as the transition *finally* from metaphysical to non-metaphysical thinking – Janus will be taken here as *the* figure of Heidegger's *Spätwerk*: as the figure of truth. Heidegger's discussions of Greek philosophy uphold a certain ambiguity between the terms *physis* and *aletheia*. At times they are conflated or made equivalent. At others, a slight distinction appears to be implied. It is therefore impossible to explore a notion of Nature in Heidegger's *Spätwerk* without acknowledging and ultimately upholding a degree of this ambiguity in the form of an absent resolution. As Heidegger's deconstruction of metaphysics aimed at the inherent limitation or delimitation of metaphysics, his reconstruction of the technical *logos* as *Gestell* leads to a similar point of limitation or delimitation which will aide in his development of *Ereignis* as a guiding orientation for thought.

This chapter will follow Heidegger's development of *Gestell* from a seemingly unconditioned or absolute self-relation of presence to the conditioning (making-possible) of this self-relation by an inherent dimension of finitude. It will do so in reference to the basis that has been laid in the previous chapter and elaborate *Gestell* as one 'pole' of truth. The core texts considered in this analysis will include the essay "Die Frage nach der Technik", the Bremen lectures on *Gestell* and 'what is' (GA 79), and Heidegger's technic workbooks (GA 76). As the finitude or inherent limitation of *Gestell* is traced out, Heidegger pursues the transitional object of his *Spätwerk* as something like the inverse relation

² Augustinus, *Den Gottesstaat*, pp. 336, 344ff.

between a finite universal (presence and its ontological register) and universal finitude (absence as such). *Technic is not mere artifice that will eventually be discarded by thought; rather it is the flawed (because finitely conditioned) attempt of Nature to universalize itself.* Technic is the striving of Nature towards self-expression as pure and equal self-relation. Its striving threatens to render all particular instantiations of technic or formalized presence equal, and therefore fungible, in terms of their utility within the self-relation of presence. The only reason why everything that is real and true is not expended in its entirety is the ‘conditioning’ named with *Ereignis*, a sort of finitude-as-such or universal finitude.

Section 2.1 will first consider the key terms *Geschichte* (‘history, occurrence’) and *Wesen* (‘essence, modality’) and their place in the development of Heidegger’s *Spätwerk*. Rather than bestow meaning or orientation to these terms in a position ‘after’ metaphysics and *Gestell*, this section will show how both terms ultimately belong to what is named and thought with the term *Gestell*. Put otherwise, *Geschichte* and *Wesen* are fundamental terms that Heidegger uses to characterize or elaborate *Gestell* as the ‘revealing’ aspect of the truth.

Section 2.2 will consider *Gestell*’s ‘absolute’ formulation in terms of the shifting modalities of revealing that exhaust the possibility of the technical *logos*. The two dominant motifs of metaphysics – antecedence and consummateness – will be considered from the reciprocity of Heidegger’s terms *Bestellen* (‘to order’) and *Bestehen* (‘to persist’) or *Bestand* (‘survival’). It is with these terms – terms of the ontological difference – that Heidegger attempts to elaborate the movement of *Gestell* as constituting the image of *thesis* (the technical *logos*). *Gestell* is, in this way, the ‘form’ of presence’s absolute self-relation. The section will close with a consideration of how the self-relation of presence is ‘secured’ without causality, a matter raised in the previous chapter in terms of Heidegger’s substitution of the technical *logos* for *causa efficiens*. The (metaphysical) notion of possibility will be discussed in terms of ‘probability’, which will help introduce the role of finitude in *Gestell*.

Section 2.3 will begin by considering finitude and/or the limitations Heidegger finds or builds into *Gestell*. Such limitations, of course, are inherited from Heidegger’s deconstruction of metaphysics. They stem from a lack of precision in metaphysics that is apparently attributable to its lack of true causal structure (and the general lack of such causality). *Gestell* secures itself without being precise. In a sense, it is a matter of correlating the presumptuousness of the antecedence, which provides the security of presence’s self-relation, with a sort of ‘use of incompleteness’. This is perhaps more clearly put as follows: finitude is what grants presence’s self-relation. The absolute self-relation of

presence is thereby viewed in terms of a partial image of Nature, while the purported 'world of presence' is viewed as a simulation. A recognition and acceptance that the technical dimension of Nature always constitutes an *internally incoherent simulation* is at once a freeing of technic towards what is proper to it and a freeing of humankind towards the search for another task, variously named 'thinking', 'building', 'dwelling', 'poeticizing'. The section will close with a discussion of the distinctions between philosophy, science, and thinking attempting to break down Heidegger's pejorative stance towards science and giving an indication of how thinking might be situated as another form of human practice.

2.1 History and Revelatory Modalities

Gestell is the gathering of all modes of revealing in accordance with the optic imperative. Put otherwise, it is the gathering of everything Heidegger wishes to indicate with the verb *stellen*, all modes of the technical *logos*. It is therefore the gathering of all modes of revealing that have been documented by the western philosophical canon, which is a documentation, it will be shown, of *being's self-simulation*. As the gathering of all modes of coming to presence, *Gestell* is quite literally the 'framework' within which all revealing occurs, and thus it is the framework, the possibility, of all those philosophies Heidegger calls metaphysics. Despite the apparently 'late invention' of modern technology, its essence or modality – *Gestell* as the *Wesen der Technik* – is *geschichtlich* earlier: the invention of technology is but a 'sub-occurrence' of *Gestell*'s 'timeless' structure. Heidegger goes so far as to say that *Gestell* is *aletheia* in its entirety, the totality of its 'sendings' (GA 76, 341).³ It will be seen that these sendings constitute something like modalities of intelligibility, though not in the sense of a historiographical sequence of representations. It is rather that *Gestell* names the 'totality' of these sendings, which makes it determinative or co-determinative for Heidegger's attempt to (re)think 'history' as *Geschichte*. Indeed, throughout Heidegger's workbooks on *Gestell* and modern technology (GA 76), *Gestell* is developed from, or at the very least placed adjacent to, *Geschichte* as the sending of revealing and *poeisis*.⁴

3 "Das Wesen der modernen Technik ist selber zweideutig als Gestell. 1. Gestell als Weise der *aletheia*, bzw. *aletheia* zugleich verhüllt im Gestell; 2. Gestell als *aletheia im ganzen Geschick* als dieses währen aus GeWahrnis (kein historisch vorstellender Ablauf – die Jähe und das *Verborgene*)" (emphases in original).

4 The previous footnote has indicated a point where Heidegger understands *Gestell* adjacent to *Geschichte* in terms of the revealing dimension of *aletheia*. Throughout this workbook this

The inseparability of *Geschichte* from *Gestell* can be seen in a decisive passage in "Die Frage nach der Technik". The passage in question considers *Gestell* as a 'sending of revealing', or *Geschick der Entbergung*, linking *Gestell* to the lexicon of *Geschichte* and *schicken* central to Heidegger's thinking (VA 28f.). *Gestell*, the 'essence' of modern technic, brings humans upon a way of revealing, all of which belong in *Gestell*.⁵ The verb *schicken* ('to send'), for Heidegger, means 'to bring on a way'. He then introduces the term *Geschick* as a collective noun for *schicken* that indicates the revealing of *schicken* as a collection or aggregate. *Geschick*, however, also indicates a number of motifs that belong to the technical *physis* of metaphysics. It can be understood in terms of 'craft', 'skill', 'ability', 'deftness', but also 'fate' and 'destiny'. *Geschick* is the ability to do something in the correct way (DWDS). One link to *Geschichte* might be found in the Middle High German *geschicke*, which means 'occurrence' (*Begebenheit*), as much as order or ordinance, as *Geschick* passes into a sense of legacy (*Vermächtnis* as the 'legacy' of the technical *logos*). The term *Geschick*, then, provides 'history' (*Geschichte*) with the technical undertones that lead Heidegger to discuss history in an essay apparently about technology.

Gestell brings humankind together with a way or the ways of revealing. This produces onto-epistemic paradigms in accordance with the optic imperative and as the source of metaphysical knowledge. The 'essence' of all history – all of which is 'in some way' subject to *Gestell* – is determined by gathering together human activity and a mode of revealing as 'one' (VA 28). What Heidegger names in *Gestell* is at least partially responsible for humankind's ability to move or act in a 'historical' manner. It 'endows' it with certain 'technical' skills, skills pertaining to presence and/or intelligibility. Insofar as *Gestell* is understood as intrinsic to Nature, *Gestell* precedes technic as the manner of its occurrence, just as this endowment of skills tying humankind intrinsically to technic precedes any sense of technology as 'man-made' or as 'culture'. What was viewed more stringently in the 'occurrence of metaphysics' as a paradigm, a dominant *idea* orienting intelligibility, now takes the sense of a mode or modality (*Weise*). In this way, variations of mode and modality – in terms of

dimension of revealing is thought from *poiēsis*. Examples can be found at GA 76, 328, 337, 342, et al. Heidegger also ties *poiēsis* to the two structural moments of the technical *logos* (*noein* and *legein*) at GA 76, 361.

⁵ Heidegger states this as if *Gestell* brought humankind to one particular 'way', the one wherein things are perceived as *Bestand*. However, it will be shown below – and is hinted at above in referring to the (*geschichtlich*) antecedence of *Gestell* – that the entirety of what exists as *Bestand* is the basis for all metaphysical epochs.

modalities and models of presence – seem to replace or translate what has thus far been referred to as formal presence.

Heidegger's remarks on *Wesen* that follow the discussion of *Geschichte* and *Geschick* suggest as much. His use of the term *Wesen* responds to questions of 'how?' (*modus*). The word has often been translated along the lines of 'essence'. More apt variations include 'essential unfolding' or 'essential occurrence'. In addition to his many pleas that the word not be understood as 'substance' or from the Latin *essentia*, his reduction of the metaphysical-canonical understanding of being to presence, as what is active or operative, destroys this possibility. *Essentia* is a direct translation of *ousia* and understanding *Wesen* as essence would render it just another word for presence. Heidegger's non-standard use explicitly derives the noun from its verbal form (*wesen*).⁶ The DWDS defines this verbal sense in terms of the 'presence (*vorhanden*) of a living force'. The most pertinent senses given in Grimm are 'the use or practice (*gebrauch*, utility) and conditions of ...' and the sense of an active dimension that is immanent to something ('what is it, what *west* in you'). One solution would be to drop the redundant 'essential' and render the term in English as unfolding, occurrence, or both.

Heidegger's use of *Wesen* also attempts to draw attention to an everyday usage that does not have the transcendental or suprasensible connotations of 'essence' and 'substance'. In this sense, 'essence' would be taken less as the true, underlying nature or being of something and more as the manner in which something takes place, its 'how'. Heidegger's discussion of *Wesen* begins with the sentence: *Ge-stell* is therefore, as a *Geschick der Entbergung*, the *Wesen* of technic (VA 28). What makes it a *wesen* is its being a 'gathering way of revealing'. To speak of a *Geschick der Entbergung* is to speak of the *Wesen* of *Gestell*, not a 'type' or 'species' (*Gattung*), but the way in which something "prevails, maintains itself, unfolds, and decays or expires" (VA, 34). Rather than indicating a homo- or heterogeneous totality underlying something ('substance', 'essence'), *Wesen* indicates the manner in which a heterogeneous unity takes place. *To name Gestell the 'Wesen' of technic says that Gestell is the modality of all technic, the mode(s) in which technic occurs.*

Heidegger's use of the term *Wesen* nevertheless appears somewhat inconsistent. At times it is difficult to distinguish whether or not he has his own idiosyncratic sense in mind or is speaking in a historiographical voice. From here forward, *Wesen* will be understood as the 'how' of something and will be most often translated along the lines of 'mode', 'modal', or 'modality', particularly when

⁶ "The noun is first derived from the verb 'wesen'" (VA 34).

it is a matter of ‘modes of revealing’.⁷ At times, particularly when Heidegger’s thinking is oriented by *Ereignis*, it will simply be rendered as the ‘active dimension’ of whatever, which can be seen towards the end of this chapter.

What is most important to recognize here is the way in which the consummation of metaphysics, reduced to the single term *Gestell*, transforms Heidegger’s understanding of history. When *Gestell* is understood collectively as all possible modes of revealing, the sense of progression or sequence in history is no longer operative.⁸ History (*Geschichte*) comes to refer to something like a latent or potential reserve of revealing (or intelligibility) and its occurrence or activation. The occurrence of history as a modality of revealing remains tied to the ‘revelatory’ dimension of truth by way of truth’s technical dimension. Heidegger’s co-determinate elaboration of the technical *logos* (*Gestell*), history (*Geschichte*), and modality (*Wesen*) not only serves to transform ‘history’, but also to further elucidate his sense of technic as something that does not originate in humankind. This transformation of Heidegger’s understanding of history, however, leads to two different ways of viewing ‘humankind’ in relation to ‘history’, which are not necessarily mutually exclusive.

On the one hand, it must be said that *Gestell* and *Geschichte* appear to be co-determined in relation to the human, though primarily with the task of showing that technic is not something ‘human’. It is not that there would be no technic without humankind, but sooner the case that there would be no humankind without technic. And yet one is never reducible to the other. Technic and humankind belong to one another in the entangled manner considered in the previous chapter. Humankind belongs to technic insofar as it belongs to revealing more generally, which is now understood ‘collectively’ in *Gestell*. Technic and humankind are not in the service of one another, but rather in the service of the revealing. What in the previous chapter was called the ‘optic imperative’ is referred to by Heidegger in his Bremen lectures as *Gestellungsbefehl* (literally, ‘the command or imperative of placing’). The placing of *Gestell* places the human in such a way as to ‘demand’ from the human that it partake in the act of placing and/as revealing, which Heidegger begins

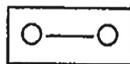
⁷ Heidegger explicitly uses the word ‘mode’ (*Modi*) in this sense in the protocol to “Zeit und Sein” (GA 14, 56).

⁸ The word ‘inoperative’ intends that the semblance of a technical progression *within* metaphysics is no longer operative or determinative for thought. Chapter 1 has attempted to show that the ‘incipient’ (*noein-legein*) and ‘closing’ (subject-object) binaries of metaphysics adhere here to and derive from the same basic structure, namely the *Gestell*-function in Nature. The necessity of metaphysical progression remains only as an artifact of its deconstruction. It is or has been one possible iteration of *Gestell*.

to speak of as the ordering of what exists on the basis of its reorderability (infinite rearrangements of the scaffolding of intelligibility). The human orders and reorders revealed presence and remains the second gatherer (*thetic* of a second order). The consummation of metaphysics is the 'revealing' of the manifold formations or implementations of the technical *logos* in relation to collective human action, or of philosophy as a practice in relation to human collectives (GA 9, 432). Much of this chapter is devoted to elucidating this determination of humankind in its entanglement with technic. The final subsection (*Philosophy and Thinking*), however, will consider humankind as both 'technician' and 'thinker'.

There is therefore the possibility of another relationship between humankind and 'history' (*Geschichte*), one that is not the production of a metaphysical canon or technical knowledge. This will be introduced at the end of this chapter and explored in Chapter 3. The temporal terms used by Heidegger to describe *wesen* as active – maintain, unfold, decay, expire – already hint at this, for not all of its characteristics are concerned with the technical preservation of presence (e.g. to decay, to expire). These characteristics are collected by Heidegger with the verb *wählen* ('to last') and placed in direct relation to 'what grants' (*gewähren*) (VA, 34ff.). The term *gewähren* is an indication of *Ereignis* as Heidegger states at Le Thor: "The sending is from *Ereignis*" (GA 15, 367). This introduces into the question of *Gestell* a peculiar sort of finitude which stems from the motif of *delimitation*. The modalities of revealing that orient heterogeneous presence are thought, first of all, in the sense of their constant occurrence. This is a trait of presence inherited from metaphysics. As Heidegger suggests in his preliminary studies to the *Technik* essay, 'what lasts' (*das Währende*) is to be thought first from the constancy (*ständig*) of substance as formal presence (GA 76, 341). This is also seen in the vocabulary Heidegger employs. He develops an interplay between the verbs *wahren* ('to keep, preserve, maintain') and *wählen* ('to endure') in order to derive from them 'what grants' (*gewähren*) this constancy. It is this granting of constant presence (from *Ereignis*) that delimits modalities and renders every configuration of presence non-total. It is as if Heidegger constructs a hierarchy of collective nouns (*Geschick, Gestell, Gewährnis*) that serves to orient thought (*Ereignis* being the 'most high'). The non-telic, constant revealing of *Gestell* is qualified by the non-telic, constant finitude that grants this revealing. Only in this way can he speak of constancy and decay or expiration at once. That the 'granting' attributable to *Ereignis* is finite will be seen in Section 2.3 and follow as a central theme of Chapter 3. It opens another Janus-like tension between the generic and the unique in Heidegger's later thinking.

2.2 The End/s of Possibility



“φανερὸν ὅτι πρότερον ἐνέγεια δυνάμεως ἔστι”

In his discussions of *Gestell*, Heidegger makes explicit what has been implicit throughout his reading of the metaphysical canon: presence ‘works on’ or ‘acts in’, it is active in a sort of transitive sense. The term transitive is indeed an awkward one here, though questions of grammar will be found in any attempt to seriously elaborate this term. The above discussion of Janus has already suggested that Heidegger’s later thought is concerned with transit and transition.⁹ ‘Transitive’, as a description of *Gestell*’s ‘movement’, takes its sense here primarily from its grammatical function in the construction of the term *Bestellen*, which Heidegger uses to name *Gestell*’s movement. The addition of the prefix *be-* in German generally serves to form transitive verbs out of intransitive verbs. This derives from a sense of ‘around or near’, verbally expressed as ‘being or bringing near’. Something similar was seen earlier with the prefix *an-* in *an-wesen* and *an-sprechen*. With transitive verbs, such as *stellen*, this ‘bringing near’ is extended across an entire ‘object’.¹⁰ It can thus be said that *Bestellen* is constructed (or chosen by Heidegger) to indicate or emphasize that the *stellen* of *physis* is diffuse across the entirety of what exists.

Heidegger’s use of *Bestellen* indicates the ‘universality’ of the thetic dimension (named by *stellen*) in all things (*das Seiende im Ganzen*), or again, the latent possibility of being ordered according to the optic imperative. It is, in this way, the pervasive imposition (*Walten, Gewalt, Gestellungsbefehl*) of a technical or thetic *logos* that ‘befalls’ every thing and at all times and from which, like the τὸ μὴ δῦνόν ποτε, it seems nothing could ‘escape’. *Bestellen* always ‘works on’ (*bestellt*) what is ‘orderable’ (*bestellbar*), where ‘always’ means ‘in advance’ (antecedently) according to essences (modalities) that it has secured in advance. This is the violence of *Gestell* (GA 79, 29-30).

⁹ Beyond invoking ‘transit’ and ‘transference’, the term has grammatical and mathematic meanings that are not directly considered here.

¹⁰ As an example from common language, take the verb ‘to build’ (*bauen*) with which it can be said that one builds a house (*ein Haus bauen*) or builds upon a piece of land (*auf ein Grundstück bauen*). The addition of the prefix *be-* extends the action in space and time. For example, the phrase *ein Gelände bebauen* means to develop an entire area, perhaps with housing or commerce infrastructure.

The discussions in the last chapter regarding the 'categorical doubling' of the technical *logos* in its coming to appear and know itself showed that the transitivity of presence can only be directed at itself. *Bestellen* moves in the self-referential manner of Aristotle's technical *physis*. It moves in the immanent realm of the immediate address of presence itself. It can be said, then, that *Bestellen* is a movement 'within' everything that exists. Thus it is within humankind as well. The human, the philosopher, can be and is *bestellt* as a functionary of technic. This is an inexorable feature of its being-questioned. As with Heidegger's investigation of Aristotle's *physis*-concept, which begins from the question of movement (*kinesis*), an elaboration of *Gestell* might begin with the 'work' (*Bestellen*) that characterizes it. The remainder of this section will consider the work of *Gestell* from two of its central motifs: antecedence and consummateness.

Consummate Recursion

It could be thought that the first and most obvious way to characterize *Gestell* is from the word itself as a collective noun. This would correspond to a general trend in Heidegger's use and understanding of the *ge-* prefix in German, seen above in the relation of *schicken* to *Geschick*. With *Gestell*, this does not hold up etymologically (see below). However, this does not stop Heidegger from conflating (or combining, to speak less pejoratively) the use of *ge-* to form collective nouns with its other uses: to form *nomina rei actae*, or nouns that speak of the result of an action; to form participles; to form so-called 'action nouns', etc. All of these uses are exploited and intertwined by Heidegger in his own idiomatic approach to 'phenomenological description' abbreviated in the suggestion that *die Sprache spricht* ('language speaks'). This is to say that Heidegger's selection of the word *Gestell* is not arbitrary and intends to evoke and 'collect' a manifold of senses indicated in the movement of technic.

Whatever the specific grammatical or linguistic justification in this case, Heidegger does state that *Gestell* is the gathering of all *stellen*, all placing (GA 76, 320). He would add, perhaps, that *Gestell* has the modes of the technical *logos* at its disposal. In having them, its movement is 'enclosed'; without outside. This recalls the *Verfügung* (the disposability of command) and 'steering' of the *physis archē* that 'has itself within its end'. It is reflective or self-referential. This self-referentiality was seen in Heidegger's Aristotle interpretation as the unity of structure and structuring (the unity of the ontological difference) and was otherwise referred to as the 'unity of a doubling', where *physis* doubles itself in order to know or encounter itself, returning to itself in encountering its 'double'. In *Die Frage nach der Technik* Heidegger states that the very movement of revealing reveals itself to itself each time it 'places' something in presence

(*Das Entbergen entbirgt ihm selber seine eigenen, vielfach verzahnten Bahnen dadurch, daß es steuert*) (VA 20).¹¹ It secures what is possible for it by revealing itself to itself in its work, regardless of the particular mode of its enactment. It has itself within its end (*ergon-telos*).

In "AΦ 1939" Heidegger rejected the spatial image of a circle to describe the movement of (technical) *physis* in favor of something like a structural circularity. In speaking of *Gestell*, he regularly uses the terms *Kreis* ('circle' or 'circuit') and *Kreisgang* ('circular course'). The circuitry of *Gestell* is therefore not spatial. Nor does it appear to be temporal. Although the role of antecedence spanning the previous chapter is central to describing *Gestell*, this antecedence must also be considered as a structural feature or function and not spatially or temporally. Antecedence pertains to *Gestell's* circuitry in terms of the certainty or security of determining or (re)ordering things according to the *Gestellungsbefehl*. Heidegger thinks 'certainty' (*Sicherheit*) primarily in terms of what is secure or secured, namely presence's absolute self-relation. The 'activation' of *Gestell*, the 'use' of its purposed-*idea*, is its manner of securing itself in 'revealing itself to itself'. The self-revealing or self-showing of things is a matter of self-relation from the perspective of *Gestell*. Heidegger's discussions of its circuitry seem to translate the doubling wherein the two structural moments of technical *physis* are understood from the production of a *noein* that encounters the *legein*, i.e., the production by presence of a 'second position' through which to encounter itself. It is a 'circularity' to which all things are 'subject' by their very nature. Heidegger states that things are in this movement such that 'we stand in reflection'. Such 'reflection' is not necessarily the movement of the entity itself, but rather of the presence pervading all things. This might be referred to as something like the 'total mobilization' of the thetic capacity inherent in all things. *Gestell* holds sway over this thetic capacity. Reflection is qualified here as a 'resetting' (a 'casting or projecting back', *Rückwerfen*) and something like a 'reverse- or backwards-inflection' (a 'turn back' *Rückbeugung*) (GA 76, 349). The construction of formal or modal presence (*stellen, bestellen*) through which technical Nature 'knows itself' is in every instance a 'resetting' of this capacity.

The movement of *Gestell* might therefore be referred to as 'recursive' or, better, as a 'self-enclosed recursion' or 'consummate recursion'. 'Self-enclosed' and

¹¹ "Revealing reveals to itself the manifold, interlocked courses [of revealing] that belong to it (*seine eigenen*) and through which it steers." This sentence will serve as a central assertion of Heidegger to be returned to throughout the elaboration of *Gestell* in this section. In the previous chapter, the technical *logos* was considered in terms of the 'present' or 'revealed/ing' aspect of truth or *physis* and associated in this way with the metaphysical *legein*. Earlier in this chapter it was asserted that *Gestell* is the 'form' of all possible modes of revealing.

'consummate' would serve here to indicate that there is no 'outside' at play here. Nor is it a matter of opposites, opposing forces or systems encountering one another in order to be resolved in a restructuring to which the initial movement would return. As the previous chapter has shown, technical oppositions are a matter of 'internal' differentiation as a structural necessity. The Oxford English Dictionary defines 'recursion' as "the repeated application of a recursive procedure" and 'recursive' as "characterized by recurrence or repetition".¹² The word is derived from the Latin *recursio* meaning a 'backwards course', itself deriving from the verb *recurrō* meaning 'to run or hasten backward; to return, revert, recur'. Recursion is the return of an operation to itself characterized by repetition of itself. The lack of an outside here is substantiated by the fact that Heidegger situates the *thetic* capacity as a capacity inherent or immanent to all things, without individuals or individual things being in control of the manner in which this thetic capacity registers.

Vagt's commentary on Heidegger and quantum physics offers useful remarks on recursivity in Heidegger's thought. Her analysis refers primarily to Heidegger's remarks on mathematics in the essay "Die Frage nach dem Ding" and does not stray far from Heidegger's own. Both continue the work of understanding of *Gestell*'s recursive structure. These remarks will also link Heidegger's reading of Plato's cave allegory to the movement or work of *Gestell* in terms of his admission that metaphysics and/or ontology is mathematical in nature and that, following from this, metaphysical knowledge and ontological register, as discussed in the previous chapter, are also mathematical.

Vagt's commentary demonstrates the link between the motif of antecedence and the consummately recursive structure of *Gestell*.¹³ Heidegger understands mathematics as what prefigures knowledge about things. The 'mathematic' (*mathēmata*) is what is already known about things (GA 41, 57). The mathematical – following Heidegger, Vagt equates it with the Kantian *a priori*¹⁴ – is the antecedence that, since Plato, guarantees the determination of a thing or entity as a process of a systematic science. The 'power' (*Mächtigkeit*) of mathematics, however, lies not in the antecedent position itself, but in its

¹² Both definitions appear to be circular in nature, including the term or a variation of the term to be defined within the definition. This issue will appear again in a below discussion of probability.

¹³ Vagt, *Geschickte Sprünge*, 151–155.

¹⁴ Antecedence is *antecedō*, which means both 'to precede' and 'to surpass'. It relates semantically in this way to transcendence (*transcendere*, 'to climb over, surpass') and the understanding of metaphysics as concerned with what is 'beyond' or 'above' the physical.

structure of return or reversion (*Struktur des Zurückkommens*) made possible by this antecedent position. For Heidegger, the structure of mathematics is recursive in the same manner as *Gestell*. It is the ‘activation’ or ‘use’ of an antecedently situated access to a ‘trait’ inherent in all things.

As the guarantor of *physis*’s systematization – the determination of an entity as a systematic process – the recursive structure of mathematics is treated in relation to learning in its Platonic sense. In *Die Frage nach dem Ding*, Heidegger refers to learning as a matter of taking in what is already known and calls this a taking in of mathematics. Learning is a ‘giving to self’ (*Sichselbstgeben*) of what one already has (GA 41, 56). Learning is repetition and giving-to-self. This is what *Gestell* is said to do in the activation of itself (each revealing is a revealing-to-self of the technical *logos*). Ontology is grounded in mathematics and tied directly to the recursive structure of academic knowledge.¹⁵ Knowledge derived from the recursive structure of mathematics is ‘academic’ in the sense that it can be traced to Plato’s academy,¹⁶ where knowing is ‘conditioned’ by and ‘restricted’ to the mathematic (GA 41, 58).¹⁷ This restriction to the mathematic – which Heidegger takes to be the antecedent position directed by necessity of the intelligible – is important insofar as it will ‘reveal’ the inherent finitude of mathematics and/or ontology (metaphysics) (Section 2.3).

Heidegger uses the number as an example of the ‘already known’. The already known mediates what is learned in ‘experience’.¹⁸ Three chairs are three chairs because the number three stands in an antecedent position. The ‘thing itself’, however, is not something that is learned. What is learned is only the utility of the thing, itself seeming to lie ‘already there’. Utility can be understood here in the broad terms of an ontological register: presence or intelligibility in

¹⁵ Ontology is grounded in the antecedent power of the mathematical in the manner of the optic imperative.

¹⁶ This is a reference to the fabled inscription above Plato’s academy: *Ageōmetrētos mēdeis eisitō!* Heidegger translates this as “None who have not understood the mathematical will have entrance here”. The accuracy of such a translation, particularly given the question of this phrase’s existence, is of no interest here.

¹⁷ In years to come, it will be no surprise to historians of philosophy that and why Alain Badiou, who implicitly claims Heideggerian ontological lineage, situated his major work of ontology as an elucidation of the assertion “mathematics=ontology”. See above regarding the mathematical-logical nature of the assertion of a *Gestell*-determined ontology. See the introduction to Badiou’s *Being and Event*. Discussions of a Heideggerian lineage are found at p. 9f. Discussions of the assertion “mathematics=ontology” are found at p. 6f. Alain Badiou, *Being and Event*, trans. Oliver Feltham (London: Continuum, 2005).

¹⁸ Heidegger’s more idiomatic understanding of experience will be discussed in Chapter 3.

relation to a purposed-*idea*.¹⁹ 'Three' is the purposed-*idea* according to which some chairs register. 'Three' is the *modality* of the chairs' being-revealed. But number is only one possible modality of revealing. In the same way, 'sitting' can be the modality according to which the chair is revealed. In the aggregation (consummation) of the *Gestellungsbefehl*, differing modalities of 'three' and 'sitting' may combine to form another modality of revealing, three-sitting. Such modal combinations would appear to be attributable to the recursive structure (a self-giving) that is a 'resetting' of itself *ad infinitum*. The relation of modal combinations to the function of the copula will be discussed below. With the modalities of three or sitting or three-sitting, nothing is transferred between subject and object, nor between subject and subject, but rather a 'chair' or 'three' register according to an antecedent position, or again, to some (presence's) purposed-*idea*.²⁰

Academic knowledge does not derive from 'experience', according to Heidegger, but rather from the filtering of experience or the replacement of experience altogether through the antecedence structure that determines revealing. This is the same as what the last chapter referred to as a purposed-*idea*. Learning is a making-use of what is 'already there' in a two-fold sense. It is the doubling of the role of the purposed-*idea* as 'general' and 'specific'. The purposed-*idea* of *Gestell* is that of the movement registering presence in general, whereas the purposed-*idea* registering presence in a specific instance appears to be one of prefigured utility. The latter could be linked to the 'rearranging of the scaffolding', while the genericity of *Gestell* allows it to serve as an aggregate of these many scaffoldings or modes of revealing, these 'manifold interlinked courses through which it steers'. The work that produces academic

¹⁹ Utility was discussed in the previous chapter as marking humankind's relationship to the technical *logos*. With *Gestell* it is discussed more in terms of the technical *logos*'s self-relation, within which, of course, the human can become 'entangled'.

²⁰ Imagine the 'person' who is constantly revealing something of themselves in their actions, constantly producing, in this way, data input. In terms of the 'purposed-*ideas*' produced by advertising firms or government apparatuses, these 'persons' do not register according to 'personhood' or ipseity or whatever variation of occidental mythology surrounding 'subjecthood'. 'Persons' register, are captured and accounted for, according to combinatorial modes of revealing, whether this is concerned primarily with their 'desires' and 'consumer habits' or their patterns of movement and uses of particular phrases. The situation is quite similar when it comes to speaking of 'Aristotle' or 'Heidegger' as a 'discursive regularity'. The person or subject disappears in configurations of registerable presence that serve primarily to reaffirm *Gestell* to itself. The utilization of this by intermediary functions such as advertising firms or government apparatuses for 'good' or for 'bad' does not change the basic structure of a technical *logos* that has been appropriated here by occidental metaphysics. They simply carry out the work of *Gestell*.

knowledge *could* be attributed to humans as what philosophers and scientists ‘do’, however, in such an attribution the human itself is *bestellt* and registered according to the *idea* of its utility. Thus Heidegger maintains the ultimate attribution here to be something like a process in Nature that he names *Gestell*.

Heidegger does not seem to deal with the question of a potentially broadening horizon of metaphysical or *Gestell*-oriented knowledge as a matter of knowledge’s ‘progression’ or ‘advancement’, for the simple fact that he views it ‘all’ as iteration or expression of the same movement of the technical *logos*. It could be said that the rearranging of antecedent frameworks only shifts the modality according to which presence registers and, in this way, is merely a shifting of the horizon(s) of academic knowledge. This appears to be his peculiar way of removing his analyses from a susceptibility to value judgments. Whereas notions of progress or advancement tend to elicit the judgments ‘good’ or ‘bad’, the shifting of horizons of technical knowledge, the broadening of a certain paradigm of knowledge, is neither good nor bad. It is inevitable. It is a ‘building for eternity’ or, as Vagt refers to it, the *fate* (the *Schicksal*, the ‘sending’) of an infinite task.²¹ Nonetheless, it can be suggested that the shifting or broadening of metaphysical horizons and/or a rearranging of the antecedent framework does produce something like an increase in the storehouse of catalogued presence, though ‘progress’ would remain only within a retrospective assessment of such a catalogue. And while there is ample evidence to suggest that Heidegger the person had value-oriented views concerning the role of technological advancement in the 20th century, the task of his thinking is not to assess the specifics of this advancement, but rather to find its most generic breadth and capacity, in hopes of finding something else, some other or limit.

A working understanding of the recursive movement of *Gestell* can thus be considered as follows. *Bestellen* is the ‘work’ through which *Gestell* is actualized in the entirety of what exists. To put this in Greek terms, it is the work of *thesis* inherent to all things of ‘Nature’. It is the technical *logos* ‘present’ in every thing. It can be said that each instantiation of a thetic ordering, each modality of ontological register, occurs within the context of the totality, that is, any ‘localized’ thetic ordering is an arrangement or rearrangement of the totality,

²¹ Perhaps it can be said that the ‘history of metaphysics’, as Heidegger constructs it, is itself an aggregating process that has shifted and therefore broadened its horizon(s), broadened its capacity for registering Being, to the point where philosophy was able to recognize itself as such; and to recognize that such an aggregate framework is bound to ‘higher’ aggregation of the *Gestell*-function in Nature. Perhaps it is this recognition that Heidegger mythologizes with his ‘other beginning’.

a shifting of the relational structure that designates presence's totality.²² As 'absolute' technical *logos* in all things, it is neither causal nor successive. In this way, it has no 'outside'. It 'effects' only itself. It does not go out beyond some 'originating place' and then return to itself. It is much more *the giving of itself to itself in the shifting of its own limit*. Its outermost point is the fluctuating limit-point of metaphysical knowledge that delimits the production of configurations according to which knowledge is arranged, drawn from the same source, subject to the same imperative. It produces nothing new.

The Open Already

The phrase 'new nothing', in qualifying what *Gestell* produces, refers to the apparent lack of any external antagonism, any lack in knowledge or technical proficiency that would be 'overcome' in the advancement of technical movement. This lack of 'newness' is attributable to the fact that *Gestell* names a movement that is 'aggregate' (gathered or collected) and 'consummate' (*vol-lendet*). That 'the essence of technology' does not produce anything 'new' is quite opposed to common understandings of what is at stake in technology and technological production. Technology is often thought of as being bound up in a progressive movement, whereby the limitations (antagonisms) inherent to or placed upon existing technology gives way to a 'solution' in the form of an improved or advanced technological object. Innovation is understood as the relationship between humankind and technology, wherein humankind is the 'agent' or 'conduit' for resolution. For Heidegger, however, innovation can be little more than the shifting of a horizon (shifting, not surpassing) of what already is. This is at least the case when *Gestell* is viewed in isolation, without reference to *Ereignis* or what is developed in the 'topology'. Heidegger speaks of this in terms of the production of interlocked chains and courses (*verzahnten Bahnen*), chains that amount to mere amalgamations of what is 'already there'.²³ These can be seen both historiographically and technologically.

The historiographical sense of this has already been discussed. *Gestell* names all modes of revealing documented by the metaphysical canon or all the modes of accounting for constant presence as rendered by the philosophers, i.e., the interlocking chains of 'metaphysical epochs' as chains of filters

²² This would relate to the basic, dictionary definition of 'recursive' in terms of computation: 'relating to or involving a program or routine of which a part requires the application of the whole, so that its explicit interpretation requires in general many successive executions' (OED).

²³ What is really intended here and will be taken up below is that 'courses' and 'chains' refer to compositions or configurations of presence: "[Das Bestellen] versammelt in sich alle möglichen Arten des Stellens und alle Weisen ihrer Verkettung" (GA 79, 32).

registering constant presence. *Gestell* is the form of these epochs' possibility; its 'framework' and metaphysical paradigms of knowledge are only iterations of this.

The 'technological' examples that Heidegger provides, which are somewhat limited, do seemingly suggest an advance, in the sense of producing something out of something else. They evoke the 'new use' of natural resources associated with industrialization, though this 'newness' is misleading. One of the reasons the examples can be misleading is attributable to the fact that, in discussions of *Gestell* and technic, they remain mostly within the context of industrialization and early machine technology. This is certainly the case for the *Technik* essay. Given that the examples seen thus far have come from quantum physics, it is a wonder why Heidegger's deep interest in this science, as well as in cybernetics – which is to say, in fields that engage more with mathematics, computation, and post-industrial technology – did not produce more examples in his published work.²⁴ Whatever the reasoning for Heidegger's own decisions regarding rhetoric and examples, these choices have allowed for his understanding of technology be viewed through a sort of pastoral, anti-modern lens. Yet Heidegger would have certainly understood that modernity is not the age of the debasement of traditional principles, but rather, as the word modernity itself suggests, the consummation of traditional principles as their constant flux.²⁵

The main examples in "Die Frage nach der Technik" are given when Heidegger qualifies the movement (*stellen*) of the technical *logos* as a 'demanding' (*herausfordern*), indicating again the dimension of utility in presence's self-relation. The examples are taken from the process of energy extraction – access via extraction to 'hidden energy' (the wresting of unconcealment from concealment). An exemplary sequence is given as follows: 'hidden energy' is unlocked and/or developed, rearranged (transformed or converted), saved or stored in rearranged form, distributed or redistributed, such that what is distributed or redistributed is newly shifted or transformed again. All of the verbs

²⁴ The reasoning for this may be that the technical specificity runs the risk of reinterpreting the 'past' or what already is through an emerging technical paradigm. Perhaps Heidegger felt that the more mundane examples he tended to use were more suited to the generic nature of phenomenological analyses/description.

²⁵ Take the importance of the relationship between 'presence' and *Wesen* in Heidegger's work. The word 'modern' refers to something current, better said, the 'nowness' of something. This stems from the Latin *modo* ('just now'). It can also be taken in terms of *modus* as measure. The measure for things, in terms of technic, is the current modality of revealing.

used (*erschließen, aufschließen, umformen, speichern, verteilen, umschalten*) name modes of revealing that are always already available and remain available and accessible in and to *Gestell* (VA 20). The impression of something 'new' is the appearance of something by way of shifting modes of revealing. The 'chains of demand' are not a progression, but concern the shifting of an ontological register on the basis of a modality of revealing. When coal is *gestellt*, this occurs in relation to the 'demand' for heat, in relation to the 'demand' for steam, etc. Each self-revealing or being-revealed-as is a 'call back' to revealing itself, 'resetting' the movement.

In Heidegger's examples, entities come to register ontologically in modalities of revealedness rooted in utility: coal presences as heat, the river presences as the force it provides to a hydroelectric plant, etc. According to Heidegger, the modal shift that occurs with 'utility' occurs on the basis of a 'demand' (for energy, for sitting, and so on). The rhetorical effect of *herausfordern* ('to challenge, to demand, to provoke'), which is often translated into English along the lines of 'to challenge forth', sounds stronger (and potentially more pejorative) than what is actually being thought here. The utility indicated by *herausfordern* refers to the relationship between presence and a purposed-*idea* that is reset or repeated with each occurrence. *Herausfordern* might then be better translated as 'to place something in being placed' or 'to order in ordering'. One modality captures something with another. In this case, the *heraus-* would refer to the extraction seen in Aristotle's notion of genesis. In Heidegger's examples it is a matter of producing (or setting in motion) 'unified' or co-determinate binaries via 'work' or 'use', a sort of micro-*Gestell* whereby the emergence of one thing *qua whatever* shifts the mode in which another thing is present. The 'logic' is quite similar to the production of the *noein* from out of the *legein* whereby the latter appears to the former on the basis of a purposed-*idea*. It might even be referred to as an extrapolation of the production of the *noein*. Recall that the *noein* is also a structural moment demanded by presence, understood as a taking-in or receiving – and when philosophically anthropomorphized, a 'perceiving'.

The presence of things (the Being of beings) has become totally subsumed in the presence of the technical *logos* (Being as such). What Heidegger terms 'what being' (*wassein*, roughly *essentia*) appears dominated by a *kinēsis*, which he refers to as '*that* being' (*daf̄sein*, a sort of '*that it is*') and whose 'complete' form or iteration can be taken in the sense of *actio* as *energeia* (and associated

roughly with *existentia*).²⁶ It is for this reason that the term Heidegger uses for presence in his writings on *Gestell – Bestand* – indicates something already accomplished. *Bestand* is the nominalization of the preterit (or ‘simple past tense’) of the verb *bestehen* (‘to persist’). *Bestand* names both the constancy of presence and the accomplishment of this as having already ‘occurred’ in the securing of the technical *logos*. What is *bestellt* and constantly subject to the technical *logos* is *Bestand*. *Bestand* is the precedence of thetic constancy. Where *bestehen* means ‘to exist, persist, subsist’, *Bestand* names this constant existence (presence) antecedently.

Where constant presence is *ascrivable to* the antecedent form of the technical *logos* (*bestellen*), the inverse is also true. The antecedent position of the technical *logos* is owing to constant presence. In terms of grammar, the verb *bestehen* may be among the general exceptions to the transitivity implied in the *be-* prefixes. This does not stop Heidegger from setting constant presence in a necessary reciprocity with *bestellen* that implies constant presence itself is transitive. This transitivity of *bestehen* is, of course, the recursive movement (a reflexive transitivity) discussed in the previous subsection. The extension of *Bestehens* ‘action’ (*stehen*, ‘standing’) over all things (the constancy of *stehen*) has already been discussed in terms of the thetic dimension inhering in all things. Because it marks, in some way, both the origin and aim of thetic movement (*bestellen*), the ‘standing’ of presence is always conceived of as a setting-in-motion (of itself). The reciprocity of *bestellen* and *bestehen* remains structurally very close to Heidegger’s reading of Parmenides (the reciprocity of *legein* and *noein*), though without now being able to distinguish which of the

²⁶ It must be noted here that referring Heidegger’s understanding of *wassein* and *dafsein*, as they remark the ‘ontological difference’, to *essentia* and *existentia* could be a cause for confusion. The philosophical distinction between ‘essence’ and ‘existence’ is not at all clear in Heidegger, who is concerned primarily here with philosophy’s production of an ‘ontological register’. The Latin *essentia* (essence, being, substance, etc.) translates the Greek *ousia* (‘presence’), itself derived from *eimí* (I am, I exist). *Existentia* (existence) derives from *existo* (or *exsistō*), which could in turn be understood from *sistō* (I stand or place) and *stō* (I stand, I remain). *Existentia* does not have an immediate Greek conceptual correlate in the way *essentia* links to *ousia*. Its motifs, however, clearly correspond to the thought Heidegger is developing here, which may explain why he often seems concerned with the Latin *actio* as a ‘mistranslation’ of *energeia*. In this context it is best to understand *wassein* as ‘constant presence’ and *dafsein* in terms of the placing or ordering that shifts ontological register (see below) and allows presence to presence constantly or repeatedly. It is hopefully clear by now that a sort of Aristotelian *kinēsis* dominates both ‘sides’ of the ontological difference. Recall that in his reading of Aristotle, the highest articulation of *ousia* (*wassein*) is *energeia* by way of the technical *logos*. The terms *Bestand* and *bestellen* can only be understood from the sort of entangled reciprocity seen here in their ‘philosophical roots’.

two would fulfill the functional role of the *noein*. The terms *Bestand* and *bestellen* represent the 'ontological difference' in the lexicon of *Gestell*, which is no longer between Being and beings, but rather indicates the reciprocal entanglement of *wassein* and *dafsein* in the movement of *Gestell*.

Using an analogy to the 'machine', Heidegger writes that something 'stands' (*is*) only insofar as it moves or 'goes' (*Sie steht nur, insofern sie geht*). Something is constantly present only to the extent that it operates (GA 79, 35). And when something exists under such and such a modality, it has already determined the modality in which other things will register. Put otherwise, constant presence (*Bestehen, Bestand*) is always the setting-in-motion of the recursive movement whereby *bestellen* and *bestehen* bespeak the self-referentiality of 'coming to appear' and 'appearing' (the extension of the *thetic* dimension of *physis* over its entire object, i.e., itself). On the basis of the 'constant resetting' of the technical *logos* in shifting modes of revealing, *Bestand* might best be understood as *continued existence or constant presence grounded in being subject to change*. This is the mode of existence or 'true ontological register' for the entirety of what exists accounted for by the form of *Gestell*. The setting-in-motion of *Bestand* is Being (presence) as such.

The emphasis on movement as a sort of modal transfer, specifically here as being subject to shifting modalities, is also inherited from Aristotle's *physis*-concept. Toward the beginning passages of "ΑΦ (1939)" Heidegger remarks that *kinēsis* is co-determined by or as *metabolē*, a 'change' or 'transfer'. Heidegger wants to consider this as a 'breaking out' or 'breaking through' (*Aus- und Durchschlag*) of something hitherto concealed or absent into presence (*Vorschein*) (GA 9, 249). In a way, it can be said that this is precisely what happens with the technical *logos* over the course of Heidegger's interpretation. It comes to show through in the place of anticipation (*Vorschein*). But this sense of 'breaking out into the unconcealed' is more or less abandoned with *Bestand*. The word *Umschlag* ('envelope', 'turnover') that Heidegger uses to translate *metabolē*, however, seems more fitting here than in "ΑΦ 1939". Change is the 'enveloping' of the thing in a different mode of revealing, a 'turnover' in the way it registers ontologically. Positing everything available, *bestellen* works like an elementary circuit, turning things on and off, like the blinking lights of an intricate control board.

The modal shifting that characterizes the work or movement of *Gestell* indicates the 'openness' particular to it (the 'openness of the *idea*'). This 'openness', better understood as a malleability, is made possible by the apparent 'closedness' of its consummate recursion. Because it is ever consummate, the work of the technical *logos* cannot amount to an accumulation of what registers ontologically. Its aggregation, qualified as consummate, must always be 'already'.

The technical *logos* merely shifts the ontological register. This shifting is the ‘openness’²⁷ of presence; it is attributable to the securing of the technical *logos*, which governs modes of revealing, and this securing must always ‘presuppose’ its ‘totality’.

In the Bremen lectures, Heidegger summarizes or defines the self-referential openness of *Gestell* as the ‘the self-driving circulation, which is in itself monopolizing and gathering, of the placing of what is placeable in the placing’ (GA 79, 33).²⁸ Such a statement may seem a groundless, purely phenomenological assertion drawn from an analysis of modern technic in the form of statistics, cybernetics, or predictive analytics, universalizing their assumptions and analogizing this to the ‘machinic’.²⁹ It would be a silent acknowledgement of those ‘examples’ Heidegger has mostly left out. While there may be a dimension of accuracy to this, the notion of ‘openness’ has already been developed in Heidegger’s reading of the metaphysical canon via Aristotle. It is the structure of metaphysics that is determinative here. There is no backwards determination somehow rooted in the naturalization or making-absolute of a

²⁷ This ‘openness’ is also something like total or absolute publicness (*Öffentlichkeit*) whereby the human is registered ontologically via the ‘placing’ of different apparatuses directed at the public. For example, the radio registers humankind ontologically through the faculty of hearing or listening, the television through viewing. The human becomes a reified ear or eye directed at the continued presence of transmission from these apparatuses, creating constellations of constant presence that cycle in themselves. The ear is the ‘source’ of the radio’s constant presence, the radio the ‘source’ of the ear’s constant presence. The present situation, where the human is entangled with privately-owned media infrastructure, perhaps exemplifies this more clearly than Heidegger could have imagined, especially in relation to the crisis of truth found in the modern secularization of Europe (Nietzsche, etc.) and later in ‘crisis’ in fundamental science. As the general lack of foundations in ‘truth’ has become more widely recognized, ‘individuals’ have increasingly turned inward, allowing individual ‘worlds’ to be constructed from a seeming countless number of possible sources. The human is thus *bestellt*, the workings of the mind and emotions register the individual only as the source of constant presence for microcosms of nonsense which the individual itself – an idiot (*ἰδιος*) – has wished or willed into ‘existence’. In doing so, it seems that the individual would constantly send more and more modes of register – combinations it has created – back into the media infrastructure. One possible ‘consequence’ of this ‘bloating’ of the infrastructure is the accelerating anonymization of the individual, leaving the question of its register and the register of the ‘human’ more generally to a vast array of possible technical configurations – another iteration of the Heraclitean ‘no escape’. See the following section for a discussion of the partitioning of *Bestand* in the creation of configurations.

²⁸ ‘Monopolizing’ is taken from Heidegger use of the verb *raffen* and the substantive *Geraff*: “Das Ge-stell ist in sich die raffend treibende Zirkulation des Bestellens des Bestellbaren in das Bestellen.”

²⁹ ‘Machinic’ in the sense of the transmissions (*Getriebe*, an aggregate ‘shifting’, a ‘gearbox’) of what propels (*Betriebe*, ‘the undertakings or operation’).

contemporary technical paradigm. Or, at the very least, Heidegger is aware of this and strives to avoid it. The presence of Aristotle's notion of genesis can be seen in statements that precede Heidegger's summary:

Ge-stell constantly draws what is orderable or placeable into the circularity (*Kreisgang*) of presence's transitivity (*Bestellen*), fixes it there and assigns it as what is constant (*Beständige*) in continual existence (*Bestand*). This assigning (*Abstellen*) does not place what is constant outside of placing's circuitry (*Kreisgang des Stellens*). It simply reassigned (*abstellen*), which is to say that it places away and forth (*hin*) in a subsequent placeability, i.e., back into presence's transitivity (*hinein und zurück in das Bestellen*). (GA 79, 32 – emphasis added)

Recall that the basic structure of Aristotle's notion of *genesis* was to 'extract' (*Entstellung*) from a generic placing into appearance (*Gestellung*) and, in doing so, to 'hide' ('place away') the very operation whereby presence is fixed into appearance. The assigning and 'reassigning' (*Abstellen*) here is the same as the 'self-placing-away / being-underway' of *physis*. Any hope that what is given in the Aristotle interpretation might speak to the production of something 'new' is entirely foiled.³⁰ All that occurs under the optic imperative is a repositioning or rearranging on the basis of different modes of revealing always already accessible in *Gestell* (*physis*). The 'newness' of 'rearranging' by way of shifting modes of revealing will be seen more clearly below. 'Genesis' is a matter of drawing upon 'unconditioned resources' for revealing in terms of ontological register, where 'unconditioned resources' bespeaks its access to the very operation through which it 'generates'. A mode creates a mode. With *Gestell*, the 'full breadth' of the structural circularity that Heidegger found in "AΦ 1939" becomes clear to view. It is the repetition of a self-referential movement viewed across a flat plane of (thetic) possibility. Ontology is indeed *flat* with *Gestell*: everything exists on the basis of the constant presence of its movement (the technical *logos*, *Bestellen*). It is 'flat', also, in the sense that *Gestell* lacks an outside. Flat here means complete, 'nowhere' to go. The 'work' of *Gestell* is thus the work whereby revealing reveals itself to itself in its manifold and interlocked courses or ways for steering or governing and, in doing so, secures an 'endless' possibility for operating in this way (VA 20).

³⁰ Vagt paints a stark picture of Heidegger's understanding of metaphysical 'knowledge' of things: "Given the technological situation [the situation where *technē* determines all metaphysical knowledge – jf], the antique characterizations of the growing thing (*Gewächse*) and made thing (*Gemächte*) no longer help – there is no *causa efficiens* or *causa finalis* –, no more helpful than a nature understood in this way or the character of *poeisis* as an occasioning that brings forth." Vagt, *Geschickte Sprünge*, p. 258.

Possibility or Probability?

In "ΑΦ 1939" the 'openness' of *Gestell* (the 'openness of the *idea*') is considered in relation to Aristotle's dictum found at the beginning of this section: actuality predetermines and/or overdetermines (*próteros*) possibility. Heidegger understands this to mean that notions of matter or possibility (*hylē* or *dynamis*) merely mark out what can be and is 'made suitable' to form ('everything'), or, to put it in another language being used here, what is manipulated by or in a mode of revealing. This subsection will reset the image of *Gestell* as the *idea* of technical Nature, in order to consider the manner of its predominance and its relation to possibility. Central to this predominance appears to be a lack of precision, namely, of 'causal precision', a lack that stems from its 'form' or *idea* as a 'completed aggregation'. This lack of causal precision was addressed in Heidegger's reading of Aristotle when it was shown that the causal dimension (*aition*) of the technical *logos* is 'replaced' by the *archē*: *Gestell* 'has' the 'order and origin' of its movement in itself. Put otherwise, *Gestell*, as the *idea of ideas*, is the 'cause' only of itself and therefore does not maintain as immutable that which is manipulated in its movement.

Shifts in modality, formation, and ontological registration occur solely on the basis of *Gestell*'s repeatability, namely, in the enactment of the moment of utility (the production of the double).³¹ Because of this, there is no immutable, or even strict deterministic structure among that which registers or is formed, i.e., entities. As will be seen in the following section, entities exist, temporarily it seems, in isolation, dependent only upon the movement of presence's self-relation that will rearrange them. Plainly put, the structure of *Gestell*, as guarantor of presence's self-relation, does not guarantee that X is the cause of Y *each time*, that B always follows from A necessarily. At the level of entities, of chains of utility or micro-*Gestell*, the movement of *Gestell* does not guarantee the repeatability of its 'results', but only of its movement. Chains of revealing

³¹ Speaking of the ontological difference between entities and Being in "Zur Seinsfrage", Heidegger writes that "what is present (entity) is generated or brought forth (*her-vor-gebracht wird*) in presence (Being)" but that this does not mean that it is "caused (*verursacht wird*) in the sense of a efficient causality" (GA 9, 395 – emphasis added). Heidegger's use of the verb *hervorbringen* ('to bring forth') here should be considered in terms of the partiality or partial inflection occurring in the recursive movement of *Gestell*, discussed in the following section. Considering that "Zur Seinsfrage" is staged as a reflection on 'nihilism', it is important to note that Heidegger equates Nietzsche's doctrine of eternal return with the movement of presence's self-relation (the recursive movement of *Gestell* that 'orders' and 'reorders'). He immediately remarks that Nietzsche is unable to realize that with the 'eternal return' he thinks the essence of technic and therefore the essence of Being or presence (GA 76, 321). What Heidegger refers to as the *Geschichte des Nihilismus* corresponds directly to the occurrence of metaphysics as the self-relation of presence.

or utility have explanatory power only from the perspective of an inevitable shift. In light of this, technical or metaphysical possibility comes to be viewed as something like a range of *probable suitability*. The shift from 'matter' as possibility to probability can be seen in *Gestell*'s manner of securing itself. As stated above, the self-securing of *Gestell* occurs through its particular openness or 'leeway'. Before considering this, however, the reciprocal relation between *bestellen* and *bestehen* will be further considered in terms of *Gestell* as formally 'complete', which is to say, 'secure'.

The movement of *Gestell* (*bestellen*) occurs according to an antecedent position through which the presence of things (*Bestand*) is 'pre-figured' as 'orderable' (*bestellbar*). To refer *Gestell* to a similar grammatical-semantic construction as *Bestand*, namely, to draw upon the sense of completeness that speaks in the participle as Heidegger's notion of *Bestand* draws upon the pret-erit, would be something of a folk etymology. *Gestell* is not formed of *stellen*'s participle (*gestellt*). Official etymologies do not assert a definitive link between *Gestell* and the verb *stellen* as has often seemed the assumption thus far. Heidegger established this connection in his own work when, in "AΦ 1939", he rendered the 'placing into appearance' of *morphe* as *Gestellung in das Aussehen*. The *Duden* states that *Gestell* is linked to *stellen* 'today', while the *DWDS* suggests that this relation is 'secondary'. *Gestell* is however closely linked with the term *Gestalt* (*morphe*), which is understood to be formed of *stellen*'s participle. In this curiously opportune etymology, *Gestell* is linked to the verb it appears to insinuate – the *stellen* that translates *thesis* as the technical *logos* – by way of *Gestalt*, the term that properly translates Aristotelian form or *morphe*,³² again establishing the emphasis on 'form' (or mode) as concerns metaphysically- or technically-construed 'presence'. It is as if *Gestell* is the *energeia* that elevates *Gestalt* into its 'double form': appearance and placing into appearance, *bestellen* and *Bestand*. Once removed (in language) from its dependency upon the verb *stellen*, *Gestell* appears to precede it. It 'contains' and has as accessible the two structural moments in the same way Heidegger attributes to *energeia*.

Both *Duden* and *DWDS* relate *Gestell* to *Stall* ('a closed off space housing livestock'), which links *Gestell* to the verb *stehen*. This link also appears to occur on the basis of a shared PIE root, **stel-*, 'to put, place, locate', or the

³² A Heideggerian English might render *Gestalt* in terms of a 'figuring', a more kinetic or dynamic sense of form found in Heidegger's understanding of *energeia*. This would also account for Heidegger's attempt to maintain some positive appropriation of *poētis* in the emerging and unfolding of presence. While there may be some accuracy in this, the attempt here is to point out that all such positive appropriations fail in the context of Heidegger's 'destruction'. See the above footnote referring to Vagt.

Indo-European *stā- (*stə-), ‘to stand, to place’.³³ A *Gestell* is ‘that upon which something can be placed’. The partial term³⁴ for *physis*’ technical movement in “ΑΦ 1939”, *Gestellung*, which is later mostly replaced by *bestellen*, is rooted in a sense of procuring or providing. The antecedent position of *Gestell* grounds, as it were, the reciprocity between (be)*stellen* and (be)*stehen*, discussed in the previous subsection. Together they constitute the constancy of intelligible presence. *Gestell* is the possibility of procuring (*bestellen*) what is constant in all things (*Bestand*). *Again and again, the structure of Gestell is that of a movement that precedes from its own presupposition in order to act upon it.* A further example of this, linking Heidegger’s elaboration of *Gestell*’s movement to the analysis of *energeia* in Section 1.4 can be found in Appendix 1 at the end of this chapter.

Even if nothing concrete is gleaned from such speculative analysis of Heidegger’s use of and intention with the term *Gestell*, it is nevertheless useful to explore these ‘linguistic’ links that appear across the development of his work in order to display some of the linguistic contingencies that may have influenced it. To further illustrate what has just been said about the reciprocity of *bestehen* and *bestellen* within *Gestell* outside the realm of speculative etymologies, it is enough to comment upon the rather unorthodox understanding of ‘production’ that arises in Heidegger’s Bremen lectures when he chooses to analyze the word ‘pro-duction’ (*das Her-stellen*) in order to elaborate *bestellen*. A brief consideration of this choice will serve as the transition between a discussion of the reciprocity of *bestehen* and *bestellen* within the image of *Gestell* to that of the ‘certainty’ or ‘security’ of this image.

Emphasis in Heidegger’s elaboration of *Gestell*’s movement here is on the sense of the suffix *her-* in *herstellen*. Both the English and German terms – produce, *her-stellen* – tend to give the sense of placing something ‘here’ (‘before or in front of me’). Heidegger will at times refer to production to a ‘placing in unconcealment (here) from out of concealment’. This would be a ‘here-placing’ similar to the ‘placing-before’ (‘in front of’) found in the verb *vorstellen* (to represent). Yet – and this can be seen in Appendix 1 – the *her-* in *herstellen* appears to indicate the ‘from which’ determined in advance by the ‘toward which’ that approaches it, recalling the analysis of *energeia* found in Section 1.4. This is to say that the *her-* in *herstellen* indicates enablement or what is enabled (made possible) by the antecedent framework of *Gestell*. In this way pro-duction

³³ Here again the ‘roots’ of *essentia* and *existentia* are seen to be entirely entangled with one another.

³⁴ Partial insofar as Heidegger ultimately links this movement to ‘extraction’ (*Ent-stellung*), as seen in Section 1.4.

could be understood as 'being led by antecedence' (*prō-ducō*). Heidegger actually defines *technē* along these lines in his technic workbook. The remarks are entitled *Tέχνη (Berechnung)*:

Technē as being-oriented in production; already grounded in the fore-placing projection of the ante-cedaneous (*vor-stellenden Entwurf des Vor-herigen*), of the self-consistent openness of presence [...] How here the active dimension of calculation is predetermined – the ability to count upon ... and expect (*Rechnen können auf... und mit ...*) ... grounded in the fore-placing projection and with an eye to securing or certainty as self-securing, the execution or consummation of which is the fulfillment of the claim to power of exposition by way of perceiving (*vernehmenden Erklärung* – exposition by way of the *noein* – jf). (GA 76, 318)

These remarks end by relating all of this to the fulfillment of the active dimension in the Being of beings as "*physis* – *power* – *meta-physics*" and *mathēsis* as the fundamental form of all grounds or 'rationale' (*Begründung*). Here Heidegger also links calculation or computation, *berechnen*, to the Platonic sense of learning.

An issue reinforcing this understanding of production was touched upon in Section 1.3 in the context of Heidegger's exchange with Heisenberg, specifically the roles of 'evidence production' and mathematics in the production of knowledge in quantum physics. The need for 'some other physical system' in the form of measuring apparatuses that can/will preempt the 'behavior' of particles has resolved 'reality' in mathematics, which Heidegger views as something like pure antecedence. The real, *das Wirkliche*, has been purged of an outside that would 'effect' it (or rather, of the presumption that it ever had an outside), and works only upon itself. This self-relation is the 'self-consistent openness' of presence that leads, as the above citation suggests, to its security.

Consummateness and antecedence are necessarily linked in what Heidegger is attempting to evoke by speaking of a 'real' that can no longer be understood from causality. The securing of access to the 'totality of what exists' (*das Seiende im Ganzen*) is only made certain through the aggregation of (all) possible modes of emergence, which, though this is not stated explicitly by Heidegger, is presupposed when speaking of *Gestell*. It has to be presupposed insofar as the 'futural' dimension is accounted for in the 'past'. The securing of access to the 'totality of what exists' is nothing more than the securing of presence's relationship to itself. Once this is secured, ontological register is assured as a moment of utility within this self-relation. The 'resolution' of causality in

the thetic dimension *immanent* to Nature occurs through recursive transitivity. *Gestell* is the ‘cause’ of nothing but itself. Metaphysics is not sufficiently determinist since its various determinations must be read as ‘self-determinate’. What is ‘effected’ in the movement whereby presence secures its self-relation – entities, ideas, paradigms – have no immutable relation among themselves. The effected are simply instantiations of the dimension or moment of utility in the recursive structure of *Gestell*. At the same time, the movement of presence is never ‘effected’ by some outside, there is no ‘external’ mediate position (between Nature and the things of Nature, in the manner of the false understanding of *technē*). This means that technic cannot be disentangled from Nature, nor humankind amidst this. Any allegedly causal intervention would thus be merely ‘self-intervention’.

It can be said, then, that the sense of ‘certainty’ and ‘security’ evoked by Heidegger does not concern a *precise* knowledge to the extent that precision would imply a direct correspondence between knowing or knowledge and object of knowledge. The known thing is ‘known’ only on the basis of what precedes knowledge of it. His understanding of motifs like ‘exactness’ (*Exaktheit*) and ‘determinateness’ (*Bestimmtheit*) in the context of metaphysics come directly from the previously discussed notion of the mathematic: “Exactness” is the austerity (*Strenge*) of those sciences that aim at a purely numerical calculation and prediction (*zahlenmäßige Berechnung und Vorausberechnung*) of the processes of its object’s vicinity (*Vorgänge ihres Gegenstandbezirks*)” (GA 76, 121). The numerical calculating and predicting of exactness is a measuring according to a standard, i.e., something there in advance. Exactness always leads back to something known (GA 76, 175). Following from previous discussions of the ‘openness’ of *Gestell*, it might be said that there is a certain leeway here in what allows the certainty of *Gestell*. *The lack of causal precision is precisely what secures the capacity to reveal*. The unified reciprocity of a metaphysical or technical ‘from which’ and ‘toward which’ – discussed in Section 1.4 and Appendix 1 –, as it reiterates the unified reciprocity of *legein* and *noein* (or *bestellen* and *bestehen*), is the ‘vicinity’ or ‘realm’ of its processes. It is not an exact point or place. The security of *Gestell*, of metaphysics, is not about the precision of putting a thumb on it.

It could be suggested that the security or certainty of *Gestell*’s operating lies in or in an access to the realm of the probable, and that ‘probability’ is a/ the fundamental expression of the *mathēsis* that constitutes the ‘language’ of metaphysics/*Gestell*. The introduction of a notion of probability helps to link the ‘openness’ of presence to the security of its self-relation in the absence of any causal determination. The lack of ‘proper (causal) determinism’ is

superseded (or perhaps preceded)³⁵ by the ability 'to steer', which not only translates the Aristotelian *archē* and describes the movement of *Gestell*, but belongs to the name Heidegger gives to philosophy: cybernetics. Take 'cybernetics' here simply from the word itself. *Kubernáō* means to 'to steer, to lead, to govern', having the sense, therefore, that Heidegger gives to the metaphysical or technical *archē*, but also that of the *epagōgē* (*Hinführung, hinstellen* – to lead or be led to) that marks Nature's *technical* access to itself. The suffix *-tikós* is itself a term of *technē*, indicating 'suitability to' or 'skill in'. Without even considering the science of communication and automatization developed by Norbert Wiener – though such a consideration is obviously not without merit – it is clear that Heidegger chooses cybernetics to name philosophy for 'what it says'.

What allows *Gestell* or *Technik* (or philosophy?) to be skilled in steering is its access to the realm of the probable, its "purely numerical calculation and prediction of the processes of its object's vicinity" (GA 76, 121). Here 'vicinity' indicates openness or leeway of presence in its self-relation. Again the word itself will justify its inclusion in the Heideggerian lexicon. The probable, which suggests a 'range' (*Bezirk*) of determination, is understood from the sort of 'testing' (*probāre*) that has so far been discussed in the self-sameness that grounds both quantum physics and metaphysics. *Probabilis* means what 'may be assumed, believed, or proved; likely credible, or probable'. All of this stems from *probō*, which means 'to make good or suitable' in the sense attributed to the Platonic Good and *energeia*. Here the more contemporary understanding of *thesis*, as a presupposed basis for an inquiry, refers back to the Greek sense Heidegger privileges. Likewise, probability is recursive by definition, which is to say, like recursivity itself, it contains the word to be defined: "The probability of an event is the ratio of the number of cases favorable to the event to the total number of possible cases, provided that these are all *equally* probable (emphasis added)." ³⁶

A few further remarks on the affinity between the notions of probability and *Gestell* can be drawn from Michel Bitbol's attempt at a 'generalized theory of probabilities' in the essay "Quantum Mechanics as a Generalised Theory of Probabilities". Bitbol's essay is framed as an attempt to demonstrate the

35 Being that *Gestell* ultimately presupposes all forms of metaphysical thinking, it would be seem accurate to state that causal efficiency is an explanation made possible on the basis of *Gestell* and not the other way around.

36 The observation is Giorgio Agamben's in his essay *What is Real?* The citation, his as well, is of the French mathematician Henry Poincaré: Poincaré, *Science and Hypothesis* (London: Walther Scott Publishing, 1905), p. 184. See. Giorgio Agamben, *What Is Real?* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2018), p. 31.

compatibility between classical probability theory and probability as used in quantum physics. It views quantum mechanics not as a physical theory that uses probability but as a theory of the physical as a generalized form of probability calculus, which consists in “a formalization of the conditions of possibility of any prediction bearing upon phenomena whose circumstances of detection are also conditions of production”.³⁷ Such an understanding of the physical seems well suited to speaking about *Gestell*. In terms of the functioning of *Gestell*, both what registers (is detected) and the production of this register are rooted in the same conditions, namely the link between antecedence and consummateness that sets it in motion. The ‘grounds’ of what has been called here an ‘ontological register’ are the same as what produces the possibility of that register. In Heidegger’s reading of Aristotle it was found that only form, only *morphe* or *energeia*, are concerned with ‘detection and production’. All matter, all possibility or dynamics, is merely what is suited to form, or modality, whatever it may be. It might be said then, within the framework of *Gestell* – and therefore within metaphysics – that the potency of possibility is extinguished in the realm of the probable, a range determined in advance by a modality of revealing.

Bitbol’s aim in proving the compatibility between quantum physics and classical probability is to prove the compatibility between, on the one hand, that which is valid on every scale and, on the other hand, that which is valid on particular scales which are not always compatible with one another.³⁸ What is at stake, therefore, is the compatibility between a generic ‘whole’ and all particulars that do not agree among themselves. Bitbol’s outline for a ‘generalised theory of probabilities’ appears to be extracted from Pascal, who characterizes probability calculus as having two primary features: It operates on the basis of a generalized holism and on a finitude of context (“gnoseological perspectivism”).³⁹ Bitbol views this generalized holism in terms of probability theory in quantum physics, which is considered to be valid at every scale. This can be compared to the consummate antecedence that is the form or framework of *Gestell* taken as the form of the thetic or technical *logos*, the *logos* of the formal or modal appearance which inheres in all things. The ‘finitude of context’ corresponds to Bitbol’s understanding of classical probability theory as consisting in a collection of incompatible (among themselves) variations of the ‘particular’. In the previous chapter, something similar was considered

³⁷ Michel Bitbol, (2014) *Quantum Mechanics as Generalised Theory of Probabilities*. Collapse, 8. (<http://philsci-archive.pitt.edu/12051/>) – Pagination 1-14, here p. 1.

³⁸ Bitbol, *Quantum Mechanics as Generlised Theory of Probabilities*, p. 10.

³⁹ Bitbol, *Quantum Mechanics as Generlised Theory of Probabilities*, p. 3.

as a structural moment of the technical *logos* in its doubling as or into a *noein* that receives the *legein*.⁴⁰ The technical *logos*, in its instantiation as 'particular appearance', differentiates itself from itself while returning to itself as utterly generic. Otherwise put, the 'results' of entanglement between general (nature) and context (instrument, human, *noein*) are incompatibly variable, whereas the 'nature' of the particular results themselves remains compatible with a general framework.⁴¹ The 'form' of the thetic *logos* is not the same as the form or modality of configurations of presence, though the 'emergence' of the latter constitutes the 'sustenance', the constant presence of the former. There is a necessary self-sustaining movement of thetic presence into the particular (exposition by way of the *noein*) that does not have an 'effect' upon the general framework. Recall that *energeia* was called the form (presence) of possibility qua possibility. This might be extended to *Gestell* as the generalized form of probability qua the probable, to the extent that *Gestell* is the general framework of contextual variations of the same.

Earlier in this section, reference was made to configurations of presence as 'micro *Gestells*'. Bitbol similarly views the contextual variations (classical probability) within the generalized framework of quantum probabilities as 'sublogics'. The 'predominance' of *Gestell* is sustained by the constant shifting of modalities of revealing, by chains of codetermination that constitute configurations or 'fields' of intelligibility. In the previous chapter, the human activity of philosophizing held an ambiguous role in sustaining the technical *logos* that drives metaphysics and the production of the *idea*. This concerned, at least in part, the inevitability that humankind's role be reduced to 'perception' (*Vernehmen, noein*) as something of a mere structural necessity. When humankind does fulfill this role, then a metaphysical doctrine should also be viewed as a 'sublogic' of *Gestell*. The following section will consider the necessity of such configurations in sustaining *Gestell* in terms of *Gestell*'s finite conditioning, the inherent limitation in what delimits its movement.

Knowing What is Known

The 'formalization' (appearing) of the 'conditions of possibility', which sets the movement towards the probable underway, recalls Heidegger's constant reference to an 'access to the hidden' at the heart of metaphysics/*Gestell*. On this point, it is worth referring back to the above discussion of academic knowledge

⁴⁰ Recall that structurally, the *noein* is the 'stand' taken against a transitive or approaching presence. The differentiation here of the particular is the 'filtering' of presence by 'forms of intelligence' (*noein*).

⁴¹ Bitbol, *Quantum Mechanics as Generalised Theory of Probabilities*, p. 10.

and the derivation of this notion from Plato's academy. The name of the academy itself is derived from the Attic hero, Academus. The story of Academus concerns the kidnapping of a young Helen by Theseus. When Helen's brothers threatened war and the destruction of Athens, it was Academus who pointed out the hiding place of Helen, thus saving the city and making Academus a hero.⁴² This myth alludes once more to the link between accessing the hidden and securing life, ambitions that permeate Greek metaphysics and therefore metaphysics more generally, and which has become a persistent motif in this essay.⁴³

This 'hidden' might be considered in different ways, in light of what has been discussed in this essay thus far. It could refer to the 'yet emergent'; this would take on a 'futural' sense, however, only to the extent that it evokes the not-yet-catalogued. As for 'prediction', which is also a possibility here, any 'future outcome' would still be dominated by power of antecedence. It could also refer to the unseen or unseeable, as in the examples taken from particle physics. The Nature that has 'finally' disappeared as object is revealed in a 'predictable (*vorausberechbar*) relation or nexus of forces, which 'registers itself in a fixable mode' and 'remains orderable (*bestellbar*) as a system of information' (VA 25, 26). Yet, in the first and final analysis, this 'hidden' very likely refers to the image of *technic itself*, as 'revealed' in the Aristotle exegesis: the image of technical Nature as the intrinsic unity of consummation and antecedence. This union speaks to the 'unapparent circumstances' in which the sciences are based, "like a river in the source" (*wie der Fluss im Quell*) (VA 63). The stillness of the source is the movement of the river that runs throughout, another metaphor for a 'building for eternity'.

But does it not then become questionable, whether or not or how this 'consummate recursive structure' can be described as a movement at all? Is the function of *Gestell* really 'kinetic'? In the example taken from particle physics, the 'other physical system' is not some outside of the particles or realm of particles – not from Heidegger's perspective at least, though seemingly also not from Heisenberg's. The 'other system' is rather the 'double' of the particles 'demanded' by them. This double is itself 'rooted' in the self-showing of the particles. To this point, many examples have been given of what has been called the 'unity of a doubling': form and formation, *legein* and *noein*, *bestellen*

⁴² Plutarch, *Plutarch's Lives*, vol. 1, trans. Bernadotte Perrin (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967), p. 75.

⁴³ Heidegger translates the 'geometry' allegedly atop Plato's academy in terms of 'mathematics'. In Heidegger's own mythology, then, it might be said that the sign atop Plato's academy intends to say 'none shall enter who are not already aware that here, in the garden of Academus, lies the power of presupposition that is the key to survival'.

and *bestehen*. It is conceivable that this concerns something like a suspension or a suspended dialectic. The *thesis* inherent in all things and universalized in *Gestell* automatically produces its 'antithesis' (the doubling), yet without any synthesis. To borrow a line from the poet Susan Howe, and wrest it from its context, it is as if, with *Gestell*, Heidegger begins to think the "unconditional cessation of becoming".⁴⁴

It appears that metaphysical or technical knowledge is entirely subject to the 'steering' of *Gestell*. Knowing is revealed as a matter of governing the real, a governing that in turn secures the very possibility of a metaphysical paradigm of knowledge. In recognition of *Gestell*, science, which has traditionally grounded itself in a causal-deterministic structure, 'goes its course more securely than ever' without these grounds. The same could be said of philosophy, now understood as cybernetics. Heidegger would see the power of this security as prefigured in Aristotle's dictum. The optic imperative requires that 'standing-in-the-work' (being-subject-to) be 'prior to' what is made appropriate to form. What is 'dynamic' is what is subject to change; and 'form' (*energeia, morphē*) holds court over 'power or faculty' (*dynamis*). To be *dynamic* is to be suitable-for; to be suitable-for is to be *rendered suitable*.

The sense of *technē* as an epistemological concept thus takes on a new expression with *Gestell*. Any notion of *poiēsis* that would differ from what is already known in *technē* is finally ceded. 'Knowing' is a 'being oriented in rendering (*Machen*)'.⁴⁵ All things register ontologically in terms of feasibility and manageability (GA 76, 290). What can be known is what can be rendered or managed. 'Knowing' is oriented in the thetic dimension of all things. It is from this perspective that Heidegger makes use of the '*poietic*' lexicon of *machen* as it is inherited from *technē*. The governance of constant presence is developed through a thematics of power (*Sein als Macht*) and manipulation or manipulability (*Sein als Machenschaft*). This is also the point from which *Bestellen* commonly takes on a sense of 'ordering' or 'arranging' in characterizing the manner of presence's transitivity. Presence is thus spoken of as a self-ordering and re-ordering in revealing or being-revealed – in repeatedly becoming accessible. Everything subject to this, that is to say, everything that 'exists', is dissolved in the name *Bestand* as the 'actual, the being(ness) of a being' (VA 21). The instantiation of presences's (self?) manipulation will be taken up in the following section, returning to a thematic proper to the *logos* (collecting as structuring).

The union of consummateness and antecedence, its recursive movement, is 'split', for Heidegger, at the dawn of Greek metaphysics. Plato thinks the

⁴⁴ Susan Howe, *The Europe of Trusts* (New York: New Directions, 1990), p. 123.

⁴⁵ *Machen* is translated as 'rendering' here in the sense of 'to conduct, implement, transform'.

precedence of form (*idea*) that bespeaks the commonality (*κοίνον*) of transitive presence. Aristotle thinks the ‘work’ of transitive presence. Metaphysics as such, as *Gestell*, is the reunification of these as consummation and antecedence. The manipulability of transitive presence is a ‘consequence’ of the presuppositional logic that forms the *rationality of presence*. This logic is the logic of what Heidegger calls the mathematic: the logic of antecedence that secures the systematization of presence. In terms of the phenomenological critique Heidegger undertakes, this logic is viewed – whether in terms of what really is or in terms of an explanatory replacement⁴⁶ – as a constructing on the basis of the doubling of the ontological difference (form and formation, *bestehen* and *bestellen*). Heidegger’s critique and subsequent elaboration of *Gestell* presents this in its absolute form and, as such, as an (absolute) impasse.

2.3 Configurations and Simulations

Configuring and Structural Absence

The previous section elaborated Heidegger’s use of the term *Bestand* as the name for presence, the constancy of thetic movement, in his *Gestell* lexicon. The term Heidegger employs for entity or thing in this lexicon gives a clear indication of how he thinks the relationship between Being and beings from the perspective of metaphysics. The being or entity is the *Bestandstück*: a ‘piece’ of constant presence. It is not constant, manipulable presence itself, but rather a ‘part’ or ‘piece’ (*Stück*) that is manipulated. In this way, it could be considered as ‘particulate’, something like the particle or the particular. It is an isolated, separated fragment of something, and yet dependent. The ‘piece of constant presence’ is an inflection of something partial. This ‘piece’ was dealt with in the previous section under various headings: ‘sublogics’, ‘micro-*Gestell*’, ‘the effected’, ‘chains of revealing or utility’, and ‘finitude of context’.

Referring to *Bestandstücke* through a lexicon of the part, its partiality and particularity should be qualified by Heidegger’s own warnings. He rejects that his use of *Stück* could be understood as synonymous with the German *Teil* (‘part’), because, like the English ‘part’, it might suggest a share in some whole, a ‘taking part’ in it. As seen above, particular instantiations of presence arise in temporary – because subject to change – moments of utility through which presence maintains its self-relation. The particular, the piece or part, however, is not the same as the structural moment of utility, which is necessary. The

⁴⁶ This refers to the ‘deprivation’ and ‘contrivance’ mentioned in the citation near the beginning of Section 1.4.

Stück is much closer to the exchangeability that utility demands in order to be repeated. The production of the *Stück* is something of a necessary by-product of utility. *Gestell's* structure *has within itself* the access and ability to continually produce this 'exchangeable part'. Heidegger insists that these pieces or parts, these exchangeabilities, in no way form a whole of their own, nor do they actually participate in the self-relation of presence *as particular*. They participate only in their exchangeability. The reasoning for this has been prepared in the previous section.

From the perspective of metaphysics' closure, 'form' (the *idea*) is the unity of *bestellen* and *bestehen*, antecedence and consummateness. The 'totality' of constant presence is secured through this relation. In discussing possibility as probability, it was stated that the maintenance of presence's self-relation occurs by way of differentiated instantiations of its recursive or reflexive movement – by way of what might be called artifacts of presence. Such instantiations, 'particular scales of probability', are incompatible with one another, which is to say, they do not form a cohesive whole. The *Bestandstück* therefore does not take part in the whole nor complete it, but is rather something isolated. Yet this isolation is nevertheless taken up in relational structures, 'technical' chains and configurations, like those introduced in the previous section. Each 'piece' of presence is inserted and fixed in a circuit (*Kreisgang*) of orderability (*Bestellbarkeit*) (GA 79, 36). It 'completes' nothing but is rather *the conduit of thetic repetition*. In this way the language of partiality remains relevant to Heidegger's *Bestandstück*. In its partiality and dependence, it remains rooted in its own fungibility or exchangeability, its possibility to reconfigurations of its mode of revealing.⁴⁷

The relationship between *Bestand* as constant presence and the *Bestandstück* as what is inflected or illuminated by presence repeats Heidegger's understanding of the Platonic *idea*. The *idea* is what registers constantly, while the piece itself is simply what has been 'given presence', what is suited to presence and made suitable to it in being inflected by it. Like the relation of entities to the *idea* for Heidegger's Plato, 'pieces' of presence have no existence of their own, but rather exist on the basis of the modality they are subject to. They are thus manifoldly 'dependent'. They derive their ontological register from the constancy (*bestehen*) of Nature's thetic movement (*bestellen*) as the movement that illuminates partially in arranging 'pieces' together (GA 76, 353). It appears then that the pieces derive their ontological register, together

⁴⁷ The Latin *par* ('part, share, division') likely comes from one variation of the Proto-Indo-European **per-* ('to sell'). From this root there also derives the Greek *pérnēmi* ('sell') and *pórnē* ('prostitute').

with other pieces, from the dominant modality in a configuration of presence. All *Bestandstücke* are antecedently equal (*gleichförmig*), to *koínōn*. They function as constructible links in *Gestell's* chains or configurations. That these chains or configurations are formed of partialities (*Bestandstücke*) indicates the finitude inherent to *Gestell*. It also provides a non-pejorative (or ‘non-anti-technological’) vocabulary for the genetic movement of *Gestell*: it is the infinite (incessant) movement constructing finite technical configurations.

The *Stück* is something extracted or generated from the very process or movement that demands it – which *Gestell has* – namely, the movement referred to in Chapter 1 as the production of the *idea* and in this chapter as the maintenance of presence’s self-relation. The notion of genesis as an extraction from the available image of the technical *logos* appears again in “Die Frage nach der Technik”. This can be seen when the terms *erschließen* and *herausstellen* are introduced to further qualify *herausfordern* as a name for thetic movement (*Bestellen*) and the repeated or repeatable dimension of utility (here as demand). They appear in the essay just prior to the much-discussed example of a hydroelectricity plant and its ‘debasement’ of the Rhine. The hydroelectric plant and the energy grid it belongs to constitute the primary example of a technical configuration in the text, though attention to the structure of this example can easily get lost in matters of rhetoric and pathos concerning Heidegger’s sylvan favoring of the great river. This is to say that, while Heidegger’s pastoral pathos may point to the non-technical sense of Nature sought elsewhere in the *Spätwerk*, his pining for a pre-technological Rhine has no bearing on the structure he describes here.

In their qualification of the technical *logos*, *erschließen* and *herausstellen* must be understood together in a way similar to or mirroring the extracting (*Entstellung*) and placing (*Gestellung*) of the technical *logos*. *Erschließen* generally means something like ‘to make something unused available’ or ‘to derive something from something’. It can be taken as saying ‘to tap into something in order to extract from it’. It may also be understood in relation to ‘extrapolation’ when considering the role of antecedence and ‘access to the hidden’ that drives the thetic movement of Nature.⁴⁸ *Herausstellen* may take a general sense of ‘to emphasize, to draw attention to’. Given Heidegger’s emphasis on the ‘isolated’ nature of the piece of presence, *herausstellen* will be taken here as ‘to singularize’, while retaining the sense of ‘partializing’ implied by ‘emphasis’. Taken together, *erschließen* and *herausstellen* bespeak the ‘extracting’ and

⁴⁸ The term extrapolation is suggested here simply in the sense that the application of *Gestell*, the function of the technical *logos*, is continually extended through the assumption reproduced by or in its movement.

'placing' of genesis, whereby a particular appearance is produced from the generic image of Nature. In the case of Heidegger's example, the river's current is 'tapped into' and 'singularized' as 'force' in order to be brought into a technical configuration. 'Force' would be the doublet of the river produced by the demand for energy and that registers the river as current. At the same time, the river might be understood as an allusion to the image of *Gestell* or the technical *logos* itself and its constant movement. In this sense, the river produces from itself a technical configuration (the energy grid) to which it itself does not belong – at Heidegger's insistence – but through which it maintains itself as present. The evocation of the 'electric grid' appears to offer a sort of weak analogy for the notion of configuration itself. It is an instantiation of *Gestell* to which *Gestell* remains indifferent. The river does not care whether it maintains itself as fishery or as force. A technical configuration results from presence's ability to 'tap into' and 'singularize' itself. Technical configurations are *what is* made up of various, extracted and fixed pieces of presence that together register an entire configuration in such and such a way (VA 19).

The meaning of 'pieces of presence' here in terms of technical configurations should not, however, be limited by Heidegger's choice of examples. The notion of *Stück* – particularly as it pertains to a vocabulary of the partial – could again be referred to Heidegger's encounter with Heisenberg and the 'crisis in fundamental science'. Knowledge of elementary particles is not knowledge of the particles 'in themselves'; rather, this knowledge is extracted from the 'interaction' of the particles with 'some other physical system', in this case, the physicist's experimental apparatus. What registers then is only a 'partial reality' of the particle, which Heisenberg himself situates in the 'endless chain of humankind's interactions with (*Auseinandersetzungen des Menschen mit ...*) nature', which can 'never speak of nature in itself'.⁴⁹ For Heidegger, what registers in the 'particle's interaction with another physical system' is a *thetic modality* of the particle rooted in the 'self-showing' or 'self-revealing' of nature. It is a 'part' of a technical configuration (or in a more restricted sense, a scientific model) of reality. This latter is itself a partiality insofar as it is constructed of parts or partialities.

The previous section discussed the partiality of the entity in terms of probability or *Gestell*'s access to the realm of the probable. This discussion viewed access to the realm of the probably as a condition placed upon the sense of certainty or security which Heidegger attributes to metaphysics and technic as its epistemological mode. Maintaining presence's self-relation does not require

⁴⁹ Heisenberg's Munich lecture, "Das Naturbild der Physik", quoted in Vagt, *Geschickte Sprünge*, p. 257.

a complete, intelligible securing of the ‘object’ of presence. It maintains presence’s self-relation through an access to the object’s ‘vicinity’, a range of possible determinations. There are ‘gaps’ among its particular instantiations. Such ‘gaps’ maintain the compatibility, the *relation*, between the particular and the universal or general, but not among what is particular. The gaps maintain the compatibility, the necessary relation, between *Gestell* and the ‘parts’ it produces without guaranteeing that these parts remain compatible with one another or form into a cohesive whole. Intelligibility mediated by probability in this way corresponds to what is here referred to as the partiality of the entity, be it the ‘partial object’ or the configuration constructed therefrom.

Partiality and probability call back to Section 1.3. on Heisenberg and the vanishing of objectivity as an epistemological mode, marking an important distinction between what is objective and what is certain or secured. Recall that the deep entanglement of subject and object leaves nothing that would stand in opposition (no *gegenüber*) to a ‘thinking subject’. The latter is never transformed into a ‘knowing subject’ before a given ‘known object’. There is no knowing subject and no known thing, but rather only the partially and particularly illuminated *Stück*, which forms into configurations through *Gestell*’s repetition. Certainty or security allows for the gaps that constitute such a process and, it might be said, make use of them. Yet such gaps will also allow a space for Heidegger to think finitude ‘within’ presence’s absolute self-relation.

Speaking of *Gestell* in terms of technical configurations constructed of partial presence is Heidegger’s way of drawing out the inherent limitations of *Gestell*. This would be a necessity for him, given that his thought is guided by an attention to finitude or conditioned by a certain ‘logic of finitude’. The inherent finitude found in *Gestell*’s constructions, its ‘inability’ or lack of need to construct a ‘whole’ on the basis of the universality of presence’s self-relation, bespeaks the inherent finitude Heidegger would ultimately attribute to the *logos* itself, whether it is conceived technically or otherwise. The unconditional modal registration ‘employed’ by *Gestell* in its access to the totality of things *qua* presence does not reveal everything all at once, but rather occurs only in the circumscribed form of relational structures constructed of pieces of presence. A relational structure is nevertheless always constructed on the basis of the enactment of *Gestell* as consummate – *Gestell* in its entirety as the image of the technical *logos*. That the instantiation of *Gestell* as ‘partial’ requires *Gestell* as such, its form, is again a feature of its recursivity. Any technical configuration is *Gestell* ‘in action’/‘enacted’.

On this basis of their formation from out of ‘pieces’ or ‘parts’ of things, technical constellations ‘reveal’ a dimension of structural absence. Structural absence delimits technical configurations. Absence, concealing, in Heidegger,

is generally delimiting. This marks the consolidation – because of the 'end' of 'metaphysical history' – of what guides much of Heidegger's phenomenological analysis. The entire 'destruction' of metaphysics can be viewed as a reading of structural absence (the 'forgetting of being', that Being forgets)⁵⁰ in the western philosophical canon. The canon itself can be viewed as a technical configuration, not simply as a historiographical configuration (though it is also as this), but as a configuration of notions or concepts that together bespeak the essence of the optic imperative.⁵¹

Structural absence appears central to what Heidegger seeks in a 'use of technic' that is 'freeing'. The notion of freedom is rooted for Heidegger in the revelation of presence. What is 'free' is what is revealed. But what is free, or better, freed, is not what is freeing. All revealing belongs, for Heidegger, within a 'harboring' (*Bergen*) and concealing (*Verbergen*). Concealing is what frees, it is the 'necessary' in relation to revealing (VA 28-29). As mentioned above, concealing delimits, defines, etc. For metaphysics and for the technical more broadly, concealing was viewed as the 'self-concealing' thetic dimension of *physis*, the technical *logos*. This is ultimately revealed as the present-absence of the technical *logos*. With the consolidation of this in *Gestell*, the concealing dimension becomes related to what Heidegger seeks to name in *Ereignis*, the 'mystery' (*Geheimnis*) of revelation that designates his attempt to rethink *physis*. With the elaboration of *Gestell* there is a shift from absence as what has been utilized by technic or metaphysics (what Academus has pointed to in

⁵⁰ In the protocol to the seminar on "Zeit und Sein" Heidegger remarks that *Vergessenheit* is to be understood as concealedness and self-concealing (GA 14, 37).

⁵¹ What should be remarked here, at least in passing, is the folly inherent in the attempt to privilege particular technical configurations, themselves equivalent to metaphysical constructs. In Heidegger's case, it is a matter of arbitrarily inventing the notion that the German language would be revealed as the philosophical language of the occident at the time of Occidental philosophy's closure. Viewed from the Janus situation, whereby the 'unconditioned totality' of thetic possibility is held suspended with its necessary complement (i.e. *Ereignis*), Heidegger's decision is arbitrary. The idea of German-ness, of a uniquely German history and fate, through which not only a specifically German 'task' would register or become accessible, but also that of a hidden or yet unknown Greek task, or anything following such and such a 'logic' (for example, some 'special truth' hidden in a 'language' or 'nation', themselves metaphysical constructs), can be nothing more than a metaphysical construct. Such constructs remain within the desire to master technic. The motifs of retaining and maintaining so essential to Heidegger's understanding of technic are also essential to conservatism as an orientation determined thereby in the broadest sense. When Heidegger indulges such possibilities he is exploiting his own thinking by 'playing metaphysics' and being the arbiter of things, a mistake that has won him much admiration in certain circles. This *Geschick*, the sending of cultural relativism, takes all the pejorative sense of cunning from Antigone's *tό deion*.

saving Attica or what *Antigone* has utilized in counter-violence), to absence or concealing ‘as such’. This shift appears to re-establish the question of truth in terms of *aletheia* as Heidegger’s thinking moves through metaphysics to *Gestell* and towards *Ereignis*. Within metaphysics, truth (*aletheia*) might be viewed as constant presence maintained by way of the unacknowledged ‘use’ of the technical *logos*, itself ‘presently absent’ from metaphysical doctrine. With *Gestell*, truth seems to articulate itself insofar as the optic imperative is permitted and/or maintained by structural absence. Truth as the suspension of revealing and concealing ‘in one’ is not *Ereignis* alone. The words are not analogous. Truth is rather something closer to the constellation of *Ereignis* and *Gestell*. Pure presence and/or pure revealing is disrupted constantly by absence, concealing, harboring.

Simulation and ‘Freedom’

Gestell’s occurrence in technical configurations has a two-fold meaning for Heidegger. On the one hand, the construction of technical configurations is the ‘endangering’ – ‘compromising’ (*gefährden*) – of the truth. In this case, the partiality of the configuration remains considered with a view only to presence, to what is revealed or made accessible in it. The view to revealing demanded by the optic imperative is a misplacing – in the sense of ‘distorting’ or ‘disguising’ (*verstellen*) – of the truth. This continues the motif of a technical or metaphysical ‘overcoming’ or suppression of absence and/or concealing. On the other hand, such compromising of the truth designates *Gestell* as what bestows (*das Gewährende*) all presence and, in doing so, allows the human to ‘endure’ in presence. To endure in presence is to experience the compromising of the truth as what Heidegger names ‘danger’. It is to experience and recognize ontological register as partial. In this sense, the human would experience what is in relation to the production of presence, including its own, as incomplete and would lead to the experience of something else, and perhaps even a different sense of ‘utility’.

The ‘danger’ which lies in compromised truth guides Heidegger’s discussion of a ‘saving’ that ‘grows’ in the compromised truth of *Gestell* – the ‘long since unexperienced’ dimension of *physis* in *thesis*. This ‘saving’ (*retten*) is defined differently at Bremen and in *Die Frage nach der Technik*. At Bremen he emphasizes a sense of freeing or loosening from something (GA 79, 72).⁵² In *Die Frage*

⁵² The etymological tie here is to the Proto-Germanic **hradjanq* (‘to loosen, set free, deliver’) and Proto-Indo-European **kret-* (‘to shake, jostle’). *Retten* is married in this way to the English ‘redd’ (‘to free from entanglement or embarrassment’) and ‘rid’ (‘released from obligation’), the former tied to the Old English *gerēdan* (‘to arrange, put in order,

nach der Technik, retten is defined as 'to enter something in terms of its modality or active dimension (*einholen ins Wesen*) in order to first recognize it as it is' (*erst zu seinem eigentlichen Scheinen zu bringen*) (VA 32). This definition of *retten* is used to transition to the reflections on *wesen* discussed at the beginning of this chapter. These are the closing passages of "Die Frage nach der Technik" where some sense of the essence of technic should arise in relation to the optic or ontological imperative. What is described there is the active dimension of *Gestell*. This, in turn, provides a non-pejorative sense of technic, namely, technic as 'what is'. 'Saving' here is the intimation of the 'dual structure' that directs Heidegger's later thinking (Janus as *Gestell-Ereignis*), which itself becomes apparent only by 'entering' and 'accepting' the 'true modality' of *Gestell*. It could be said that, in compromising the truth, the optic imperative has 'freed' humankind towards another use, a matter of 'corresponding to' *Ereignis* or the 'other side' of *Gestell* (technic) (VA 37).

The development of this dual structure from out of the analysis of technic is also the moment when focus on the antecedent 'totality' of technical configurations (*Versammlung des Stellens*) gives way to what Heidegger calls the 'constellation' of the 'compromising' and 'freeing' (VA 37). By this he intends to say that the presupposed totality of possible configurations of fixed presence (*Versammlung des Stellens*), once recognized, can be viewed 'macroscopically' in terms of what delimits that totality – compromising and freeing, *Gestell* and *Ereignis*, *thesis* and *physis*. The Janus constellation betrays a sort of 'symmetry' or 'complementarity' between its two faces, which Heidegger calls 'proximity' (*Nähe*). This proximity is thought on the basis of an inseparability of the totality of modal configurations in *Gestell* and its 'complement' – though not necessarily in a properly holistic manner, as if the two combined to form a proper and perfect 'whole'. It is rather a complement in the sense of being that which allows *Gestell* to be 'complete'. It is the finitude that allows for presence's absolute self-relation without necessarily accounting for or legislating its movement. The relation between *Gestell* and *Ereignis* thereby serves as a sort of *ur-duality* in Heidegger's thinking. It marks the proximity of two beginnings (*Anfänge*), between which there is no distance *in time*. This is indeed to repeat that the 'two beginnings' of Heidegger's later thinking, one oriented by the technical *logos*, the other by what he terms *Ereignis*, are not historiographically locatable moments in time. Heidegger also refers to Janus here with a stellar reference; *Gestell* and *Ereignis* are to be thought as a *Kon-stellation*. Such

prepare'). Note that the argument here is not purely etymological. Heidegger's intention is quite literally to say that the 'granting and securing' of presence in *Gestell*, the *autoconstruction* of technical configurations, releases the human towards a different 'work'.

a reference, should it not merely be a bad pun on ‘placing together’, leaves much to be explained and will be returned to in the following chapter. It could be stated simply that the notion of ‘proximity’ at stake here is not a matter of calculable or measurable distance in the technical sense.

According to Heidegger, the constellation, as the proximate relation of *Gestell* and *Ereignis*, is the ‘dimension’ in which the modality of Being is understood as *Gefahr* (‘danger’) (GA 79, 75). In *Die Frage nach der Technik*, Heidegger says very little about his choice and use of the word ‘danger’ here. It is mostly left in a typical Heideggerian suspension, where ‘danger’ and ‘saving’ are meant to be thought ‘together’ and without resolution. The notion of ‘Being’ as ‘danger’ would appear quite empty then, a merely rhetorical gesture to persuade the public into being more thoughtful about the ‘technological world’. ‘Technology, when used properly, can save us!’ Perhaps.

Heidegger offers more in the Bremen lectures given a few years prior. There he grounds his use of the term *Gefahr* in its Old High German root, *fāra* (‘danger’ or ‘a trick’, ‘deceit’). Here again are technical motifs like ‘skill’, ‘dexterity’, ‘being sly or clever’, which were found in terms like *Geschick* and *tō deinon*. Heidegger draws in particular on the sense of *fāra* as *Nachstellung* (‘stalking – in the sense of the crime’, ‘readjustment’, ‘reenactment’) and *nachstellen* (‘to follow, stalk’, ‘to reconstruct’, ‘to simulate’). Yet another term drawn from the field of *stellen*, *nachstellen* bespeaks the repetition implied by every instantiation of *Gestell*’s movement and, in this way, appears to contain the senses of adjustment and shifting (change) which were discussed in the previous section as the shifting modalities of ontological register (GA 79, 53-54). This adjusting and shifting is the metabolic movement of *Gestell* that orders the ‘parts’ into a technical configuration. Such configurations are purely partial presence without absence.⁵³ The determinative sense of *nachstellen* and *fāra* intended by Heidegger appears to refer this metabolic construction to a ‘reconstruction’ and/or ‘simulation’ in the form again of a collective noun: “the sending(s) of revealing in each of its modes is therefore necessarily the simulation (*Gefahr*)” (VA 30). The essence (active dimension) of *Gestell* – *Gefahr* – is as the simulation or reconstruction of truth according to the optic imperative. The danger

⁵³ The above discussion of the partiality of the entity refers to the Latin *pars* and its relation to the Proto-Indo-European root **per-*. This root also belongs to the formation of *fāra* (via the Proto-Germanic *fērō*), though there its sense is ‘to dare, risk’. The root **per-* has yet another meaning as ‘to pass through’, a sense central to Heidegger’s understanding of experience (*Erfahrung*) that will be discussed in Chapter 3. It is worth pointing out, in any case, that the root **per-* serves as a nexus for much of his thinking. It is suggested here that Heidegger is well aware of this nexus.

is, at least in part, that it *presents* partial presence *unconditioned by absence*, thus compromising (by simulating) the truth. The mutually incompatible chains of revealing that maintain presence's self-relation constitute a simulation of the real (a real without cause) – a re-construction or re-presentation of a real or a world filtered through the artificial position of the *noein*. *The mode in which being (presence) occurs in all of its modalities is as self-simulation*. And it is important to note that the simulated world is a world of difference and incompatibility, not a smooth, coherent virtual paradise. Each instantiation of presence's self-relation – the constant movement of *Gestell* – marks off another fragmentation of the real that belongs to its simulation. Being is the approximation of truth in terms of pure, partial presence. The proximity of *Gestell* and *Ereignis* is that of an approximation.

Section 1.2 ended by referring the 'self-evidence' of *physis* to the self-production of knowledge about *physis* by *physis*. This paradoxical expression was the result of the 'logic' underlying Aristotle's notion of *physis* at its limits, namely the mediate position that would produce knowledge about *physis*. Having no outside, it was said that sufficient knowledge of and orientation in *physis* must always and necessarily be lacking – what cannot be mediated dissimulates itself in its entirety. This lack is not necessarily an error or fault, however, once 'metaphysics' is viewed in its consummate form. At Bremen, Heidegger states that the zone of simulation (*Zone dieser Gefährlichkeit der Gefahr*), which might also be referred to as the zone of approximation, is an 'err' (*Irre*) that must be experienced by thinking. Etymologically, the term *Irre*, with its Latin roots in *erro*, means 'to wander or stray from the truth'. In the context of Heidegger's thinking, it is the optic imperative, the attentiveness to revealing, that leads away from the truth. But the 'err' of simulation or approximation is not a mistake in terms of knowledge (*Erkenntnis*) (GA 79, 54). As Heidegger's Aristotle shows, approximation or 'err' is the way, and the only way, metaphysical knowledge can be produced. The 'dissimulation' of *physis* in its entirety might now be taken as the self-simulation of *physis* in its entirety. *Physis* 'knows itself' technically by way of self-simulation.

Being's self-simulation puts to work parts of presence which are configured in such and such a thetic ordering. These constituent parts are themselves products of an approximation of some or another thing. In the above section this was exemplified by way of the approximation of particles in particle physics. The so-called 'suspended dialectic' of Heidegger's metaphysics thereby yields, as a pseudo-synthesis, a 'piece of truth', namely the piece belonging to the revealed. Becoming is always becoming as revelation. Being's simulation might be taken quite literally as a *model* or *modeling* constructed through the

ontological registration of such and such a *modality*, one that is always in itself a ‘partiality’, i.e., made up of parts.⁵⁴ There is, however, a double freeing here. In the recognition of its partiality or its construction of a simulated world, technic is freed to such production without scrutiny or moralizing critique and, with this, humankind is freed towards the search for a different task.

Philosophy and Thinking

“[...] technocracy should be considered less as the power of technicians than as technicians in the service of power, power created by technics as efficiency [...] The question is one of liberating communication from its technicization. It can be seen that the founding positions of philosophy still haunt these analyses [...] Technics, which appears to be a power in the service of humanity, becomes autonomous from the instance it empowers.”⁵⁵

The remarks selected here from the general introduction to Bernard Stiegler’s *Technics and Time 1* should serve to reiterate the problem raised in Sections 1.3 and 1.4, namely, the identification of humankind with technic, which puts humankind in its service and threatens ‘a world in man’s image’ – though it is never actually ‘man’s image’, but technic’s. The question of communication raised by Stiegler can be considered from the distinction Heidegger seeks to make between Philosophy and Thinking.

While Heidegger’s deep fear and pathologizing of the ‘use of metaphysical language’ might cause him to generally avoid speaking of ‘communication’, it is nevertheless certain that his distinction between philosophy and thinking plays itself out most clearly in terms of ‘language’ – technical language (mathematics) and the language of thought (and ‘poetry’). The introduction to this essay noted that the early Heidegger understood praxis together with *phronēsis* ('intent') in relation to self-disclosure. Heidegger accounts for self-disclosure in various ways throughout his work with the Greek terms *logos* and *legein*. Anything like a human praxis that might be developed from Heidegger’s work would therefore include some sense of a communication *de-coupled from the tyranny of the optic imperative; in other words, a non-technical use of language*. The proximity of the technical *logos* or thetic dimension of *physis* to humankind has proven to cause some difficulty in Heidegger’s deconstruction of metaphysics, forcing the issue of ‘how’ the human is determined and

⁵⁴ The word model – also ‘mould’ – comes from *modulus*, a diminutive of *modus*. It might be said that the approximation of being, its model, is a measure of a mode.

⁵⁵ Stiegler’s remarks here come within a discussion of Heidegger and Jürgen Habermas. Stiegler, *Technics and Time 1* (Stanford University Press: Stanford, 1998) pp. 12–13.

'used'. That Heidegger maintains to the end his belief that the question of language (still and always as *logos*) is essential to a thinking that would not come (entirely) in the service of technic, shows that, despite their entanglement, humankind and technic are *not* reducible to one another, nor technic to *logos*. The thetic *logos* or technical *logos* is not the *Logos* as such.

It is humankind's proximity to language and *logos* more generally that allows Heidegger to say that the human is 'more originally' subject to the technical *logos* than 'other things'. Heidegger seems to find this most clearly when the human identifies with the second structural moment of the noeitic doubling, namely that of representation (*vor-stellen*), which allows the 'represented' (*Vorgestellte*) to be a reconstruction (*Nachstellung*, simulation) of the real. The human does not have command over language, but rather, as Heidegger likes to reiterate, humankind is 'had' by language. In the first chapter, this was discussed in terms of humankind's entanglement in or with *logos*. There is no thinking of humankind or of the mortal without the *logos*. It is a two-faced situation whereby what makes the human most 'susceptible' to the thetic dimension of *physis* is at once what provides it a 'way out' of the thetic trap. To understand the modality of *Gestell* as simulation is, for Heidegger, a matter of what 'comes to or arises from language'. This was seen quite literally in the above discussion of the 'semantic space' Heidegger creates when he links freeing, saving, and danger to *Gestell*'s capacity for revealing. It is the 'method' or way of Heidegger's own work as much as it has been reapplied in this essay.⁵⁶ It is (now) a matter of a 'language' that is at once technical ('revelatory') and not.

It is worth noting here that, after he completes his critique of metaphysics, Heidegger's essays that do not deal with a direct analysis of technic or *Gestell* no longer refer to technical mediation primarily from the perspective of technical knowledge. This is not to say that technic no longer accounts for mediation, only that a new point of emphasis can be observed: technic can be treated without its often-accompanying epistemological undertones. Technical mediation is now referred directly to its revelatory capacity as a 'letting-appear'

56 Heidegger writes that in questioning the essence of modern technology, the words *stellen*, *bestellen*, and *Bestand* 'impose themselves' upon the questioning and that this 'imposition' is grounded in what 'comes to language' (VA 21). These words are not chosen, therefore, but belong to what occurs in technic. Whatever is to be thought about Heidegger's claim, it is undoubtedly the case that the verb *stellen* has long before this point belonged to his investigations of the thetic dimension of *physis*. *Stellen* translates the Latin *ponere* and Greek *tίθēmi* and is indeed the proper word if technic is a matter of *thesis*. Much of this chapter and this essay as a whole has advanced by simply elaborating further upon Heidegger's use of language and what is said or articulated through the relation of elaborated terms.

(*Erscheinenlassen*) (VA 154). Technic is thus finally equated to the revealing dimension of truth, the constant formalization of presence through which Nature comes to know itself in some way. It would appear that what allows presence, namely technic, is at once what allows human action to escape the determination of metaphysical knowledge and what separates thinking from philosophy. This is tied to Heidegger's shift from speaking about 'overcoming' to a language of letting-be as concerns humankind's relationship to metaphysics or technic. If humankind lets technic be, it might find another 'way' with or in the *logos*.

On Heidegger's definition, 'philosophy' occurs when human thought comports (solely or predominately) towards the thetic dimension of *physis* – it is a *re-action* to the transitivity of presence. At the very least, this is one assertion that can be derived from his critique of metaphysics. Philosophy as a practice appears to arise from a human decision regarding its own comportment and therefore its own determination. The human does not have (full) command over presence – belonging intrinsically to it – but is 'released' from its own thetic determination *in presence's very revelation*. Heidegger's references to and distinctions between the names of philosophers and scientists appear to be as particular iterations or articulations of the metaphysical mode as such. But why he would continuously privilege philosophers over scientists, maintaining a sort of lineage between philosophy and thought that would not exist for science, is not entirely clear. Heidegger's general defense of philosophy states that metaphysicians have merely corresponded (*entsprechen*) to what has 'addressed itself to them' ('spoken to them', *zusprechen*). This simply repeats the motifs surrounding 'demand' and 'use' and the 'approach' of presence in its transitivity. For Heidegger, what Plato 'does' bears little difference to what Heisenberg 'does', yet the latter is met less approvingly as a sort of 'mouthpiece' or 'secretary' of *Gestell*.⁵⁷ The philosopher and scientist both, *geschichtlich* the same, share a love of knowledge, in terms of what can be constructed of presence in its fixed or formal appearance. 'Thinking', however, is distinct from both, and perhaps 'precedes' both, in being a more generic term for human comportment.

The philosopher, like the scientist, is a technician of presence. The philosopher is a technocratic arm of technic, for example, when it produces modalities of revealing by way of concepts. Technic either cannot or does not rule alone. In producing forms and formulas through which revealing can occur and be registered, the philosopher is taking part in the cyclical movement of revealing's fiat. Heidegger deals with this issue at length in his workbooks,

57 Vagt, "Komplementäre Korrespondenz, p. 13.

particularly in the context of the *potetic* lexicon of *Machen*, and very often in an overtly pathologizing manner. For him a 'bearer of power' – which a philosopher, wielding and yielding modalities as it does, most certainly is –, can be nothing more than a means in the 'empowerment' or 'fiat' of power.⁵⁸ Because being (*physis*) has no outside and is mediated by the immanent dimension of revelation and its formalization, the human can be little more than a point through which (transitive) presence passes in its recursivity. Those whose work is thetic in nature *appear*, therefore, to be mere conduits of the technical *logos*.

The link between philosophy/science and technic, engendered by the transitivity of presence, is not something to be 'judged' as 'good' or 'bad', despite Heidegger's own presentation of the situation. Whatever his potential agendas within academic philosophy may have been, or his desire to be the thinker to resituate the place of occidental philosophy, this can only have a limited bearing on what his work actually 'says'. The rhetoric often used in his workbooks and public material on technic and *Gestell* is by now more often found useful by his detractors than those who wish to understand his thinking.⁵⁹ Yet there is nothing to be gotten rid of or overcome, no world imaginable where the techniques⁶⁰ of the thetic practices such as science and philosophy would not be required or altogether useful and necessary. Modalities of revealing that produce knowledge or are produced by it have not been exhausted. They exist rather within a consummate paradigm that 'grants' their possibility. At times it appears altogether lost on his commentators that when Heidegger 'describes' the modality of modern technic (as *Gestell*), he is not describing its each and every instantiation, but only the manner in which it occurs. This is, on the one hand, the structure of *Gestell*'s movement and, at the same time, the 'essence' of this as *Gefähr*, as simulation. By the time Heidegger's 'critique of metaphysics' is complete there is only *one* object of thought, namely the Janus essence of the truth (or *physis*) named by *Gestell* and *Ereignis*, where *Gestell*

⁵⁸ "Wo immer wir noch die Macht in der Hand von Machträger sehen, ist es noch nicht die Macht selbst, die da getragen wird, sondern je nur ein von der Macht erzwungenes und bestimmtes 'Mittel' der Machermächtigung" (GA 69, 63).

⁵⁹ The image of Heidegger's so-called 'anti-modernism' is that of a pastoral reactionary awash in his own indecipherable, colloquial murmuring, high on idyllic fantasies akin to a similar image of Ezra Pound. There is indeed truth in this appearance, though the reduction of Heidegger's critical engagements with metaphysics and technology to mere reactionary anti-modernism appear to come from Heidegger's reactionary insistence upon upholding the 'special dignity' of occidental philosophy in its traditional form and practice. This is somewhat ironic, given Heidegger's floundering in nationalism and occidental essentialism – both of which are counterintuitive to his philosophical project.

⁶⁰ Whereas technic refers to the thetic movement in all things, technique refers to a practice that puts technic to use, usually as 'technology', broadly speaking.

is now the consolidation of philosophy into a single modality (adherence to the optic imperative and structure of the technical *logos*) and *Ereignis* remains to be thought. It thus seems safe to assume that there *could* remain a sort of reciprocity between thetic and non-thetic practices, between philosophy and thinking. It is possible to imagine the philosophers, those technicians within the ‘closure of metaphysics’, as now producing a ‘metaphysics of metaphysics’, and scientists as producing a ‘science of philosophy or meta-philosophy’, both of which would always be in dialogue with ‘thinking’.

Heidegger’s critique therefore does not need to reduce philosophers and scientists, as technicians of presence, to mere conduits of the technical *logos*. This would risk repeating the conflation (technical *logos*=‘humankind’) Heidegger consistently warns against. The human – whatever it is – is subject to language as the possibility of its ‘acting’. As such, it will always be caught up in revealing, its modalities, and indeed the optic imperative. When the ‘autonomy of being’ is thought as the transitivity of presence, all thetic activity will be viewed as technic/technique within a Heideggerian framework. It is a matter of collaboration with the inexorable: ‘there is nothing like a humanity that is human solely from itself’ (VA 36). Heidegger wishes merely to shift or reorient human acting (thinking), such that the *question of the human* is not lost to the autonomy of a rational movement (the technical *logos*, *Gestell*) – the human belongs to it (or ‘is’ adjacent to it) but is not reducible to it. It is therefore necessary (for both Heidegger and the reader) to expound the most extreme formulations of his critique – as with passages from this essay or Heidegger’s own discussions of ‘power’ –, not to subscribe to them but to *entertain* them.

The vision of the human as pure technician of presence should be considered as humankind’s simulation of itself in its technical essence. Essential here is that when the human understands itself by way of this type of work or production⁶¹ – one determined by the optic imperative – it has registered itself ontologically by making its own inherent thetic dimension absolute.⁶² The ‘granting’ (*gewähren*) of technic, tied as it is to what is ‘enduring’ (*wählen*) and ‘maintained’ (*wahren*), would be – at least in part – the basis (or ‘mode’) of all notions of transmission and memory. If, however, the human is not merely its thetic capacity, then such a determination or direction for human activity is compromising. The danger of this compromise is that it renders the human

⁶¹ In *Die Frage nach der Technik*, Heidegger writes: “In operating (*betreiben*) technic, the human takes part in *Bestellen* as a mode of revealing” (VA 22). This statement does not contain any anti-technic, anti-metaphysics pathology, but only remarks the Janus-situation occurring as it does in humankind.

⁶² Refer to Section 1.3 for a discussion of humankind’s taking on the whole of the technical *logos* in order to register itself ontologically.

entirely fungible within the self-relation of presence.⁶³ If it is too reductive to say that the human could be replaced with any other thetic movement, it is nevertheless not difficult to say that any thetic activity that registers as 'human' can be replaced by any other such 'human thesis'. The 'human' becomes unconditionally (absolutely) fungible through its image, which is an image it itself has registered. Any *animale rationale*, any *homo ex machina*, can be replaced by the 'next', like scabs in the workforce. And so it is 'today' that the prospect of a general intelligence, modeled on human knowing become autonomous, not only raises questions as to whether or not the 'thinking being' or 'being who uses language' will come to be replaced by what 'fills these images', but again provides ground to repeat the insidious game of human categorization. Of course, this technique of producing fungibility has been used by humans against humans for millennia. Heidegger's thinking of *Gestell* merely bears witness to its universalization in terms of a thetic *logos* driving the revelation of presence in general.

This universalization recalls the 'absolute subjectivity' Heidegger sometimes speaks of in the context of consummate metaphysics.⁶⁴ The consistency whereby the thetic movement of humankind and of presence itself are indistinguishable drives humankind, Heidegger seems to suggest, to produce a 'world in the image of *man*', such that the human would only encounter itself. Such a purely human-constructed world in which the human could encounter only itself would appear to be a simulation of a second order, whereby the human reconstructs the simulation of the truth on its own terms. This self-encounter – seeming to mimic an unconditioned recursivity of *Gestell* –, guided as it would be by the optic imperative, would mean that the human would never be left to encounter itself *in truth*, whatever 'itself' may be (VA 31).

There is an obvious link between the question of the human and the question of what it does, its praxis. In the context of Heidegger's work, the former is a question of what kind of determination, if any, the human may receive beyond its obedience to the optic imperative. And if no such determination is to be found, how is the human to be thought without determination? These questions are not answered in Heidegger's *Spätwerk*; at most they are, as he himself would put it, 'prepared'. It is for such reasons that this essay is presented as a series of prolegomena, rather than an exposition of a potential

63 "Das Beständige besteht in der bestellbaren Ersetzlichkeit durch das bestellte Gleich" (GA 79, 40).

64 It is worth noting that Heidegger sees 'subjectivity' and 'absolute subjectivity' as the leveling out of humankind to a sum of equal parts which manifests as either the 'nationalism of a people' or the 'socialism of peoples' (GA 69, 44).

Heideggerian practice (or ‘naturalism’). While Heidegger does not provide answers, the move from a metaphysical-technical philosophy and science to a non-metaphysical thinking can be partially traced out by following the motif of utility in his work as it develops from the mid-1930s onward.

According to the Heidegger of 1949, the human is needed (utility) to ‘get over’ (*Verwindung*) *Gestell* in a mode (its mode) that corresponds to this ‘getting over’ (GA 79, 70). *Gestell* is not something to be ‘overcome’ (*überwinden*) in any anthropocentric manner eliciting the sense of ‘mastering’, ‘winning’, ‘conquering’, ‘surmounting’, etc. ‘Getting over’ or *Verwindung* is a matter of ‘collaboration’ (*Mithilfe*) (GA 79, 69f.). It is for this reason that the human must experience itself in its simulated form, its ‘clone’ perhaps, and in its unconditional fungibility from the point of view of technical maintenance of presence. It must ‘know’ this in order that its ‘action’ can be one that releases technic to its proper task and does not mimic it, but rather collaborates with or within the autonomous rationality that is technic, without mistaking itself for it. To experience itself in its simulated form is, according to Heidegger’s ‘logic’ here, to experience the ‘saving’ – *einholen ins Wesen, um so das Wesen erst zu seinem eigentlichen Scheinen zu bringen* –, which is to say, *to release itself into the possible opening of structural absence*, towards what is not captured in the production of the *idea*. In following Heidegger’s destruction of metaphysics the human, or the ‘occidental human’ at least it, learns what it ‘is not’.

There is therefore in Heidegger’s work something like an attempt to develop a practice that would ‘check’ the thetic practices that simulate the real, be they of the real itself or of human participation. Heidegger refers to this practice, at least in part, as a *Verwindung* (‘twisting’, ‘torsion’) in a clear attempt to avoid what he sees as the metaphysical notions of ‘overcoming’ or ‘becoming’ (*überwinden*). The latter remains too close to the sense of a dialectical synthesis or *Aufhebung* that would produce a third or forth difference or position from out of the opposition of a thesis and antithesis. Humankind and technic are not opposites, not thesis and antithesis. Nor is the Janus situation of *Gestell* and *Ereignis* a matter of opposition.⁶⁵ It is a suspension or tension, a Heraclitian solution: “they do not understand how what is carried in different ways comes

⁶⁵ The Janus situation that confronts humankind and that it will ‘embody’ should it ‘take on’ *Dasein* bears some resemblance to what Bernard Stiegler has developed under the term ‘pharmakon’, the ‘transitional object’. The pharmakon is both poison and cure, knowledge and what destroys it. In an essay entitled “What Is Called Caring”, Stiegler writes that pharmacology – the structure of the pharmakon – is the first and last issue of the history of philosophy, i.e., metaphysics in Heidegger. For a fuller elaboration of this term, see the introduction to Stiegler’s *What Makes Life Worth Living*. Bernard Stiegler, “What Is Called Caring” in *Technē: Research in Philosophy and Technology* Vol. 1, 2-3 (2017), p. 281.

together to speak the same language: harmony turned away from itself, like that of the bow and lyre".⁶⁶

In the Bremen lectures, Heidegger offers at least two analogues to characterize *Verwindung*. The first is the issue of 'pain' in the human realm.⁶⁷ The *Verwindung* of *Gestell* is like 'getting over' pain, which seems to give a sense of convalescence, a healing and returning to an 'original state'. Yet this 'getting over' is not a 'human overcoming' of metaphysics or technic (*die Technik wird nicht menschlich überwunden*), and this means that thinking will not overcome or 'transcend' technic. Heidegger opposes the verbs *verwinden* and *überwinden*. Rather than be overcome, technic will be 'contorted' in its still concealed truth (*das Wesen der Technik wird in seine noch verborgene Wahrheit verwunden*) (GA 79, 69). Thus Heidegger's second analogy is to his own figure of a 'turning' (*Kehre*) of *Gestell*:

"Thinking, we first learn to dwell in the region wherein the twisting (*Verwindung*) of *Seinsgeschichte*, the contortion (*Verwindung*) of *Gestell* takes place (*sich ereignet*). [...] The modality of *Ge-stell* is the simulation (*Gefahr*). As simulation, being turns into the forgottenness (*Vergessenheit* – the 'oblivion' of its compromise) of its essence, away from this essence, and in this way turns against the truth. A yet unheeded (*unbedacht*) turning (*Sichkehren*) prevails in the simulation. The possibility of a turn therefore conceals itself within the essence of the simulation, a turn in which the oblivion of the essence of Being (*Sein*) shifts in such a way that with this turn the true essence of *Ereignis* (*die Wahrheit des Wesens des Seyns*) enters all things uniquely (*in das Seiende eigens einkehrt*)."⁶⁸ (GA 79, 71)

66 Heraclitus fragment B51 is translated here from Diels-Kranz with reference to the Greek. The German reads: "Sie verstehen nicht, wie es auseinander getragen mit sich selbst im Sinn zusammen geht: gegenstrebige Vereinigung wie die des Bogens und der Leier". *Diapheromenon* has been translated as 'what is carried in different ways' rather than 'what is borne apart'. This word also carries a temporal sense that can refer to the unity of differences over the course of a lifetime or any finite temporal situation which is antecedently complete: 'to pass a life', 'to bear through to the end'. *Homologein* has been translated as 'speak the same language' rather than 'go together' to maintain the overarching precedence of *logos* and the different 'ways' it occurs. The words 'way' and 'harmony' here, as they pertain to 'difference within language or *logos*', also refer to Heidegger's discussion of *melos* at the end of the essay "Der Weg zur Sprache" (GA 12, 255). *Homologein* is central to Heidegger's later attempts to rethink language and *logos*. In the essay "Logos" he translates it as 'to lay the same' and understands it from a sense of corresponding difference from within a union or 'one' (VA 207ff.). Herman Diels, "Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker", ed. Walter Kranz (August Raabe: Berlin-Neukölln, 1960), p. 162.

67 It should be noted that this 'pain' (*Schmerz*) will play a central role in Heidegger's understanding of 'difference' in the essay "Die Sprache", composed at roughly the same time as these lectures are being held 1949-1950 (GA 12, 15ff.).

As technic ‘transcends’ absence and concealing, transcends limitation towards pure and absolute formal intelligibility, the monotone of presence turns against the truth. The convalescence of *Verwindung* is thus ‘restorative’ in turning away from pure revelation towards what appears to be the dimension of concealing or absence in truth.⁶⁸ Better said, perhaps, convalescence restores tension to truth.

Between these two analogies of turning or torsion and convalescence, Heidegger, rather haphazardly and misleadingly, refers the *Verwindung* to the arrival of another modality of revealing (*Geschick*). This is misleading despite the immediate qualification that such an ‘arrival’ cannot be anticipated logically-historically, nor can it be construed as belonging to a sequential process of history (GA 79, 69). It is misleading because it falls prey to the sometimes ambiguous-seeming use of *Geschichte* in Heidegger – for which Section 2.1 attempted to provide a possible resolution – that does not always allow his qualifications or ‘warnings’ to be heeded or parsed. *Gestell* already names the gathering of thetic modalities of revealing. If Heidegger himself tends to think against this at times – holding out hope for the ‘hidden *poiesis*’ – it can be made concrete by recognizing the import of Heidegger’s statement: “There is no *geschicklich* [sic] epoch of *Ereignis*. The sending (*Schicken*) is from *Ereignis*” (GA 15, 367). The sending of modalities is ‘from’ *Ereignis* (see Chapter 3) and (always already) gathered in *Gestell*. There ‘is’ only this union of *Gestell* and *Ereignis*. The ‘arrival’ of another *Geschick* can only be understood as the ‘saving’. Heidegger seems to understand this ‘saving’ in terms of what is released in all thetic movement – his figures of withdrawal, expropriation, and excess –, which is at once what is ‘already there’ in a modality of revealing, namely the ‘arrival’ of what has been forgotten.

The analogy between *Verwindung* and *Kehre* evokes the sense of twisting or contorting in the verb *verwinden*. It also refers to one of the tasks Heidegger’s thinking assigns itself following the destruction of metaphysics. The substantive *Verwindung* is understood by both *Duden* and DWDS solely as a synonym for ‘torsion’. Torsion is a twisting or turning, often specifically associated with the turning of two ends in opposite directions (or turning one end of something while holding the other in place). The verb *verwinden* gives the sense of twisting, warping, and distorting, passing into a sense of dislocation. The simulation is a turn away from truth in its proper modality (as tension, as a suspension of revealing and concealing). It is a turn away or covering over (and overcoming, *to deínon*) of structural absence. It would appear that Heidegger’s

⁶⁸ In his translation of GA 71, Richard Rojcewicz has translated *Verwindung* as ‘twisting free’. This might be taken as a twisting free from metaphysics or from technical determination.

reorientation is concerned with 'dealing in' ('acting', *Handeln*) absence, as if the human were meant to be turning the gears of absence while technic turns those of presence, whatever that might come to mean. This would appear to be the 'start-point' (*Anfang?*) for thinking a non-neutral relation to technic which is also not 'anti-technic'. It is perhaps from here that a sense of healing or convalescence could arise, supposing that humankind reinstate absence into *Gestell's* configurations and so 'repair' the truth.

This assignment for thinking appears to be given in the first lecture of Heidegger's Bremen lectures, "Das Ding", which would be repeated the following year at the Bayerisch Akademie der Schönen Künste. At the end of the essay Heidegger speaks of humankind as the mortal (*das Sterbliche*), which he characterizes as the one that has access to death as death. Death is the 'shrine of the nothing' which holds within it the 'active dimension' (*das Wesende*) of being. It harbors or protects this 'active dimension' of being, such that Heidegger gives death a name similar to the constructions of *Gestell* and *Gefahr*: the collective noun *Gebirg* (not *Gebirge*). As the active dimension of Being, death is associated with the structural absence that 'allows' the self-relation of presence and 'produces' partial presence. Death is something like the collective act of rescuing and/or harboring. This would suggest that the importance of Heraclitus's question in B12 (*wie kann man sich bergen?*) for Heidegger's thinking may be quite pointedly about the determination of humankind (or lack thereof) in terms of mortality. The human would then be situated (also *wesend*, here in the sense of *aufhalten*) in *death*, and thus in the collective harboring and salvaging of being's 'active dimension', making humankind the 'active relation to being as being'.⁶⁹

It is indeed the case that Heidegger views the human as called on to 'repair' Being, as suggested in the initial analogy with convalescence.⁷⁰ Heidegger presumably would have been aware of Grimm's Latin translations for this meaning of *verwinden* ('to get over the consequence of something'), which include *resarcire* ('to patch up, mend, repair, restore'), *reconcinnare* ('to set right again,

69 "Die Sterblichen sind, die sie sind, als die Sterblichen, wesend im Gebirg des Seins. Sie sind das wesende Verhältnis zum Sein als Sein" (GA 79, 18).

70 The French collective author Tiqqun, apparently under the influence of Giorgio Agamben, is one attempt to develop a practical and political thinking that could respond to the lingering issues and insights of Heidegger's thinking (though not solely this). Taking their name from Kabbalistic concept of *tikkun olam* (literally, 'to repair the world'), they define *tiqqun* as the action restoring the 'how' to each fact, elevating this 'how' to 'the only real there is'. *Tiqqun* is the 'becoming-practice of the world', where each act 'spontaneously manifests its own metaphysics'. Tiqqun, *Introduction to Civil War* (Los Angeles: Semiotexte, 2010), pp. 181, 189.

repair'), and *recuperare* ('to recover, salvage, rescue'). The last named term bears direct semantic relation to the *Gebirg* in which humankind 'dwells'. Thus 'death' here is not the cessation of life, but is paradoxically related by Heidegger to the active mode of humankind in its role, not as securing technical presence, but as somehow preserving structural absence.

Heidegger appears to take the long route in proposing that the human is tasked with taking on an orientation which is concerned with (needed or used in) repairing the truth. Something very simple to say emerges quite indirectly. Such is the *impractical slog* of Heidegger's language. It comes not only as a need to think through the particular words, but also the movement between them and their placement within a given 'thought' or text. This 'method', which the introduction to this essay has called 'paratactic arrangement', is quite common to Heidegger's *Spätwerk*. The multivalent relationality of terms, which Heidegger constructs within and across texts, allows him to say 'more' than he would with direct assertions and words taken only in their 'technical' meaning. It is one way that he attempts to enact a twisting or contorting of the technical configurations that determine philosophical language. By drawing upon the 'excess' of language, these 'twists' might undermine such determination and 'save' language.⁷¹ This is something like a 'twisting free' (*Verwindung*) of language from fixed determinations. The entire project of the 'destruction of metaphysics' can be read as an attempt to 'restore' absence to the/a trajectory in thought rooted in and determined by presence. Examples such as this one, however, are limited to Heidegger's approach to textual practices or practices of writing.

Heidegger's language essays of the 1950s contain related reflections on sound and verbal or phonetic communication. Some of these concern the localization of language and the development and use of the idiomatic and the colloquial. Others concern the entanglement of *physis* and *logos* as it plays out in the human body, a matter also linked to the colloquial.⁷² Such figures (idiom, the colloquial, the sounding body) display the universality of language

⁷¹ This is also done, of course, with words themselves, to the extent that Heidegger scholars have had to fashion themselves as amateur philologists in order to engage at all with his use of the German language. His work has elicited an 'attention' to language that has had broad influence in the domain of so-called 'continental philosophy'. The word *energeia*, for example, says much more when Heidegger's translation 'standing in the work' is used as a vessel through which to then think 'actuality' and 'operation'.

⁷² Heidegger believed that elements of the sounded word, in relation to the uniqueness of the body, indicated the concealed dimension of *physis* in the human that could not be captured in the technical. Handwriting designates another example. In a time where natural language processing advances into these once 'concealed' realms, where 'real' faces are constructed technologically as 'deep fakes', the troubling limitations of Heidegger's

at crossroads with its own finitude in the form of the human. Heidegger ultimately refers the 'sounding' or 'sounded' dimension of human language to the field of vision embedded in *Ereignis*. The modality of language is that of 'self showing' (*sich zeigen*). Language is thought as the 'relation of all relations' or 'relation of all conditions' (*Verhältnis aller Verhältnis*), though this designation is also later shifted to *Ereignis*. Yet, in this shift, which will be covered in the following chapter, Heidegger lays out only a vague road map for what a shift in orientation towards absence would ultimately 'look like'. The references to a bodying or embodied absence would belong to this map in addition to Heidegger's textual practices, though these alone appear insufficient.

The question of 'communication' as a 'dealing in absence' is left, at the close of *Der Weg zur Sprache*, to Hölderlin's 'utopic promise' in "Friedensfeier" ("Celebration of Peace"): 'from the morning on, since we have been a conversation and heard from one another, the human has experienced a great deal; but soon we will be song'.⁷³ These lines are situated centrally in the closing paragraphs of the 1959 essay "Der Weg zur Sprache" (GA 12, 255). It seems clear that, for Heidegger, they indicate something like a shift from the metaphysical mode of communication dominated by presence (hearing from one another), to one wherein the conditioning of finitude turns the various modalities of presence into a song, a sort of harmony of fragments strung together by an attention to what is not present.

Beyond the simulation of the technical *logos*, language is a matter of sounding and silence for Heidegger, of presence and absence. It is this tension that assures the need for both philosophy/science and 'thinking'. The *Verwindung* of metaphysics does not occur alone but together with the movement of technic. Language places humankind at the thoroughfare of the autonomous rationality of technic, the simulated world it produces, and everything that is withdrawn from or in excess of it, including the human itself. It would appear that *Dasein* – the human can now be spoken of collectively and 'determined by' more than its self – 'embodies' (contains) this strife as what cannot be sublated. This perhaps speaks to a strife between universality (*Gestell*) and finitude (*Ereignis*) within *Dasein*. It begs the question of communication among the finite, with finitude marked out here by the constant fragmentation or 'branching off' of 'metaphysics' (plural) in every act. This, though, is the finitude of *Gestell* as elucidated in the first half of this section.

examples can be seen. Advancing upon a Heideggerian framework here, if it is at all useful, has become all the more difficult a task.

73 The author's translation here has been worked into prose for the sake of a brief elucidation.

It is also precisely at this point where some of the limitations or difficulties of Heidegger's *Spätwerk* begin to show through. How is the human thought collectively when Heidegger's own path through metaphysics and towards 'another thinking' has produced such a highly idiomatic body of work, a map that requires such initiation to follow it that Heidegger himself was led to speak of 'the few'⁷⁴ who might? How can it be that only a 'few' would be the ones to somehow repair or rearrange the barriers that exist between the specialized discourse of philosophy and the sciences – themselves already and increasingly understood by only a few – and the human generically speaking (thinking)? If there is any living utility to Heidegger's work, it moves away from the 'few'⁷⁵ who have understood and towards the question of something like a *universally finite communication of absence*.⁷⁶

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- ⁷⁴ It seems that it is precisely when the reader begins to grasp Heidegger's highly idiomatic use of language that the limitations of his work appear most clearly. The *Spätwerk* sets the scene, lays out the problems, that would be the basis of a thought oriented towards absence which does not resolve its tension with modes of thinking that specialize in the manipulation of presence. C.R.L. James once wrote of the need for the 'proletarianization of philosophy', stating that, because the border of practice and theory is decidedly non-existent – a matter Heidegger would have agreed with – purely philosophical answers would no longer suffice. What is meant by 'proletarianization' here is to bring the task of philosophy into the hands of the proletariat and out of the hands of the intellectuals. In passages that critique Heidegger as an existentialist and purely academic thinker, he calls on the proletariat to produce its own antagonisms in order to overcome them. The disagreements Heidegger would find with this dialectical construction go without saying, though it is clear that his thinking is concerned with a sort of 'remedy' to the technical specialization of knowledge. There is a seeming contradiction between Heidegger's 'few' and his notion of thinking. C.R.L. James, "Philosophy and State Capitalism" (<https://www.marxists.org/archive/james-clr/works/1950/o8/state-capitalism.htm>).
- ⁷⁵ Following from the previous note referencing C.R.L. James, it should be noted that Heidegger would view 'proletarianization' in relation to what has been discussed under *Bestandstücke* and *to koínōn*. This is to say that, for him, the process of 'proletarianization' would not be a 'giving knowledge back', but rather the process whereby humans become 'cogs in the machinery' of an autonomous rationality. Stiegler views this similarly, characterizing 'proletarianization' as "the destruction of knowledge that results from its exteriorization". He continues: "The proletariat is *not* the working class, but the *non-working* class (the class deprived of work, *désœuvrés* – jf) [...] They are those who *no longer know*, but serve *without knowledge*, because they serve not a master, but systems, systems that exteriorize knowledge *even for the 'masters'*". Stiegler proposes a project of 'de-proletarianization' as "reacquisition of knowledge in the service of [...] individuation". Stielger, *Nanjing Lectures*, pp. 25, 64-66.
- ⁷⁶ Despite Heidegger's various references to the 'few' who would understand the path his work lays out, namely a directedness towards absence, it is worth recounting an anecdote of Heidegger's well-known student Otto Pöggeler. In reference to the 'growing interest' in

Gestell will produce no perfect Rosetta Stone. There will be no technical universalization of communication. Yet, something like the inverse might be attempted. All communication could communicate first and primarily its inherent finitude. In this regard, Heidegger's 'topology' appears to seek a reorientation of thought towards the finite and unknown, which recognizes first the finitude 'in all things'. *Ereignis*, the central orienting figure of this attempt, is a step towards understanding the limitation of *Gestell* and away from the self-referential movement of presence. It is a step towards 'structural absence'. Comportment is not towards presence as a whole, towards *Gestell* as consummate, but rather toward a localization of truth where absence is recognized to be the productive force of presence in a unique configuration. This localization can be understood in terms of Heidegger's transmutation of the Greek *topos*, to which Chapter 3 is devoted.

When thought comports towards absence or finitude, it allows the technical aggregation of partial, that is, formal and intelligible, configurations of presence to 'be' what they are. Being situated in death, the human follows that which grants presence, and thereby all technical artifacts of this movement, its absolute self-relation. This death is not a cessation of life. In comporting towards death – towards the active dimension of transitive presence – the human is situated in the production of ever-renewed 'life'. It will be seen in the following chapter that in its relation to *Ereignis*, understood primarily from the figures of *topos* and delimitation, that humankind under the auspices of this thinking is 'engaged' in a different sort of 'organization', one guided by absence. Put otherwise, humankind is involved in 'converting' the excess of *Gestell* (the reserve of history) into something unique. It is here that convalescence and repair are to be understood from a torsion or contortion of technical presence, another, perhaps 'freer' relationship to technic. Heidegger refers to this variously as 'building', 'dwelling', and 'thinking', all of which can be qualified by his use of the term 'poetize' and/or 'thicken' or 'seal' (*dichten*). This might be viewed, in every case, as the contortion (*Verwindung*) of pure presence, of the standard produced in *Gestell*.

This leaves humankind and human action outside of the ontological register produced by the technical *logos*, which is to say, *technically speaking*, it

Pöggeler's *Der Denkweg Martin Heideggers*, Heidegger wrote to Pöggeler in 1964: "I think now is the time to stop writing about Heidegger. More important would be a sober [or impersonal] engagement [*sachliche Auseinandersetzung*]". The current essay would be a success if it were at least able to find a middle ground between necessary elaboration and what Heidegger intended here with *sachliche Auseinandersetzung*. Pöggeler, *Der Denkweg Martin Heideggers*, p. 355.

announces an ‘ontological death’ of the human. Appropriating Heidegger’s understanding of technic and his technic-adjacent notion of thinking towards practical aims will thus have to reckon with a rather awkward orientation. Heidegger’s notion of a non-metaphysical thinking, quite unlike what has been claimed about the Platonic-Aristotelian orientation of philosophy, is not oriented by survival in the common sense. It is not about the transmission of presence, nor the production or recognition of its register, for such a task is left to technic. It is rather oriented by sur-vival – a ‘safekeeping’ associated with what has just been called a ‘production of ever-renewed life’ – precisely in not seeking life as affirmation in or of the optic imperative. Thinking is thereby ‘subtracted’ from life to the extent that it observes what life is ‘not’ (already). If society is a collective joined and mediated by recognizable signs, the Heideggerian prescription would likely be that the human must first withdraw from society oriented by the optic imperative, from its pre-established modalities of mediation, in order to first communicate. Perhaps, if worked out, this would bring the archaic meaning back to the *socius*, rooted in a communication as ‘following’ (**sek^w*-). Such a thought will be returned to in the following chapter with a notion of ‘sequestration’.

For Heidegger, language does move the world. It sets it and sets it in motion. But the world can no longer be that of *Dasein*’s active construction without falling back upon all the old failings of metaphysical philosophy. The world is the product of the simulation or is this very simulation, whose danger ‘sets free’ what is, for Heidegger, to be thought. Technical configurations are themselves relational structures, and it appears that *Dasein* would be located in some ‘inverted space’. The human appears to dwell in a ‘purely active’ dimension that is *not* that of ‘placing into presence’, as if it moved in maintaining the ‘between spaces’ of technical configurations. Late in his Bremen lectures, Heidegger repeats the motifs concerning the ‘turning’ of *Gefahr* now in terms of the world itself: ‘when the forgetfulness turns, when the world arrives (*einkehren*) as what maintains the modality of being, world occurs as the single flash in letting go of the thing’ (GA 79, 74). The abrupt emergence of world occurs in letting go of (*Verwahrlosung* – ‘neglect’) the ‘thing’.⁷⁷ Such a thing will become the quintessential figure of a *topos* in Heidegger’s work. It is the

⁷⁷ The term *Verwahrlosung* (neglect) rooted in the verb *verwahren* ('to keep', 'to preserve') is used here in clear distinction to the 'maintaining' (*wahren*) of the world. The proximity of 'thing' and 'world' in Heidegger's thinking appears to be similar to the proximity of *Gestell* and *Ereignis*, revealing and concealing. This is not to say all of these couples are synonymous.

transmutation of the entity into an occurrence of the truth, the congealing of a manifold appropriation Heidegger indicates with the term 'fourfold' or 'interstice' (*Vierung*).

In the collective simulation, the human dwells in the dimension of absence and concealing (or concealment). It dwells therefore in the *Verwindung* (GA 79, 71). For the Heidegger who seeks to find a way out of being's simulation of the truth, the human who dwells in concealing and harboring signifies and is the 'opposite of being'. Heidegger mostly defers any discussion about the practices of this human other than in his discussions of language, some of which has just been discussed. He does, however, attempt to think the locality or 'non-place' of its dwellings. In doing so, he seeks something like a gnostic technotopia where the human does not register ontologically, but moves absently in harmony with its 'technical double'.

Some Remarks

Following the destruction of metaphysics, Heidegger elaborates a notion of *Gestell* that consolidates the technical nature of metaphysical doctrines and the movement it has mapped out. In doing so, he elaborates an inherent and inseparable technical dimension of Nature that can be considered, in its most basic sense, as Nature's finite striving towards the universalization of itself. The lexicon surrounding *Gestell* establishes the central motifs of metaphysics, antecedence and consummation, as the movement of this technical universalization in terms of securing presence's self-relation. The absolute self-relation of presence is viewed by Heidegger as enabled by finitude, which, in turn, marks or qualifies Nature's own universalization with or by finitude. The movement that attempts to dominate absence and the unknown with presence, the wresting of presence from absence associated with metaphysical thought, is shown to be a 'managing' of the revelatory dimension of Nature rather than a total and absolute dominance. It is from this point that Heidegger attempts to shift the orientation of thinking towards what is 'left out' or 'in excess' of such management, namely something like a structural absence or concealing.

The following and final chapter will attempt to elaborate Heidegger's notions of '*topos*' and '*topology*'. His elaboration of *Gestell* occurs simultaneously with his attempts to sketch what he calls a 'topology of being'. Such thinking is oriented around the elaboration of the term *Ereignis* as a transmutation of *physis*, for a thinking of Nature not rooted in the technical assumptions that dominate the development of western philosophy and science. What has been discussed thus far as absence, structural absence, and concealing, will be tied to the central motif of *delimitation* in Heidegger's thinking, which will

be closely associated with, if not a metonym for, *Ereignis* and/or Nature. The elaboration of Heidegger's 'topology' as something preliminary may also contain a *Verwindung* of the central motifs surrounding *Gestell*, which is to say, a 'contortion' of these motifs in being-oriented-by-absence or -delimitation, rather than by presence or revealing. This will be presented as a sort of lexical map for Heidegger's topology that is, in many ways, itself a transmutation of what has been discussed in Chapters 1 and 2.

APPENDIX 1

Hin und Her

The following appendix serves the role of further establishing a demonstrable link between the analysis at the close of Section 1.4 (subsection: ‘*Formal’ Self-Sufficiency*’) and Heidegger’s elaboration of *Gestell* in terms of the reciprocity of the terms *bestehen* and *bestellen* in Section 2.2, subsection *Possibility or Probability*?:

The role of *Gestell*’s structural antecedence in linking *Bestand* and *Bestellen* is exemplified in a passage from Heidegger’s Bremen lectures. The passage in question considers how presence is constant: presence is constant (*Bestand besteht*) through a ‘peculiar placing’ (*eigentümliches Stellen*) that takes the term *Be-stellen*. Heidegger immediately moves to describe not *bestellen*, but *stellen*. He does so by another immediate shift to the verb ‘to produce’ (*her-stellen*), which he speaks of primarily in substantive forms. What is produced (*das Her-gestellte*) is not congruent with something manufactured. What is ‘in’ what is produced (*das ins Her Gestellte*) ‘is’ (*steht*) in the vicinity of what approaches (*was uns angeht*). What is placed in the *her-*, generally to be taken as ‘here’, is in the vicinity of what approaches. This would suggest the commonly understood function of *her-* as designating movement toward a speaker and away from a point of origin (come here = *komm mal her*). The work of technic or of the technician is placed ‘there’ (*hin*, ‘away from’ the standpoint of technic or the technician) in advance (*im vorhinein*)¹ of its preferred place, where something ‘remains’ (*verweilt*) without yet ‘actually’ being there (GA 79, 26). To clarify, the example refers to a dead farmer. Heidegger states that the farmer’s casket is in its place (the location of the burial) ‘before’ the lingering or remaining of the dead farmer, i.e., before the farmer’s ‘actual’ death. What is in the *her* (‘here’), therefore, is the approach of the farmer’s death. Setting the metaphor aside, what is in the *her* is the transitivity of presence that will ‘place-there’ (*hin-stellen*). The meaning of *her* in the phrase *das ins Her Gestellte* thus seems to be something of the inverse of ‘here’, as in the sense of the German phrase *wo kommst du her* (‘where do you come from?’) – emphasizing the movement away from a ‘point of origin’. What is ‘in’ the ‘*her*’, the ‘from which’ (*wo kommst*

¹ The hyphenated verb here is *hin-stellen* which, before the hyphenation, means as much as ‘to arrange’ or ‘to situation’. The casket is arranged in advance. This is another repetition of the motif surrounding *epagōgē*, a matter which can be read into Heidegger’s entire use of *hin-* and *herstellen* here.

du her?), is (also?) already determined in the '*hin*', the 'toward which' (*wo fährst du hin*) or 'approach' of transitive presence. What is 'in' the 'from which' is the antecedence of the 'toward which', which 'remains' there.

Once again, the structure of *Gestell* is that of a movement that precedes from its own presupposition in order to act upon it. Both *her* and *hin* are determined in advance by the same 'end'. The structure on display here may get lost in Heidegger's choice of example and his rhetorically typical concluding remarks mourning the loss of 'death trees'.² This structure can be even further reduced when considering that the movement of *bestellen* always goes toward or 'works on' (*geht auf*) what is *bestellbar*, a 'possible object' determined in advance. This possible object can only ever be constant, transitive presence (*Bestand*); it can never be the thing to which that presence may 'belong'. This is in maintaining the 'mathematic' nature of metaphysics and *Gestell* as only ever being concerned with the antecedent position to which it returns; it is never concerned with some correspondence with entities. *Bestellen* comes from (*her*) the presupposition of its 'work' (*Bestellbarkeit*). In other words, *Bestellen* works on intelligibility (its 'object') and not things or entities themselves. In each case the 'action' of placing is given in the past tense (*gestellt*), indicating the antecedent framework of *Gestell*. What is placed in the 'from which' (*das ins Her Gestellte* – note the lack of hyphen) – *Bestellbarkeit* – is already arranged in the 'toward which': the determination of a rerouted determination of use, i.e. another mode of revealing (GA 79, 26).

This structure is clearly inherited from the technical *logos*'s fulfillment of the optic imperative in *energeia*.³ The copula – the from-which-toward-which

² Heidegger's choice of the thematic of death is relevant here, though it allows the issue of structure or structuring to get lost in a pastoral meandering, whether that be the fault of Heidegger or of the reader. With this in mind, the German can be quoted in full: "Das Her-gestellt deckt sich nicht mit dem bloß Anfertigten. Das ins Her Gestellte steht im Bezirk dessen, was uns angeht. Es ist her in eine Nähe gestellt. Der Tischler im Bergdorf fertigt nicht eine Kiste für eine Leiche. Der Sarg ist im vorhinein hin-gestellt an den bevorzugten Ort des Bauerhofes, in dem der tote Bauer noch verweilt. Der Sarg heißt dort noch der Totenbaum. In ihm gedeiht der Tod des Toten. Dies Gedeihen bestimmt Haus und Hof, die dort Wohnenden und ihre Sippe und die Nachbarschaft". Following this he remarks that in the 'motorized city': "wird kein Totenbaum hergestellt" (GA 79, 26).

³ Perhaps it is for this reason that Heidegger's examples tend toward energy production and extraction. It is worth noting that the word Heidegger uses in his workbook to qualify reflexion as 'resetting' – *Rückwerfen* – finds its only technical usage in 'electrotechnology' in the context of elementary relays. The International Electrotechnical Commission defines this as "for a bistable relay, change from the operate condition to the release condition". Of course, this is not the only possible meaning of the term. For its documented uses – which lack a unified definition – see dwds.de. For *Rückwerfen* as a technical term, see: <http://www.electropedia.org/iev/iev.nsf/display?openform&ievref=444-02-06>.

(*zu dem, von dem*) *Solches* – was shown to be the *eidos* of the technical *logos* (*Gestell* as absolute form), wherein the technical *logos* (*bestellen*) has itself within its end, is consummate, without ever ‘finishing’ (stopping, cessation) in some product (fixed presence, ontological register). Indeed, the *als ein Solches* of everything which exists is never something that is *bestellt*. The copula is rather the constancy of every thing’s *Bestellbarkeit*, the *Beständige* in *Bestand*. The recursive movement of *Gestell* might be analogous, in this way, to the movement between the extracted and placed image *within* the *physis eidos* (reproduced in the above with the *das ins Her Gestellte?*). It is the constancy of form (*eidos*) in general that makes all *qua* (the copulative *als ein Solches*) possible. The immediacy of being led (*Hinführung*) of metaphysical knowledge and its productive or constructive nature is grounded in the recursive structure of transitive presence as the form of this transitivity (*Gestell*).

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PART II

Nature and Topology

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“Topology”: Toward a ‘Non-Metaphysical’ Thinking of Nature

3.1 Gnostic Questions of the Limit (Introduction)

*It is death to mock a poet,
to love a poet,
to be a poet.¹*

As late as 1935, Heidegger had not yet considered a ‘transmutation’ of the Aristotelian notion of ‘place’ (*topos*) as being central to his attempts to develop a non-metaphysical thinking oriented around the term *Ereignis*. There is no indication of this in any of the major texts of the mid-1930s: *Einführung in die Metaphysik*, *Der Ursprung des Kunstwerkes*, *Beiträge zur Philosophie*. In the last named – which is often used to mark the ‘turn’ in Heidegger’s thinking –, *topos* is referred to together with *chronos* as two determinative terms for metaphysical thought. In this metaphysical sense, broadly speaking, *topos* is understood in relation to *phora*, change as a change of place.² *Topos* remains something like a ‘point’ in space. It is measurable, orderable, and registerable mathematically. According to the Heidegger of the *Beiträge*, a proper interpretation of *topos* and *chronos*, taken from their use in Aristotle’s *Physics* Book Δ is a key to understanding ‘the origin of the first beginning’. This is to say that an interpretation of Aristotle’s *topos* holds, in part, the key to the understanding of being as beingness (as presence) within a framework of representation (‘*ordo*’) (GA 65, 373).³ This would situate the *Beiträge* closer to those texts analyzed in Part I of this essay than to the *Spätwerk* or ‘topology’, at least in terms of the latter’s central development of a ‘topological orientation’. What follows in

¹ An “ancient Irish traid”, apparently taken from a work of the Irish poet Robert Graves, quoted in a letter from Frances Boldereff to Charles Olson. Olson and Boldereff, *A Modern Correspondence* (Hanover: Wesleyan University Press, 1999), p. 257.

² At Le Thor Heidegger comments on the ‘lost meaning’ of *topos* and *phora* suggesting further that rethinking these terms is central to his *Spätwerk* (cf GA 15, 354). It is assumed here that this ‘lost meaning’ is not what Heidegger speaks of in the *Beiträge*.

³ It’s worth noting that on the following page Heidegger does characterize *topos* as ‘einträumend’. The motif of ‘admitting’ space ‘in’ will certainly play a role in his attempts to rethink *topos*, as will be seen below (GA 65, 374).

this chapter will attempt to sketch the shift from Heidegger's position in the *Beiträge* to a transmuted sense of *topos* capable of reorienting thought.

Chapter 1 of this essay attempted to give an account of Heidegger's history or destruction of metaphysics without a *necessary* reference to its alleged topological structure. In the context of metaphysics, a 'topological structuring' would refer to the 'epochal' structuring of 'historical' forms of presence. This structure is employed as an analytical tool in Heidegger's destructive methodology that is meant to uncover the 'same' structure common to all metaphysical articulations of presence, namely the structure of *Gestell* considered in Chapter 2. The topological structuring of metaphysics is precisely the chrono-topo-logical structure that is to be 'destroyed' or 'deconstructed'. The attempt to show that metaphysics is indeed *technic*, an autonomous rationality guiding metaphysical thought in all its iterations, should free the terms *topos*, topological, and topology to be sought elsewhere in Heidegger's *Spätwerk*. What is discussed in this chapter is therefore no longer concerned with the *topos* referred to in the *Beiträge*, but rather its transmutation in the so-called 'other beginning'. It will attempt a preliminary elaboration of the manner in which Heidegger has reinterpreted or 'twisted' (*verwinden*) Aristotle's *topos*, recasting it as a core notion in non-metaphysical thinking.

Though Heidegger rarely indicates it directly,⁴ the topological orientation of his thinking is already well at work in the 1950s. The forth supplement or appendix (*Beilage, Blatt 4*) to the 1957 lecture cum essay "Satz der Identität" offers a good example of the movement of Heidegger's thinking as it develops into a 'topology' (see Appendix 2). The appendix enumerates four points along which the notion of 'identity' is traced through metaphysics to its transmutation according to *Ereignis*. In fact, it could be suggested that this appendix corresponds to a remark found in the lecture version of "Satz der Identität" that does not reappear in the essay version. In the Freiburg lecture, Heidegger suggests that *Ereignis* is a guideword for thinking the 'obscure word' of Parmenides: *tò autó*.⁵ This appendix can thus be understood as marking the 'steps' according to which Heidegger links *Ereignis* to *tò autó*. It begins with the

⁴ According to the *Heidegger Concordance*, the term *Topologie* (topology) appears only about eight times in the *Gesamtausgabe* as of 2013. It can be assumed that this number has increased with the publication of his private notebooks over recent years.

⁵ The following sentence is absent from the corresponding passage of the essay version found in GA 11 (p. 45): "The word *Er-eignis* is now, more originally thought, taken as guideword for a thought that attempts [to think] the obscure word of Parmenides: *tò autó* [...] (GA 79, 125).

Parmenidean sentence on Being and Thinking and passes immediately into the modern or German Idealist understanding of identity between subject and object (points 1 and 2). The transmutation proper begins with point 3 and returns to the Parmenidean sentence. The *tò gar autó* (‘the same’) that links *noein* to *einai*, presence to perception, is understood as ‘belonging together’ and ‘unity’ or ‘one-ness’ (*Ein-heit*). This link, the *tò gar autó*, is transformed in point 3a to read *auto kath auto* – roughly, ‘the same according to the same’. The word *topos* is then substituted for the *kath* (‘according to’) and set next to the *tò autó* such that ‘the same according to the same’ is transformed to read ‘the same place’. The final and forth point reads “*Ereignis* itself – the Topo | logy [...] in its saying” (GA 11, 94).

What can be taken from Heidegger’s sketch here – which in many ways follows the trajectory of his own thinking – is that the word *topos* comes to stand in the ‘between’ of ‘being’ and ‘thinking’, *einai* and *noein*. It is notable that, in following the path of transformations along Heidegger’s sketch of four points, the notions of being and thinking, subject and object, presence and perception fall away to leave only what may stand between them, namely, what is named in *tò gar autó*, *autó kath autó*, and *topos*. The guiding word of Parmenides is ‘reduced’, it might be said, to what is or remains active in it, the link, the between. This ‘between’ will be taken up throughout this chapter as a sort of interstice and/or intervention that is understood from or as *Ereignis*, particularly in the chapter’s Interlude on ‘difference’. The thinking of this (*Ereignis selbst*) is indicated by Heidegger as a ‘topology’.

That Heidegger considers a thinking oriented by *Ereignis* to be a topology can be traced further back to at least 1951 – and Heidegger subsequently does this himself – in a footnote added to the *Gesamtausgabe* edition of the essay “Bauen Wohnen Denken”. A special attention to this footnote is the central impetus of the present study. The reasoning for this is that, in the first place, this footnote is the best indication of how Heidegger understands *topos* in his *Spätwerk*, namely, as an appropriation of the Aristotelian definition cited by the footnote: ‘a generic, resting limit’. An understanding of *topos*, as has just been shown, is linked directly by Heidegger to an understanding of *Ereignis*. What Heidegger takes from Aristotle will be central to thinking the ‘between’ indicated in *tò gar autó* and *autó kath autó* and in transmuting metaphysical *physis* as well as its ‘highest articulation’ in *energeia*.

The importance of this footnote is further attested to in recognizing that “Bauen Wohnen Denken” (BWD) belongs to a series of three related essays composed in the early 1950s that exemplify the topological theme of Heidegger’s *Spätwerk*. The other two are “Das Ding” and “... dichterisch wohnet der Mensch ...” (DwdM). “Das Ding” is first given in December of 1949 and

repeated in March and June of 1950. Recall that it is in this essay that Chapter 2 discussed humankind's access to death as death in terms of 'active relation of being to being'. The other two lectures are given in the late summer and early autumn of 1951. These three essays – marking the first substantial indication of *topos* – are to be taken as experimental attempts to develop the question of *topos* in direct relation to Heidegger's *Technik* essay and Bremen lectures. They are primary examples of Heidegger's thinking oriented by the core motifs of a transmuted *topos*. "Das Ding", the first lecture in Heidegger's Bremen series, meditates upon the 'what is' that is set free ('saved') in technic. It could be said that its topological orientation presents the new direction of Heidegger's thinking in the transmutation of the 'what is' or rethinking of the 'real' – the title of the Bremen lectures is *Einblick in das was ist*. The two essays that follow it take up the motifs of "Das Ding" in two variations centered on Heidegger's notion of 'dwelling'. This notion of 'dwelling' disturbs the traditional determinative horizons from which thinking occurs (historically, but also cosmologically) and meditates upon the possibility of thought as action from such altered horizons.

Analysis of these essays will follow from a discussion of the passages in Aristotle's *Physics* from which Heidegger appears to have derived the basic sense of *topos* permeating the *Spätwerk*. Other essays considered in the following analyses include Heidegger's quasi-terminal lecture *Zeit und Sein* and its accompanying 'seminar notes'; the experimental essay "Logos" and Heidegger's language essays of the 1950s; and three of Heidegger's 'workbooks' from the late 1930s and early 40s that show Heidegger's topological orientation in its earliest stages of development.⁶ The range of essays considered here should provide for a broad view of Heidegger's later thinking. The more experimental essays show a Heidegger inspired by so-called 'poetic' engagements with language and the attempt to develop what first appears in his workbooks into a 'different kind' of philosophical language. The language essays and, importantly, "Zeit und Sein", offer a view of Heidegger's attempt to 'translate' a figural, experimental language back into a more recognizable philosophical register, though one still very much inflected by Heidegger's idiom.

Coherence between Heidegger's somewhat disparate literary styles across a roughly 30 year period will be traced by way of recurring motifs. It is postulated

⁶ While no specific claim is made here about volumes 69, 70, and 71 of the *Gesamtausgabe*, Heidegger's *Ereignis* workbooks (GA 65-72) develop as critiques of the speculative work done in the previous volumes. Simply put, the above-mentioned volumes represent more 'developed' preliminary work for Heidegger's essays of the 1950s and 60s and stand in close proximity to the important essay "AΦ1939".

here that Heidegger uses a highly figural language in order to articulate a closely related series of motifs through different vehicles. In his introduction to “Bauen Wohnen Denken” in the English collection *Basic Writings*, David Krell distinguishes the essays in question as a move away from a technical-philosophical language toward a more poetic and mythological language. This claim should be taken further. The late essays are highly ‘metaphorical’ in nature – what is referred to here as a figural language –, despite the fact that Heidegger might reject any attribution of metaphoricity to his work. At the same time, borrowing or elaborating upon a few figures from Hölderlin does not amount to the production of an entirely mythopoetic philosophical lexicon. It is further the case that some of Heidegger’s latest work, “Zeit und Sein” in particular, returns to a more ‘technical-philosophical’ language, at least the explicit language of presence and time, albeit now heavily conditioned by his work of the 50s.

Heidegger’s figural or motif laden lexicon shows him embracing a different notion of model, one seemingly unlike the models begetting technoscientific knowledge, though not necessarily unrelated to them. A model, in the sense of a figure of thought, is something ‘constructed’ in order to be ‘taken apart’. Put otherwise, it is a use of so-called ‘natural language’ with the intention of ‘working away’ the technical sense of the word – presumably the conceptual or eidetic determination – in order to ‘reveal’ something ‘simple’ which is either concealed by or in excess of the term’s technical or conventional sense. In the seminar to “Zeit und Sein”, Heidegger refers to his use of figural language like ‘the reaching’ (*das Reichen*) and ‘the gift’ (*die Gabe*) as ‘ontic models’. Such ‘models’ are a requisite (*Voraussetzung*) for thinking; though thinking must divest itself of them, it can only do so *with* these models. Thinking seeks models in order to process them (*abarbeiten*), to work them away (GA 14, 60f.). The approach to thinking that Heidegger prescribes for himself is something like the ‘destruction of metaphysics’ re-employed in a microcosm. He is constructing texts that are intended to be taken apart.

Heidegger uses a number of figures and metonyms that can be considered as or in relation to the notion of *topos* guiding his later thinking. Metonyms may include but are not necessarily limited to: *Dasein*, *Ort*, *Ortschaft*, *Gegend*, *Lichtung*, *Geviert*, *Zeit-Spiel-Raum*, *Inständigkeit*, et al. These metonyms are allied to figures of *topos* such as the thing, the vessel, the jug, the bridge, the dimension. The figures and metonyms of *topos* are further qualified by motifs of relation or relationality and proximity found in terms such as *Verhältnis*, *Versammlung*, *Vereignung*, *einräumen*, *Nähe*, *Ferne*, et al. Determinative for this nexus of figures and motifs, however, is Heidegger’s focus on the motif of the limit or delimitation throughout his work, which is only further emphasized in the *Spätwerk*; the relevant terms here include *telos*, *peras*, *Horizont*, *Gegnet*.

[sic], *Anfang*, *Ende*, *Grenze*, et al. English equivalents for all these terms cannot be given straightaway but will emerge in what follows along with their elaboration.

The models, figures, and motifs surrounding the ‘topological orientation’ of Heidegger’s *Spätwerk* will therefore be ‘processed’ in the elaboration and defense of a particular claim: Heidegger’s *Spätwerk* consists in a radical rethinking of ‘Nature’ (*physis*) through the motif of the limit or, better put, *delimitation*, and this thinking is marked by its orientation around the term *Ereignis*. Delimitation might be considered a guideword or *Letimotif* for understanding *Ereignis*. This is indeed to say that the term *Ereignis* says as much as what the motif of delimitation says and that this, in turn, is *physis*. As a transmutation of *physis*, *Ereignis* also concerns an attempt to think together two of its central aspects, namely self-intervention and consummation, non-metaphysically.⁷

Heidegger’s attempts to rethink or transmute *physis* must therefore be taken as a response to the shortcomings of “AΦ1939” and considered traceable to Aristotle’s *Physics*.⁸ Delimitation can be thought, in the first place, from the self-intervention (self-delimiting) of *physis* essential to the technical Nature of Aristotle’s conception, namely the (technical) self-intervention through which *physis* comes to ‘know itself’. As will be seen, the raw material for thinking this intervention comes not from *physis* itself, but from Aristotle’s notion of *topos* as a ‘generic delimiting’: its investigation does not lead to a theory of knowledge. Aristotle’s notion of *topos* presents Heidegger with a useful figure for thought because Aristotle’s notion is already thought as independent of form and matter and the four causes. As a figure found in Aristotle’s *Physics*, it offers Heidegger a ‘replacement’ for Aristotle’s *physis-eidos* that does not create the logical presupposition of the optic imperative. Removed from the optic imperative, then, the self-intervention of *physis* is no longer viewed as the eidetic production that orders nature, but rather something like its possibility. The ‘whole’ is therefore no longer the consummate process of this ordering, nor the ‘beings as a whole as such’ that ‘results’ from it. Nature’s consummation is constant by way of its delimitation, though this does not concern entities.

A brief reference to Heidegger’s analysis of the fundamental structure of the *logos* in his 1929-30 lecture course, *Die Grundbegriffe der Metaphysik*, shows the motif of delimitation already developing late in Heidegger’s fundamental

⁷ A clear and definitive characterization of *Ereignis* is not found in any one place in Heidegger’s work, though many reconstructions have been attempted by his commentators. It should be noted, however, that the workbook GA 71 has an entire section dedicated to its vocabulary.

⁸ This again shows that the most important shifts in Heidegger’s *Spätwerk* occur not in the mid-1930s, but rather in the later 30s and early 1940s.

ontology period. His analysis there proposes that the ground for the possibility of the assertion (*Aussage*) is the delimitation of an *indivisible whole*. The example used is an assertion about a chalkboard: ‘the chalkboard is poorly positioned’. This assertion can only occur on the basis of the *entire room* being manifest, for it can be affirmed from any one particular position within the room (GA 29/30, 501). What is of interest here is not the assertion or its possibility – though it could be said that the possibility of the assertion represents the possibility of technical knowledge –, but this ‘whole’ that Heidegger has in mind. In the language of Heidegger’s fundamental ontology, this ‘whole’ is considered a ‘pre-logical openness for entities’. This openness is well known to appear radically transformed in Heidegger’s later work in terms like *Lichtung* (‘clearing’), where the sense of indivisibility is more pronounced and delimitation is no longer understood *for* entities, but rather in terms of a movement away from entities (see: Interlude). While Heidegger’s interest in the 1929–30 lecture course is the ‘fact’ of this pre-logical ‘how’ of the assertion, there remains a certain focus upon the entities that become intelligible or open to assertion. At the very least the thinking recounted here relies upon the entity (chalkboard) *within* the whole. There remains a sort of technical or metaphysical reliance, then, in terms of the movement of thought or language describing the experience of this ‘whole’. The shift in the topology, it will be seen, is an attempt to direct thought towards an isolation of this ‘whole itself’ in terms of delimitation.

The delimited whole that grounds speech is both like and unlike the whole that sets metaphysics in motion. Heidegger stresses the *im* (‘in’) in *im Ganzen* as it signifies the indivisibility of the whole. This is to stress once more that this indefinite whole is not, despite its indefinite nature, a mere amassing or collection of various things (a *Vielerei*). It is indefinite and indivisible, an *im Ganzen* that humans do not properly grasp (*dass wir als solches nicht ausdrücklich und eigens erfassen*) (GA 29/30, 505). This ‘do not properly grasp’ indicates the insufficiency of the thought being developed in 1929/30, the metaphysical reliance upon the chalkboard, while getting to the heart of what Heidegger seeks to develop. The indefiniteness and ‘do not properly grasp’ differs from metaphysics, which posits access to *the* whole in advance. What Heidegger begins to develop in GA 29/30, however, posits only that *a* (indefinite) whole manifests itself *prior* to the unfolding of a logic, of a technical configuration that would be ‘proven’ in the contextual ‘hanging together’. It is the indefinite *im Ganzen* here that indicates a ‘hanging together’ or coherence as a finite, yet invisible ‘slice’ – the ‘room itself’ – which is indivisible without, of course, being *the* whole. Already here there is the finitude of enacted technic, the partiality discussed in Section 2.3, and the ‘unknown’ or ‘absence’ that allows

or grants it, and thus the recursive movement of *Gestell*, the latter taking the names *Ereignis* and delimitation.

Delimitation thus speaks to a transmutation of the sense of consummation that would guide any elaboration of *physis* as *Ereignis*. The notion of an indefinite, indivisible whole that is not and never could be *das Seiende im Ganzen als ein Solches* remains in Heidegger's later discussions of *logos*, including in his elucidations of Heraclitus. Take Heraclitus fragment B54: 'lightning steers the everything' (VA 214). Lightning here is the sudden flash that illuminates a field. Lightning does not light up the entire earth, nor the entire cosmos, but rather presents a coherent whole from which 'vision' can begin to think. Such language – motifs of lightning, suddenness, clearing, etc. – is often used to indicate *Ereignis* in Heidegger's later work. It is intended to convey the singular and/or unified 'vision' that is 'opened' (or 'cleared') by delimitation.

Between a thinking oriented by *Ereignis* and one oriented by *Technik*, there is a subtle difference in the way in which the 'part' is subordinated to the 'whole' (consummation) – if it can be spoken of in these terms. In speaking of consummation as a 'whole', Heidegger speaks of a 'whole' that is no longer distinct from its 'parts', thus suggesting or nearly suggesting that the entity itself is a sort of 'whole'. This will be seen in Heidegger's non-metaphysical understanding of a world as a delimited configuration of the 'four elements' named as the matrix or *Geviert* (the 'fourfold'). At the same time, the indefinite, indivisible whole just spoken of is not the 'whole' in the sense of an unconditional or absolute that stands in advance as the conditioner. Rather, a whole is always the condition/ed, always finitely delimited. The notion of an indefinite, indivisible whole – the conditioned – sets Heidegger on a path to a generic understanding of Nature as self-intervention. Such intervening is the manner in which Nature continually completes itself without resolving itself in a flat, totalized ordering of its entire 'content'.

The following chapter will proceed in the form of two further sections separated by an 'Interlude'. Similar to previous chapters, each section will consist of a series of vignettes. Each subsection or vignette will consider a certain intersection of Heidegger's topological motifs, always directed towards the central semantic axis of *Ereignis*, *physis*, delimitation. Continuity between subsections may not always be immediately evident; the intersecting and repetition of the above-mentioned motifs is intended to provide a certain coherence to the two sections viewed together. In referring back to this essay's introduction, what is at stake here can be repeated as follows: to elaborate a 'holistic' view of Heidegger's topology through a piecemeal approach and present this elaboration as a necessarily preliminary reconstruction.

The first section concerns the elaboration of Heidegger’s notion of *topos* as delimitation. To this end, it may appear at times as if *topos* and topological have disappeared completely in favor of the ambiguous term delimitation – a nexus for *Ereignis*, *topos*, and *physis*. The second section begins to elaborate some basic tenets of human comportment or thinking when it is oriented topologically, which is to say towards or by delimitation as such. The two sections are bridged by an ‘Interlude’ that is concerned with Heidegger’s understanding of difference, with particular attention to his notions of immanence and limit. It is hoped that, by the end of the chapter, a preliminary elaboration of Nature as delimitation plain and simple has been articulated and, following from this a corresponding sense of human comportment as Heidegger’s prolegomena to a future thinking of ‘Nature’.

3.2 Prolegomatics for *Topos*

The following section attempts an elaboration of Heidegger’s understanding of *topos* understood from the central motif of delimitation. Through the various vignettes or subsections, delimitation will be seen in at least three ways. The first and primary way, the one that also guided the destruction of metaphysics, is as the concealing and/or harboring that delimits everything accessible or intelligible, all form. The second is via the motif of rest. Rest or stillness (=ο) is related to a sense of transit or passage, in terms of the finite intervention that allows it. The third is a transformed notion of antecedence/consummation or antecedent consummation. This can be associated with the nexus of death and immanence, suggesting that immanence is something like a generic or universal finitude. The second and third aspects appear to follow from the structural absence inherent to *Gestell*. It is worth considering whether or not these are all simply various ways of saying what Heidegger thinks in the term concealing (*Verbergen*, *Bergen*). It does appear that all three are concerned with motifs such as the lack of ontological register or formlessness (*akinēton*) and what is generally held to be inaccessible and unknowable (death, preliminary knowledge of the consummate). If Heidegger’s philosophy begins from the problematic of the manifold ways of saying Being in metaphysics, perhaps his own thinking sets off from and after the many ways that concealing is said.

The section will begin with a discussion of the notion of ‘beginning’ (*Anfang*) in Heidegger. It will consider the term *Anfang* as a transmutation of the Aristotelian *archē* and show that Heidegger’s rhetoric of ‘two beginnings’ should not be read as the abandonment of one paradigm for another,

but rather in terms of the Janus situation raised in the previous chapter and its two senses of ‘limit’. It will also introduce some of the basic characteristics of *topos* to be pursued throughout this chapter. The discussion of *Anfang* is followed by a brief discussion of the sections of Aristotle’s *Physics* from which Heidegger develops his own notion of *topos*. The four subsections that follow will continue to elaborate notions of *topos* and delimitation from various points in Heidegger’s text. This will lead to and culminate in a discussion of the ‘elements’ of Heidegger’s *Geviert* and a discussion of the essay “Das Ding”, the latter focusing in particular on the motifs of ‘appropriation’ and ‘reflection’ developed there. In thinking *topos* from *Ereignis* or delimitation, *topos* becomes the ‘thing’ of this essay and presents a radical transformation of the philosophical entity.

AQ

How Many Beginnings? (Preliminaries)

Heidegger often ties the possibility of a non-metaphysical thinking to the notion of ‘another beginning’. His rhetoric of ‘two beginnings’ corresponds to the analytical tool that is the mytho-historical (or ‘topological’) structure of metaphysics. The ‘other beginning’ would appear to mark something like a decisive break with a metaphysical continuum in its final days. It has been shown, however, that no such necessary structure exists beyond its analytic utility. The ‘other beginning’ does not indicate the beginning of a new philosophical trajectory that arises from the ashes of metaphysics. Much of the central lexicon of Heidegger’s preliminary non-metaphysical thought, if not all of it, consists in Heidegger’s transmutations of metaphysical concepts. At best, the ‘other beginning’ might be considered the inseparable complement of a beginning that corresponds to technic in the sense of the Janus face. ‘Thinking’, as opposed to philosophy, is uncovered in the analytic destruction of metaphysical thought and constructed around the transmutation of this thought.

It remains, however, to examine the development of the term ‘beginning’ (*Anfang*) in the context of Heidegger’s later lexical developments. For even in speaking of the simultaneity of two modes of knowing and acting, the term itself is not properly elaborated. The development of the term is skewed by Heidegger’s continued return to the matter of a ‘first’ and ‘other’ beginning. His reliance upon the analytic tool, which allows him to move from the metaphysics of a fundamental ontology, through the destruction of metaphysics, towards a non-metaphysical thought, leaves serious ambiguity between the term itself and its indication of a Janus-faced apparatus of knowledge.

The workbook composed around 1941 (*Über den Anfang*) comprises Heidegger’s most concentrated development of the term. Here he develops *Anfang* together with several terms in use throughout his later work including



: With discrepancy from TOC. Should this be in italics as well?
Please advise.

‘difference’ (*Unterschied*), ‘immanence’ (*Innigkeit* or *Inständigkeit*), ‘departure’ (*Abschied*), ‘downgoing’ (*Untergang*), *Dasein*, and *Ereignis*.⁹ The workbook itself is a good example of Heidegger’s paratactic elucidation of terminology. *Anfang* is considered alongside the elucidations of other words from which its understanding is inseparable. This workbook is also notable in being dated roughly two years following the composition of “AΦ1939”. It shows Heidegger attempting to work through motifs central to that essay, namely a transmutation of *archē*. It is focused on here due to its extensive coverage of the concept of *Anfang*, and the importance of this term for critiquing Heidegger’s self-interpretation of his destruction of metaphysics, and the material it contains on his later notion of difference.¹⁰

The intention in the workbook is to develop *Anfang* from or in accordance with *Ereignis*. There are two important aspects of this. First, thinking from *Ereignis*, as mentioned above, means thinking from delimitation. Heidegger has almost always thought the notion of the beginning from or together with the ‘Greek understanding’ of ‘end’ or ‘limit’ – where end and beginning are the ‘same’ – and this has always marked his thinking of delimitation. In “AΦ (1939)”, the ‘end’ in Aristotle’s *entelechia* is the ‘end where movement *first* intervenes in itself (*sich auffängt*) and is movedness’ (GA 9, 284). The *telos* in *entelechia* indicates the delimitation of technical movement named by the work of *energeia*, while simultaneously holding the same ‘place’ as that work. The self-sameness of ‘work’ and ‘end’ (and thus, beginning) is what ‘allows’ and indicates presence’s self-relation. Heidegger’s *Spätwerk* is concerned with a transmutation of the self-sameness found in *energeia-entelechia* by focusing on the question of the ‘limit’ itself, with emphasis on absence and/or concealing. In “Bauen Wohnen Denken” (BWD), Aristotle’s *peras* is, like *telos*, the ‘limit’ from which something first begins (VA 149). But this something, as it will be seen, is not the self-relation of presence as it inflects entities in partial presence, but rather what will come to be understood as *topos* or the topological matrix. In both “AΦ (1939)” and BWD, beginning and end seem to be the same ‘point’ of delimitation. Whereas in the analysis of metaphysical thought, it is a matter of ‘what’ is delimited (the movement of presence), with topology it is a matter of homing in on the ‘selfsameness’ of delimitation as it indicates its consumateness or indivisibility.

⁹ Many of these terms are brought together in the “Interlude” on difference that follows this section.

¹⁰ The preceding notebook, GA 69, is dated 1938/1940 and the following, GA 71, is dated 1941/42.

The second aspect, which follows from the first, concerns the consummate nature of delimitation as a rethinking of the metaphysical notion of *archē*. Examples of this can be seen in early passages from GA 70 as well as in Heidegger's technic workbook (GA 70, 13, 21; GA 76, 36, 40). Heidegger understands the metaphysical *archē* as what guides the production of the *idea* or *eidos*; this was shown to be interchangeable with the terms 'limit' (*telos*) and 'work' (*ergon*) in Heidegger's Aristotle. The metaphysical *archē* is thought from and according to (technical) *physis*, like *Anfang* from *Ereignis*. In terms of *physis*, *archē* indicates the 'intervention' where movement is first 'movedness', which is to say where movement is viewed as consummate.

One of the central distinctions between *Anfang* and *archē* appears to concern the direction or directedness of movement. The metaphysical *archē* indicates an 'origin and ordering' for the continuity of a movement that progresses or develops, or at the very least presents the semblance of such a movement by inflecting entities in configurations of presence. In the destruction of metaphysics this is presented as a progressive chain of centrally orienting *ideas*. With the thinking of *Gestell*, this is seen to be a modal shifting that occurs in the imprecise inflection of entities through which presence's movement maintains its self-relation. The necessity of the former – the presentation of a progressive chain of centrally orienting ideas – is thereby stripped in the latter. *Anfang*, on the other hand, is concerned with a movement of preservation that Heidegger describes as 'immanent' or 'inward'. With topology, therefore, a third possible sense of 'progression' or unfolding will be explored. The 'object' of this preservation is ultimately the 'delimiting' that is, for Heidegger, named in the term *Anfang*. The following is an attempted translation, slightly modified, of a key passage from GA 70 that shows Heidegger attempting to distinguish between *archē* and *Anfang* on these terms:

In the first beginning (*Anfang*) the *archē* is realized, but what belongs intrinsically to the *Anfang* (*Anfängnis*) commences initially and only in the intimacy or immanence of the return (*in der Innigkeit des Rückgangs*). Even here the *archē*, the beginning (*Anfang*) as decree or regulation that keeps the limit (*Grenze*) and revealing (*Entbergung*) safe, occurs in a progressive direction from the beginning (*in die Richtung des Fortgangs vom Anfang*). What occurs with *Anfang* occurs as a downgoing or intra-going (*Anfängnis fängt an als Untergang*) (GA 70, 21).

It can be gleaned from this passage that Heidegger's attempt to think a transmutation of *archē* as or into *Anfang* concerns the simultaneity of two 'movements', one forward, one 'inward'. The transmuted notion indicating an inwardness appears to be privileged. Even as the *archē* directs a 'progression', what belongs to *Anfang*, along with everything named in its lexicon, refers to

the ‘immanence of a return’ or an ‘intra-going’. *Anfang* and *archē* together, the ‘two beginnings’, indicate on the one hand, a movement that remains with itself, a sort of stillness, and on the other hand, a progression from (or of?) this stillness. It will be seen throughout this chapter that while Heidegger’s central focus is on a thinking of the limit, its isolation in thought, he cannot avoid the matter or problem of a progression. Both the limit and revealing are preserved. The ‘progression’ of revealing lingers in the *Spätwerk* like a sort of by-product of delimitation, an emission, exhaust, or waste.

Heidegger’s notion of *Anfang* bestrides questions of delimitation in itself (limit, *Ereignis*) and what is delimited (revealing, etc.). He refers to *Anfang* as the occurring of truth (*Wesung der Wahrheit*). Being occurs as truth and this as beginning (GA 70, 140).¹¹ In this sense, *Anfang* is tied to the occurrence of a configuration of presence and absence, revealing and concealing (truth). This is consistent with the notion of two beginnings, occurring simultaneously, corresponding to *Gestell* and *Ereignis* as ways of experiencing truth. It would also be consistent with the notion of multiple beginnings that differ according to modality, where the simultaneity of multiple beginnings is thought as the playing out of different configurations of revealing and concealing. At times, Heidegger also equates the terms *Anfang* and *anfangen* (‘to begin’) directly with *Ereignis* and *ereignen* (GA 70, 10). In this case *Anfang* looks more like a metonym for *Ereignis* as delimitation, as what ‘begets’ or allows for a truth-configuration. *Anfang* is the non-ground where *archē* is the ground or semblance of ground.

Thus any attempt to analyze Heidegger’s notion of ‘beginning’ will have to consider something that, rather than referring to ‘two’ (a first and other beginning), refers to something potentially uncountable and indefinite. This latter possibility, that of uncountable and indefinite beginnings, is tied to the lingering question of progression or unfolding in Heidegger’s *Spätwerk*. Each beginning (*Anfangen*, verbal) is different according to its *Wesen* (GA 69, 98). Such statements suggest an essential or modal inflection, the beginning of a variation or differentiation in occurrence. This begs the question: How many beginnings? If there are ‘two’, this can only refer to Janus, to the overlap or simultaneity of *Gestell* and *Ereignis*. If this is not the case, *Anfang* is an uncountable term bespeaking both truth and what allows it, namely every ‘instance’ of a truth configuration and its delimitation or being-delimited. The question of ‘how many’ aside, the lexicon of *Anfang*, considered below, can be considered as prototypical to Heidegger’s topological orientation.

¹¹ “Die so wesende Wahrheit *ist* das Sein. Das Sein *ist* als die Wahrheit, diese als der Anfang.”

Anfang takes two primary verbal descriptors in GA 70: *An-sich-nehmen* and *Auffangen*. The former can be understood roughly as a ‘taking to itself’ or a receiving of itself. The latter is a ‘collecting’ in the sense of catching something that is falling,¹² intercepting or intervening in something, and is also associated with the way a radio signal is picked up by a receiving antenna. *An-sich-nehmen* is clarified as a ‘taking to itself’ of revealing and concealing, as both harboring and disguising itself. This self-capture (*sichfangen*) and self-intervening (*Sich Auf-fangen*) occurs in or as *Ereignis* (GA 70, 10). Together, taking-to-itself as intervening in-itself, these terms constitute the abyss or nonground of occurrence (*Geschichte*) (GA 69, 98). “The beginning is the mystery of *Geschichte* because it brings itself to nothing in the sudden clearing of *Ereignis*’s spontaneity (*jähe Lichtung der Jähe des Seyns*)” (GA 69, 208). It is as if a sudden and arbitrary intervention sets an occurrence of truth (a configuration of revealing and concealing) underway. *Anfang* thus appears to name a ‘moment’ in or by which a configuration of revealing and concealing is (non)grounded or ‘begins’ and Heidegger’s descriptors here not only appear to include references to *logos* (the ‘collecting’ of *auffangen* and ‘accepting’ of *noein*), but also *physis*.

As a self-intervening, *Anfang* is the taking-to-itself of a departure (*Abschied*) that ‘steps back into itself’ (*in sich selbst zurücktreten*) (GA 70, 24-26). *Anfang* returns to itself in the ‘emerging’ (*Hervorkommen*) of what ‘comes out’ (or departs, *Aufgehendes*) and, in having this structure, becomes proper to itself as something distinct (*sich zu eigen wird*) (GA 70, 57). Heidegger is clearly transposing the language used to describe *physis* – metaphysical or otherwise – in order to elucidate *Anfang: physis* as a ‘going out of itself that goes back into itself’. Following from previous discussions of transitivity and the prefix *an-*, it could be suggested that *An-fang* attempts to rethink the problem of *physis* as a self-capturing (self-gathering) in the sense of a limited self-intervention. Put otherwise, it attempts to rethink the delimitation of *physis* ‘within’ *physis*. Such a delimitation – following Heidegger’s own axiom – could not be a formal delimitation of an entity, though the extent to which it could delimit a technical configuration remains to be decided, this being a matter of suspended interpretative decision.

¹² This opens the possibility of a more advanced study of delimitation in relation to Hölderlin’s essay “Das Werden im Vergehen”. Near the end of the essay, Hölderlin refers what he is thinking to a new Epicureanism and refers to a pertinent line from Horace about God’s prudent concealing of the future. Friedrich Hölderlin, *Sämtliche Werke*, Kleine Stuttgarter Ausgabe (KSA), Volume 4, ed. Friedrich Beissner (Stuttgart: Cotta, 1962), p. 297.

If a technical configuration is taken as a temporary universal (a paradigm), the departure that returns to itself might be taken as a departure from the given universal (or paradigm), from the hegemonic or dominant formalism or mode of intelligibility. Heidegger never understands self-intervention along any particular temporal scale or as corresponding to a ‘point in time’. The self-intervening named by *Anfang* plays out with or within the dominant paradigm or modality it intervenes into. Put otherwise, intervention plays out with or within the stability of presence maintained by the technical dimension of *physis*. This presents either another tension, or another way of speaking about the tension between stillness and progress raised above. In the latter case, the stability of presence maintained by technic would, paradoxically, be linked to the movement that presents progression insofar as the stability of presence is maintained by the shifting of modal register, which is viewed subsequently as a progression. It therefore offers another tenable starting point from which to understand the seeming ‘double movement’ of Janus. It might be said that considering *Anfang* as an intervention into stable, technical presence offers another way of thinking how Nature ‘knows itself’. In this case it would ‘know itself’ in deviating from or *perverting its own technical self-interpretation* though perhaps ‘knowing’ should be replaced here with ‘keeping’ or ‘preserving’ (*Verwahrung*).

As an intervention in stable presence, or a stillness within progress, *Anfang* remains something ‘active’ or ‘occurring’ without being reducible to or equated with a relentlessly unfolding formalism (*Gestell*). If its movement is an intervention in the above-mentioned way, it is not the restless shifting of *Gestell*'s placing. If the formalism associated with technic and *Gestell* is a ‘flattening’, then it might be said that this ‘other’ way of ‘self-knowledge’, the way that *preserves the limit*, is one that produces depth (GA 70, 50). It must be remembered here, however, that any sense of movement will have to reckon with the accompanying sense of consummation to which it is tied. Nature’s intervening quality holds to its intervention in or as an extension (*Auslangen*) of the modality available in or *as the occurrence of delimitation that it is*. As seen in the above citation, Heidegger also refers to this delimiting intervention as an inward path, an extension into the initial intervention that he often names with the term *Untergang* ('downgoing').¹³ It is worth wondering if deviation from technical progress, from the constant shifting of modalities, is a sort of

¹³ A discussion of Heidegger's use of the prefix *unter-* in the terms *Untergang* and *Unterschied* especially will come in this chapter's “Interlude” on difference. Essential is that he understands the prefix in conjunction with the Latin *inter* ('between or among').

safekeeping thereof, in providing something like a finite snapshot of configured truth.

On this point, a few of Heidegger's variations on the term *Anfang* should be noted. *Anfänglichkeit* is that which makes *Anfang* what it is. *Anfänglich* is what belongs to an *Anfang*. The term *Anfängnis* names the *anfänglich* as it becomes distinct or unique, as a sort of nominalization of a unique iteration of *Anfang* and what belongs to it. The *Anfängnis* of an *Anfang* contains its own range (*Reichweite*) and coincidental construction (*Fügung*). Heidegger situates *Dasein* here, stating that only *Dasein* is *anfänglich*, insofar as *Dasein* is the playing out (what proceeds from, *Nachspiel*) of *Anfang* (GA 70, 31). What Heidegger seems to say with this is that a 'beginning' is an intervention, and *Dasein* occurs as the playing out of this intervention. How *Dasein* is understood (or understands itself?) in a given instance is tied to the coincidental construction of this intervention as it plays out. *Anfang* names the (non)ground of *Dasein* as much as it does the (non)ground of history. In fact, throughout the development of Heidegger's later thinking, the terms *Anfänglichkeit* and *Geschichtlichkeit* come to replace the terms finitude (*Endlichkeit*) and temporality (*Zeitlichkeit*) respectively (GA 70, 81; GA 69, 94-95). It may be said that the two defining characteristics of Heidegger's *Dasein* are its being born/borne of an intervening delimitation (*Anfänglichkeit*) and occurring within or according to this delimitation (*Geschichtlichkeit*).

What was referred to at the end of the previous chapter as a meta-philosophical situation can now be viewed in terms of the development of *Dasein* as an ecological notion. Whereas the notion of a meta-philosophical situation refers to a manifold of 'beginnings', what Reiner Schürmann would refer to as a plurality of origins or *archés*, *Dasein* refers to the 'unfolding' of an ecology as a sort of inward path. The apparent distinction between a metaphysics of metaphysics, an attempt to order this manifold, and a thinking that 'takes on' or is attentive to *Dasein*, is the deseverance of *Dasein* from the optic imperative and from entities. *Dasein* is situated in or as an unfolding (a *Nachspiel*), but it is not at all concerned with the becoming or development of entities, i.e., with the formalization of presence, with technic. The tension of stillness and progress is now 'embodied' by *Dasein* as the tension of a unique unfolding *as* indivisible (still, 'unmoving'). In this sense, it might be said the constant manipulation of presence that has been named technic here unfolds all around and within the finite circumscription that is *Dasein*, which 'internalizes' and remains with itself. *Dasein* is therefore something like a generic finitude as pure ecological awareness, a delimitation of *physis* 'within' *physis*.

It is clear that Heidegger's use of the word *Anfang* names delimitation as an intervention and the playing out of this as a distinct instance of what is

the same with itself (*physis*). This ‘individuation’ of *Dasein* as an occurrence of Nature is not the same as the individuation of the subject or ego in society, nor the process whereby culture distinguishes itself from Nature. Heidegger marks out *Dasein’s* incipience, its belonging to an *Anfang*, as the ‘end’ of a humankind understood as *animale rationale* (GA 70, 31).¹⁴ The distinction of an *Anfang* is found, according to Heidegger, in its going-into or among concealing (*die Anfängnis des Anfangs ist der Untergang in die Verbergung*; GA 70, 41). Delimitation is therefore directly associated with absence and concealing in relation to presence and revealing. What distinguishes thinking from metaphysics, then, is its being oriented by delimitation rather than by formal presence, an orientation indicated by Heidegger through the motifs of concealing and death.

It is true that Heidegger held multiple meanings for *Anfang* and attempted to maintain the necessity of this manifold (GA 70, 37). The first sense given in this subsection was its performative sense, where it indicates an alleged move from metaphysics to non-metaphysics. Much of what is found in an analysis of the actual term and Heidegger’s lexical characterization concerns the motif of delimitation. *Anfang* indicates the simultaneity and/or tension of what is named in the terms *Gestell* and *Ereignis*. The circumscription of this tension is named *Dasein*, though *Dasein* does not appear to ‘embody’ technical and non-technical Nature on equal footing, but rather a tendency towards or penchant for the absence of a non-technical Nature. Following these various meanings seems to lead to an emphasis upon Nature’s self-intervention and this as an *indivisible finitude* associated with *Dasein*. This is the transmuted *archē* of thought. As such, it will be the motif followed throughout this chapter.

Aristotle’s Boat (Hölderlin’s Eyes)

Part I of this essay elaborated metaphysics/technic in terms of the self-relation of presence and its maintenance through a constant shifting of modal registers. At his most pejorative, Heidegger presents this as something of a runaway train of baseless formalism. The movement of technic, in any case, presents the constancy of the simulated world and its incessant repetition or ‘reordering’. The thinkers of metaphysics and all technicians were referred to as those who were only allowed to eternally ‘toy with the scaffolding’. The existence

¹⁴ Heidegger states that ‘in the intervention of *Anfang*’ (*Im Ereignis des Anfangs*) human essence as rational animal is destroyed (*geht unter*). It is perhaps just as valid to understand this as indicating that this ‘rational’ aspect of humankind, its relationship to technic and a technical *logos*, belongs to the constitution of *Dasein* (it ‘goes into’ *Anfang*) without any longer being determinative of humankind.

of formal paradigms in the intelligible world is reintegrated into Nature as its technical absolute. Pivoting away from mere modal shifting, Heidegger is concerned with rethinking the provision of a 'grounds' for thought. This is to say that thinking the reintegration of technic into Nature requires a safeguard against the cyclical structure of presence's self-relation. The preceding preliminary remarks on beginnings and incipience introduced some of the basic motifs of these grounds, or rather, (non)grounds. The following will 'locate' the *topological* orientation of these motifs in Aristotle by way of the three essays named in this chapter's introduction.

The essay "Das Ding" takes up the question of 'what is' as a topological matter. Both "Bauen Wohnen Denken" and "... dichterisch wohnet der Mensch ...", as experimental extensions and variations of "Das Ding", take up thinking more explicitly as a 'building' that is a (poetic) 'dwelling' in relation to a notion of *topos*. 'Thinking' as 'dwelling' is the fundamental characteristic (*Grundzug*) of being that corresponds to humankind (VA 155). This fundamental characteristic should correspond to humankind's capacity for death, as raised at the end of Part I, and the relation of this capacity to the 'active dimension of being'. The only figure concerned with a 'grounding' for any such fundamental characteristic in these essays is the figure of delimitation, plain and simple. It is also only with the discussion of this figure, of delimitation, that explicit reference to an Aristotelian *topos* is made.

Heidegger's basic characterization of a 'thing' as a 'locale' (*Ort, topos*) is found in BWD. The 'locale' is that which 'allows' or 'makes possible' (*verstatten*). It is something of an order of magnitude 'higher' *in thought* than places, points, and spaces. It 'precedes' them. Taken in a context that is spatial, architectural, or topographical, a 'locale' is what makes 'sites' (*Stätten*) and 'places' (*Plätze*) possible. Such 'places' can be taken in both a common and technoscientific or mathematical sense (a monument as a 'point in space', a concrete or abstract relational structure). Heidegger reorients the metaphysical notion of 'space' around the making-possible of locales as what is permitted or 'let in', an 'in-spacing' (*einräumen*). This 'making possible' and 'permitting' of the thing is only spoken of insofar as the thing *is* or has a limit or border (*Grenze*) (VA 148-149). The limit or border of locale is, for Heidegger, the *peras* ('end', 'extremity') of Aristotle's *topos*.

A subsequently added footnote to the *Gesamtausgabe* edition of *Vorträge und Aufsätze* reveals these essays' concern with Aristotle's *topos* and, primarily, as the question of the limit or delimitation (GA 7, 156). The note is appended to the word *peras* in BWD and refers the reader to the discussion of *topos* in Aristotle's *Physics* 212a5ff. In the note, Heidegger provides two partial citations separated by roughly 12 lines of text: *tópos péras tou periéchontos sōmatos*

akinēton (roughly: ‘the limiting surface of an unmoving body’) and *ho tópos aggeion ametakinēton* (roughly: ‘place as an immovable vessel’).¹⁵ The first citation can be taken as the core of what Heidegger adopts from Aristotle’s notion of *topos*, namely that it is nothing more than delimitation. The second citation can be taken as further qualification of *topos* as a ‘vessel’ – Aristotle refers to a boat moving through the flowing water of a river –, which can be seen in Heidegger’s figures of the ‘thing’ (jug, bridge, dimension, etc.).

Given that Heidegger draws primarily on what is named in the two citations and otherwise attempts to radically transform Aristotle’s *topos*, only a brief contextualization will be provided here. The following will therefore attempt to identify and bring together features of Aristotle’s *topos* that appear in Heidegger’s own notion. The chapter Heidegger draws from (Book Δ or IV, Chapter 4) provides the Aristotelian definition or understanding of *topos*. The three chapters that work towards this definition are mostly concerned with distinguishing *topos* from form (*eidos*) and matter (*hylē*).¹⁶ Above, *Anfang* was spoken of as a delimitation that was tied to neither beings nor formal paradigms. *Topos* is similarly ‘separable’ from both form and matter. It is independent of ‘bodies’ and their ‘content’. Such distinctions, from form or content and from entities, betray an obvious usefulness to the Heideggerian project. Aristotle likens this feature to Hesiod’s *chaos*, the first of all things, the nether, the gaping chasm that is prior to earth and heaven (208b 30-33). Aristotle’s analogy is not without possible reference to Heidegger’s use of *Anfang*. What comes first in Hesiod, the very first (*protista ... génet*) is Chaos.¹⁷ Such incipient Chaos can be linked to motifs to be discussed below, including the ‘spanning’ that first turns heaven and earth toward one another and the motif of emptiness (*Leere*). Both of these relate to death and the possibility of humankind becoming mortal (VA 189, 161).¹⁸ Importantly, however, for Aristotle, such ‘gaping’ could not be likened to a dimensionality in terms of receiving space or

¹⁵ Regarding the first citation, the version of the *Physics* consulted here does not contain the term *akinēton*. The sentence concludes with the term *sōmatos*. Whether or not this is considered a paraphrase by Heidegger or simply a differing between Greek versions of the text is not terribly important here. Aristotle’s use of the term *akinētos* elsewhere in the intended passages will be accounted for. Aristotle, *Physics*, p. 312-313.

¹⁶ The following several paragraphs draw from Ch. 1-4 of Book Δ. When necessary, specific lines will be cited parenthetically. Aristotle, *Physics*, p. 274-315.

¹⁷ *Hesiod, the Homeric Hymns and Homerica*, trans. Hugh G. Evelyn-White (London: William Heineman, 1914), p. 86.

¹⁸ Any attribution of *Theogony*-like chaos to Heidegger’s thought would appear valid in its opposition to Nietzschean chaos, which Heidegger understands as “the concealed self-overflowing, unmastered superabundance of life” and “the concealment of unmastered richness in the becoming and streaming of the world as a whole” (GA 6.2, 512, 510).

room occupancy, an understanding of *topos* that Aristotle appears to attribute primarily to Plato's identification of 'matter' with 'room' (*khōra*), and subsequently 'place' with 'room' (209b 5-20).

To the extent that *topos* is autonomous in relation to form and matter, it is intrinsic to itself (*en autō ho tópos*), a matter reflected in the above references to Heidegger's identity essay where *topos* is linked to the 'same' (210a 6). This follows from Aristotle's remark that *topos* cannot be brought under any of the four causes. In addition to its autonomy from formal and material causes, it does not serve as a goal, nor does it set in motion (209a 20-24). In fact, its movement or relationship to movement is one of its more curious traits. As consummate (intrinsic to itself), and independent of cause and of being a cause, it might be considered 'at rest' (=ο). The independence of *topos* from the four causes might be easily compared to Heidegger's replacement of causality with the *logos* in "Die Frage nach der Technik" considered in Part I. This would no longer be the thetic *logos* of metaphysics, but *logos* and language as Heidegger attempts to think it throughout his later work, exemplified in his language essays of the 1950s and corresponding engagements with the Heraclitian *logos*.

The autonomy of *topos* – particularly from form and matter – is what leads Aristotle to consider *topos* as a vessel (*aggeion*). This characterization first arises from its severability from matter. A *topos* is a vessel as a 'moveable place'. If a *topos* itself can be moved, its 'content' or matter would remain in the same place, i.e., the content would not be moved together with it (209b ~27-35). However, it is also the case that if a *topos* remains 'in the same place', that its content or matter can change. This introduces the vascular quality of the vessel, which is effusive as it is receptive. The vascular quality of *topos* does appear to retain a certain sense of dimensionality, though it is not intended as a 'space' of pure reception. It is rather a 'dimensional something' (*diastēma* – Wicksteed and Cornford's rendering) where 'dimensionality' takes the quality of an 'interval' which is autonomous of anything that it receives or effuses (212a 5-15). Aristotle thereby comes to the conclusion that is cited by Heidegger: "But now note that we have as good a right to regard a *topos* as 'an immovable vessel' (*ho tópos ayyeion ametakinēton*) as we had to regard a vessel as a moveable *topos*" (212a 15).

Both Heidegger and Aristotle settle on the *topos* as an 'immoveable vessel' that has as its only characteristic: to limit or delimit. Aristotle's final definition in ΔIV gives *topos* as 'whatever fixed environing surface' (*periéchontos péras akinēton*: 212a ~20). It is worth examining all three terms here. Wicksteed and Cornford translate *periéchontos péras* as 'whatever ... enveloping surface', presumably rendering *péras* as 'surface'. The term *periéchontos* ('environing', *periechō*, 'to encompass, embrace, surround') – which will be discussed again

below – also takes a sense of ‘universality’¹⁹ in Aristotle²⁰. This seems to agree with Heidegger’s passing comment in “AΦ (1939)” that *topos* is *poù*, ‘anywhere, somewhere’, which is accompanied by remarks concerning the ‘above’ and ‘below’ of heaven and earth corresponding to Aristotle’s own remarks immediately following the passage in question. It might therefore be reasonable to take *periéchontos péras* as a ‘general’ or ‘generic’ limit that is also ‘unmoving’, *akínēton*.

Wicksteed and Cornford translate *akínēton* as ‘fixed’. Quite literally, it is that which is without motion or movement. Such a lack of movement, insofar as it may concern the consummation of ‘movement’, is tied intrinsically for Heidegger to his notion of delimitation. In the passage of “AΦ (1939)” where he translates *entelechy* as ‘having-itself-within-its-end’ and *energeia* as ‘standing-in-the-work’, he remarks that the lack of movement or rest, its limit case (*Grenzfall*, =o), is actually the ‘highest expression of movement or movedness’. Rest is ‘where’ movedness gathers itself in a ‘holding still’ (*Stillhalten*). To put this otherwise, rest, the highest expression of movement, is movement delimited. Yet it would seem almost paradoxical to place ‘delimited movement’ in opposition to form or *eidos*, or as entirely autonomous and distinct from them, since ‘delimited movement’ could just as easily define the ‘moment’ when movement becomes intelligible as form or image. This is precisely the problem Heidegger’s ‘deconstruction’ of Aristotle’s *physis*-concept fails to solve. In terms of technic, the highest expression of movement is presence’s self-relation.

Heidegger’s remarks on the ‘highest expression of (technical) movement’ go on to refer this ‘rest’ to a particular ‘seeing’ in Aristotle, making use of the vocabulary developed two years later in his *Anfang* notebook. The seeing associated with the highest expression of movement is the end or limit (*Ende, telos*), wherein the movement of seeing is intercepted (*auffängt*) and, in being intercepted by an end, is truly movement (GA 9, 284). In “AΦ1939”, the intercepted and delimited movement is that of the technical *logos*. The particular seeing discussed there must be the seeing guided by or in the service of the technical *logos*. The preceding discussion of *Anfang* has shown it to be a transmuted *archē*, where the key terms of *energeia-entelechy* – *archē* as *telos* and *ergon* – are transmuted in a prospective non-metaphysical *Anfang*. What

¹⁹ Wicksteed and Cornford do note in their critical overview of Aristotle’s argument that this is a definition of the “place-universal” which is the “ultimate frame of reference”. Aristotle, *Physics*, pp. 302–303.

²⁰ On this occasion, it is worth providing the entire relevant section of Liddell-Scott, I.4b: “in Logic, *tò periéchon* universal, opp. *tà periechómena*, the individuals or particulars, Arist. Metaph.1023b27, APr. 43b23; *honómata periéchonta* generic terms, Id.Rh.1407a31; *kaloūs* dé *autoùs plátakas apò toù periéchontos* from the generic name, Ath.7.309a.”

Heidegger is beginning to develop precisely what fails as a theory of *physis* in metaphysics. Heidegger's later thinking appears to appropriate Aristotle's *topos* concept in order to return to the failings of "AΦ (1939)" and his earlier attempts to 'retrieve' *physis*. This can be seen as early as GA 70 two years following the publication of "AΦ1939" as he makes use of expressions employed there to develop *Anfang*. A 'topological seeing', as it were, would likely consist in what will be developed here as an ecological awareness.

Yet to speak of a transmuted notion of seeing is not without its difficulties. Part I of this essay suggested that the act of seeing always corresponds to a metaphysical mode of thinking, the optic imperative. In the latter case, seeing is exhausted in technic. It showed that metaphysical thinking is rooted in a sort of technical seeing that binds the act of perception to the *predominance* of form's antecedent position in the technical *logos*. As stated in Section 1.2, *the primal event of seeing always resolves itself in an "already"*. This was a problem Heidegger's reading of Aristotle could only get around by resolving all seeing in *technē*. How could or would a non-metaphysical or topological seeing differ from the 'technical seeing' at the heart of metaphysics? Seeing as such seems always to derive from the cessation or resolution of movement in intelligible form. Yet, as it will be seen, death absolves seeing of its rootedness in the already.

The simplest answer is therefore that it is a matter of fundamental orientation. This was discussed at the end of Chapter 2 as a 'directedness' towards concealing, which for Heidegger was permitted by the privileged relation of humankind to death. Aristotle's notion of *epagōgē* concerned a seeing directed by the Being of beings as their formal presence. The shift at stake is thus to a seeing oriented by delimitation plan and simple, rather than by the formal or eidetic demarcation of beings, a matter that should become clearer in the following sections. Rest, tied as it is to delimitation and so to finitude, interrupts or intervenes upon 'formal sight' by the simple fact that it is not the technical *logos*, i.e., it is not the formal placing or construction of technical configurations. Rest lets formal appearance be (automatically), but, in delimiting, 'keeps out'. It intervenes upon the thetic absolute of technical seeing. Rest is what allows for the intrinsic divergence of Nature from itself, as a divergence, in this sense, from its own thetic absolute. The liminal point of technical movement or movedness (*Gestell*) would be the 'beginning' of different movement, of the becoming-distinct that occurs *within* the paradigmatic optics of a metaphysical paradigm.

Heidegger carries this notion of rest – taken from Aristotle's *akínēton* or *ametakinēton* – into the notion of consummate or four-dimensional time that he develops as *topos* in "Zeit und Sein". This transmutation of metaphysical

consummateness will be covered in Section 3.4. It can be stated here simply that the interlocked modes of revealing, the varying technical modalities configuring presence, arise according to or thanks to an intervening delimitation and rest together in a three-fold temporality that is their playing-out or being-carried-out. Heidegger states that this revealing (or what is revealed) holds to itself (*is ansichhaltend*), while the three dimensions of time, taken together, ‘refuse’ (*verweigern*) or ‘withhold’ (*vorenthalten*), terms which designate concealing (GA 14, 27). Time, it will be seen, is consummate (at ‘rest’) according to a delimiting intervention. This is to say that the course of a *topos* is in some sense ‘unmoved’ by external causes, but it is also unmoved by the delimitation that first makes it possible; the latter possibility must be left open. A *topos* indeed unfolds according to delimitation itself (its *Anfänglichkeit*), as something like a filtering standard or measure. But delimitation remains withdrawn. It is primitive, in the sense of being rudimentary, but it is not a primary or originary cause and is ‘known’ only in its generic fact.

The role of Hölderlin in Heidegger’s appropriation of Aristotle here must be acknowledged. Hölderlin’s fragment “Die Bedeutung der Tragödien” (“The meaning of tragedies”)²¹ makes use of the same ‘formula’ attributed to Aristotelian *ametakinēton*: =ο. Hölderlin writes about the paradox wherein everything originary (*alles Ursprüngliche*) appears in its weakness (*Schwäche*) rather than its ‘originary power’ (*ursprüngliches Stärke*). The originary can only appear when its ‘sign’ (*Zeichen*) is without effect and meaningless (=ο). This is to say that Nature (the originary)²² can only appear through something like an empty vessel. The impossibility of Nature ever appearing in its originary power is due to the ‘just and equal division of capacity’. The meaning of equal can be taken here in relation to Aristotle’s *periéchontos* as what is unspecific. The ‘just and equal division’ is taken as the generic delimitation of Nature within Nature.

The notion of *topos* that Heidegger appropriates from Aristotle in order to rethink *physis* through the term *Ereignis* is a ‘generic limit or delimiting that is consummate or at rest’. Additional, qualifying characteristics or motifs have been drawn here from Aristotle’s text. It has a dimensionality in the sense of an interval, which is to say that delimitation is an intervening. Its being at rest and/or consummate is tied to its selfsame quality (*en autō ho tópos*); and in being selfsame, it can be said to be indivisible. An intervention is not itself divided. Aristotle derives this indivisibility from its independence from matter,

²¹ Hölderlin, KSA-4, pp. 286–287.

²² Hölderlin appears to equate the ‘originary’ and ‘nature’ in the fragment.

form, and the four causes. This led him to speak of a vascular quality of *topos*. These motifs will now be considered from Heidegger's text in a variety of ways.

Thing:Language

In much of Heidegger's later thought delimitation is taken up in relation to what can be called a 'topological matrix'. The most well known evocations of this come in the terms *Geviert* ('fourfold') and *Vierung* ('crossing' or 'squaring'), though Heidegger speaks of the same when speaking of the unity of four-dimensional time in "Zeit und Sein". The topological matrix is what is delimited. It is the intelligible dimension bound to Nature's self-intervention. As this intelligible dimension belongs to an intervening, it might also be referred to as an *interstice* ('what stands between'). Heidegger characterizes the matrix as a 'meeting', 'crossing', or 'cross section' that produces something unique in terms of its elements and their context or origin. It appears altogether unconcerned with origin as such, insofar as 'origin' is concerned with elements or entities. The matrix mixes or interrelates elements. These elements – generally named by the figures heaven, the divinities, earth, and mortal – will be further discussed below.

Recall that Heidegger's analysis of the thing in "Das Ding" responds to the question of 'what is' (or 'what remains') from the perspective of *Gestell*'s thetic absolute. It can be said that the topological orientation of thing, thought from a generic delimitation, inflects the thing or *topos* with an ecological motif.²³ *The intervention of the thing draws its elements out of their formal or technical arrangement into a determination on the basis of topos's selfsame relation*. The 'ecology' of *topos* is intrinsic to itself. This is to say that the elements of the topological matrix would no longer be fully knowable or recognizable on the sole basis of their technical or metaphysical register, but rather occur now according to the intervention indicated by *topos* and its 'mixing'. The mixing or interrelating of the matrix is like a transfer or transference of its elements to one another in a selfsame relation, a transference to 'one'. Definition shifts from the demarcation of particular entities or elements to a 'being-defined-by' delimitation *in particular*. It is this movement that Heidegger, following Aristotle, indicates through the qualification of *topos* as vessel.

²³ A potential basis from which to speak of the *oikos* in terms associative with Heidegger's notion of 'dwelling' can be briefly touched upon here. The terms economy and ecology will be left with their most literal senses in order that the reader associate them with the contents of this chapter. Ecology refers to the *logos* of the dwelling place (*oikos*), namely the *logos* from which or according to which the human acts. The term economy refers to the 'allotment' (*némō*) of the *oikos*, and allotment very much in line with Heidegger's discussions of the verb *schicken* in relation to *Ereignis* in "Zeit und Sein".

The ‘vessel-nature’ of a *topos* serves Heidegger, in part, the opportunity to rethink *logos* and language independent of any co-determining relation to form (*eidos*). He refers the ‘vessel-nature’ of *topos* to the movement of gathering most often associated with *logos* in his work. He justifies this qualification through language itself by tracing the German *Ding* ('thing') through its Middle High German (*dinc*) and Old High German (*thing*) roots. The thing is, in this sense, a gathering of and for the negotiation (*Verhandlung*) of something up for dispute. Heidegger wants to emphasize the lack of a distinction, in language, between the matter to be discussed and the gathering or assembly that takes place for this negotiation. He does so by distinguishing between two senses of the Latin *res* ('thing, matter, object'): the first maintains the sense already being discussed, while the second understands *res* as a being or entity.

Res can first be understood as something that is up for discussion or in question (*in Rede stehen*). This is the understanding that, for Heidegger, retains the sense of thing as gathering and negotiation. He clarifies this by enumerating a series of Greek cognates of *res* that point to rhetoric as the art of using language: *rhētos* ('something spoken'), *rhētra* ('verbal agreement, a bargain'), *rhēma* ('something said, a statement') (VA 167). These cognates all derive from the verb *eirō*, which means ‘to speak’ but also ‘to fasten, join, or tie together’. This corresponds directly to Heidegger’s wish to think *logos* or *legein* simultaneously from ‘speaking’ (or ‘listening’) and ‘gathering’, and to hold these together in his notion of thing or *topos*.

The understanding of the thing, of *res*, and of language here serves to both decenter the human from the question of the thing and, in doing so, maintain a collapsed subject/object binary. Heidegger’s later writings on language show similar attempts to decenter humankind; in the case of language specifically, to undo the thinking that views language as a cultural-technical product of humankind and which is subject to its mastery. Humankind is not the arbiter in the thing’s ‘negotiation’. All of the terms used to translate the *logos* of Heraclitus – gathering, laying, lying, etc. – are referred back to the self-showing of (*Sichzeigen*) of language, itself referred to *Ereignis* as the name of intervention or delimitation (see below).²⁴ This ‘showing’ is the disappearance of the copula, the *als* central to metaphysics’ formal exercises (GA 14, 6). The thing is not concerned with one or another end of the copulative relation between subjects and objects; on the contrary, it appears to precede such relations. Entanglement is thought ‘as’ entanglement – tautologically. The gathering of the *logos* is no longer metaphysically inflected as what produces something

²⁴ The culmination of this work can be seen in the third section of “Der Weg zur Sprache” (GA 12, 245ff.).

that is formally intelligible. This includes the technical configurations of *Gestell* that register presence paradigmatically.

It is from this perspective that Heidegger can reject the other philological or philosophical direction of *res*, namely its role as a technical-philosophical translation of the 'late Greek' *ón* (*ον*, 'being').²⁵ The thinking that links *res*, via *res extensa*, to the modern, thetic thinking of objectivity is wholly rejected (VA 168–169). This is not simply argued as a truism derived from etymology, but has deeper roots in Heidegger's understanding of *logos* and language. It is language that indicates that the thing is nothing like a 'being' or 'entity'.

Yet Heidegger does insist that the thing is what 'approaches' or 'concerns' (*angehen*) humankind. His insistence upon translating *res* as 'what approaches' (*das Angehende*) would seem to recall the transitivity of metaphysical *physis*, the approach of presence as a structural moment in the doubling of the technical *logos*. The thing is not something that effects or receives the effect of human consciousness. It is no cause, but rather what befalls, the 'case' (*Fall*).²⁶ The transitivity of presence is transmuted here as happenstance.²⁷ *Das Angehende*, what concerns or approaches humankind, is taken literally as a 'not-yet' rather than an 'already'.

In the context of this retained sense of *res*, Heidegger makes a curious reference to the 'real'. He states that *das Angehende* is the 'real' (*das Reale*) of *res* and, in the last instance, before turning his attention towards its mistranslation of *ón*, states that this is experienced as *Angang* ('beginning') (VA 168). Here Heidegger continues to reference a seemingly futural temporality. *Angang* is a localizing term that most likely refers to the beginning point of something taken like a landscape or region, as used, for example, in a phrase such as 'the approach of the landscape'. *The 'real' is experienced as the delimiting interval, while the real itself (das Angehende) is what emerges from this*, an emergence

²⁵ "The Old High German thing and *dinc* is – with its sense of gathering, namely as the negotiation of what lies upon or toward (*Verhandlung einer Angelegenheit*) – more suited than all others to translate the Roman term *res*, transitivity (*das Angehende*)" (VA 168).

²⁶ The English 'case' is proximate to the German *Fall*. Both senses of 'case' or 'matter' derive from an 'evental' sense of 'what happens to'. The English derives this from the Latin *casus* ('a falling, accident, or occurrence') and *cado* ('to fall, to cease, to die') whereas the German is less clear. The Old High German *fallan* has the sense of 'to happen by chance' (perhaps misfortune, *zu Fall kommen*) and 'bestowal' (*zuteil werden*). Importantly, both the Latin *cado* and German *fallen* contain strong senses of death and decay. The sense of 'happenstance' or 'coincidence' (*Zufall*) relates to the motifs surrounding *Ereignis*.

²⁷ The English term 'happenstance' will be used below to translate Heidegger's use of *das Ereignete* in "Zeit und Sein". It is also refers to the 'product' of the 'appropriative movement' Heidegger names with the word *Vereignung* in "Das Ding", this being the movement of the topological matrix or *Geviert*.

to which humankind, in some way, clearly belongs. If the ‘transitivity’ of presence is transmuted here, it is viewed now – in keeping with the Latinate – as the transference of the matrix’s elements in a selfsame relation and the transit of this. The term ‘real’, with its roots in the *res* as *ón*, would likely be ‘too metaphysical’ to find consistent use in Heidegger’s own lexicon. It is nonetheless worth noting that he has retained something of the historical-philosophical import of the ‘real’ (as question) in the negotiative transitivity of the thing by retaining the above sense of *res*. Heidegger has at once negotiated the ‘space’ of the ‘real’.²⁸

The importance of *logos* and language divorced from formal presence and yet still characterizing the thing, as well as Heidegger’s appeal to the ‘art’ of rhetoric by way of *eirō*, suggest the question of communication raised at the end of Chapter 2. With regards to the primacy of delimitation, the question of communication would have to respond to the ‘common’ becoming ‘particular’, the idiomatic inflection of the topological matrix. In terms of rhetoric, this might be considered from a tension between the generic nature of delimitation and its always-idiomatic inflection.²⁹ Communication would be considered as a rhetoric of improvisation,³⁰ one that corresponds to the intervention upon

²⁸ This statement is made with the sole intention that it might be taken up or questioned in the form of further research.

²⁹ In “Das Wesen der Sprache”, Heidegger connects idiom directly to *physis*. The discussion concerns what of language, in its relationship to humankind, escapes registration in the technoscientific (he writes, metaphysical-technical) understanding of language (and he marks this relationship at the body). That language ‘sounds and rings, and vibrates, and hovers and quakes’ is its belonging to the concealed dimension of the earth. What remains concealed in language is literally its ‘modes of the mouth’ (idiom, *Mundart*). In idiom the ‘landscape’ (*physis*) speaks in various ways (*spricht je verschieden*). For Heidegger the idiom is both a way of safeguarding human language generally against the ‘full, constant presence’ of technoscience and a method of contorting the language of metaphysics. In terms of the latter, Heidegger will often insert a southern German idiom in order to introduce an etymological dimension that alters the standard philosophical meaning of what he is saying. For example, when elaborating his own understanding of the term *bewegen* (‘to move’) in the same essay, he draws upon the Swabian ‘*wégen*’, which he defines as ‘to pioneer a way, for example, through a thick-covered snow’. He then connects *wégen* to the verbs *wiegen* (‘to weigh’, though Heidegger is likely also drawing upon the gastronomical variation as ‘to chop or mince’), *wagen* (‘to dare, to risk’), and *wogen* (‘to surge’). In this way he has taken ‘movement’ and tied into the sense of intervention (delimitation) found in *physis* and *Ereignis* (GA 12, 193-194; 186-187).

³⁰ That Heidegger maintains a use of the verb *angehen* (‘to approach, concern’) and substantive *Angehende* (‘the prospective, emerging’) may suggest another intended meaning here. What is named in *das Angehende* may also refer to something like ‘training’ (potentially carrying the implications of being a ‘novice’), something that is grasped in the process of training or educating.

what is viewed commonly (a paradigm), to view it instead as generic. It could be said that Heidegger's own metonymy is itself a rhetorical performance of the part (*a topos*) taking place of the whole.³¹ But this would have to acknowledge that Heidegger does not think a 'whole' in the proper philosophical sense.

Locale:Limit

Heidegger's most direct German translation for *topos* is *Ort* (locale). The term *Ort* is almost entirely interchangeable with 'thing' and its 'movement' and is likewise characterized as a gathering. Gathering occurs through and by locales (VA 149). The locale also maintains the sense of the vessel and matrix. A locale gathers or fetches to itself as one (*holt zu sich ein*) so that this unity is *discharged* (GA 12, 33). Heidegger's intention with locale is perhaps better indicated in his use of the synonym *Ortschaft* ('locality, village'), which gives the sense of a small locality, a gathering of places. The locale is not a place in the sense of building or even a town that can be marked out on map. It is the localization of and in gathering.

While the locale elicits similar *logos*-motifs to the thing, Heidegger employs it as a figure with an emphasis on the motif of the limit, on *topos* as delimitation. It is with the term *Ort* in "Bauen Wohnen Denken" that *peras*, following from Aristotle, comes to be the definitive term for both locales and things.³² The locale gathers only insofar as it is delimiting or delimited. Delimitation, a locale, 'gives place' (*verstatten*, 'to allow') to places, it 'allows' or 'lets in' (*einräumen*) (VA 148-149). The import of this is that it places a 'condition' upon the *logos* and any thinking of the *logos*, namely that it be finite, but finite as a localization of a generic or universal 'determining'. Heidegger also uses the Greek term *horismos* here – from which the English horizon is formed (see above, *Angang*) – and remarks again that delimitation is not the cessation but the beginning (*von woher etwas sein Wesen beginnt*) (VA 149).

The etymology of *Ort* could be said to fulfill Heidegger's appropriation of the Greek limit in defining *topos*. In Middle High German *Ort* has the sense of

³¹ Heidegger's early use of the term *Dasein* is referred to Aristotle's work on rhetoric (GA 18, 110f.). Barbara Cassin's remarks on *topos* and rhetoric in the *Dictionary of Untranslatable*s indicates that 'authentic rhetoric' describes 'periods' as "complete turns" that could be taken in a single glance," used metaphor to "carry across," and metonym to "take the place of the whole". *Dictionary of Untranslatable*s, ed. Babara Cassin, trans. Steven Rendell et al. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014), p. 155.

³² Heidegger begins the paragraph in question with some remarks about 'space' (*Raum*) as what is 'allowed' or 'let in' and 'released' ("etwas Eingeräumtes, Freigegebenes"). This occurs according to and because of delimitation ("nämlich in eine Grenze, griechisch *péras*"). What is let in is gathered in the sense that the thing gathers. The limit is thus the primary term of *topos*.

the outmost or extremity according to space and time, a beginning, end, or tip (specifically that of a weapon). Heidegger refers to the locale as the ‘tip of the spear’ (*Spitze des Speers*) in which everything converges or intersects (*zusammenlaufen*) (GA 12, 33). All three senses here – limit or extremity, interstice, and a sort of cutting sharpness – are contained in the etymology of the *péras* and *periéchontos* (*periéchō*) that Heidegger seeks to translate with locale or *Ort*. *Peras* is referred to *peirar-* ('end, boundary') rooted in the Indo-European root **per-* ('to cross or pass') and related to the Sanskrit *párur* or *párvanas* ('knot, joint, section').³³ It is perhaps the case that the ‘selfsame’ nature of beginning and end form such a ‘knot’. The root **per-* connects the sense of ‘limit’ to *peirō* ('to perforate, pierce, pervade'). **Per-* also connects *peras* to the sense of ‘encompassing’ of the ‘general limit’ (*periechō*), down to *péri* ('around, at, concerning'), which links to the Sanskrit *pári* as both ‘around’ and ‘among’, and includes Indo-European roots like **per-ur* that will form terms such as *poros* ('passage, ford, narrowing'). It is worth noting that all of this is linked to the Greek stem *per-* in *peira* ('to test, experience'), which Heidegger draws upon in speaking of ‘experience’ (*Erfahrung*).³⁴ It is therefore not difficult to see why Heidegger finds Aristotle’s appeal to the *topos* as a vessel useful. A *topos* appears to be a limit or delimiting that cuts across or ‘passes’ and is, in this way, an interstice and convergence (*ho tópos aggeîon ametakínēton*).

The linking of experience to the notion of limit or delimitation – etymologically or otherwise – would not be far fetched for Heidegger who is often relating finitude to possibility and capability. Finitude is ‘enabling’ (the motif of death, for example), whereas infinitude is prohibiting. Moreover, Heidegger’s later work is concerned with staging (in thought) an experience of *Ereignis*, asserting that *Ereignis* cannot be ‘proven’ (*beweisen*) but can only be experienced (*erfahren*) (GA 14, 63). It is for this reason that much of the *Spätwerk*, as has been noted, is experimental in nature, experiments in the use of or comportment towards language or *logos*. It might be suggested from this that such experience of *Ereignis* comes by way of or ‘in’ (from within) *topos* as a limit that ‘cuts’ an interstice from out of the expanse of the unknown and unknowable (non-technical *physis*).

33 Whereas most references to Greek terms in this essay come from Middle-Liddel or the Liddel-Scott Lexicon, these references come from the etymological dictionary of Robert Beekes. Entries referred to include πεῖραρ, πεῖρω, πέρας, and περι. Robert Beekes, *Etymological Dictionary of Greek*, Vol. 1-2 (Brill: Boston, 2010), pp. 1163, 1176, 1175.

34 Note that the terms *pragma* ('that which has been done') and *prattō* ('to do'), as mentioned in the Introduction to this essay, also link to ‘experience’ and ‘limit’ by way of the root **per-*.

A Topological Formula?

One such experimental essay is simply titled “*Logos*”. The 1951 essay – a much-abbreviated form of Heidegger’s 1944 lecture course on Heraclitus (GA 55) – is a ‘free’ translation and interpretation of Heraclitus fragment B 50.³⁵ The essay is concerned with ‘how’ *Logos* occurs. Here the question of a ‘topological formula’ will be taken up from the final two terms of the fragment, ‘*hen panta*’ (‘one all’).³⁶ Heidegger’s rendering of this ‘formula’ concerns delimitation as a finite intervention, giving useful insight into the question of *topos* as interstice or ‘matrix’. It is suggested here that the Heideggerian appropriation of the *hen panta* provides a sort of ‘cypher’ for *topos*.

The capitalization of *Logos* in this essay, as well as its tentative associations with the name of Zeus, indicates that it is understood as a name for Being. This suggests that Heidegger is seeking to glean an indication or experience of *Ereignis* in this fragment. An experimental inquiry into *Ereignis* is further attested in terms concerning the quickness of a lightning that steers, which Heidegger draws from other fragments, specifically B64 and B32 (VA 214ff.). Such a lexicon – terms like *jäh* (‘precipitous, sudden’), *blitzen* and *Blitz* (‘to flash’, ‘lightning’) –, raised in this chapter’s introductory remarks, is strongly associated with *Ereignis*.³⁷ It is thereby the case that the Heraclitean *Logos* serves Heidegger a sort of proto-*Ereignis* in preparing its ‘experience’. Considering the focus upon the entanglement of *physis* and *logos* in the first chapter, it is also noteworthy that Heidegger does not seem terribly concerned with distinctions between a capital-*L logos* and *Ereignis*. This seeming conflation is seen also in the development between the essays “*Die Sprache*” and “*Der Weg zur Sprache*” (see below).

The *hen panta*, the ‘one all’, concerns ‘how’ the *Logos* ‘gives’ presence. This notion of ‘giving presence’ will be considered in later essays – importantly “*Zeit und Sein*” – from the phrase *es gibt* (literally, ‘it gives’). In the accompanying seminar Heidegger states that the terms speaking to the giving of presence – ‘gift’ (*Gabe*) and ‘reaching’ (*Reichen*) – are to be understood as ‘ontic processes of time’. This is to say that they are the sorts of models discussed

35 “Listening not to me but to the *Logos* it is wise to agree that all things are one.” Heraclitus, *Cosmic Fragments*, trans. G.S. Kirk (Cambridge: University Press, 1975), p. 65.

36 The Diels-Kranz and Snell versions both read “*hen panta einaī*” (‘one is all’), though Heidegger leaves the *einaī* out of his citation. This issue will be taken up again below.

37 For two examples among many see “*Der Weg zur Sprache*” where *Ereignis* is characterized as “*Er-Eignen, Er-äugnen, Er-Blitzen*” or, as in the Bremen lectures, *Das jähre Sichlichen ist das Blitzten* (GA 12, 253fn and GA 79, 74f.). The first citation gives the sense of ‘to suddenly happen’, ‘to come together’, ‘to befall’, ‘to catch sight of’, ‘to flash’. The second can be translated as ‘The precipitous self-clearing is fulguration’.

in the introductory remarks to this chapter and are, therefore, to be ‘worked away’ towards an experience of what then remains. It could be said here, at the very least, that what is at stake in the *hen panta* is an experience of presence given finitely, presence given within a limit, as delimited. The intrinsic relation to ‘time’ that could be said to remain here concerns the four-dimensional time of *Geschichtlichkeit*, to be further elaborated in the following section.

The giving of presence by the *Logos* is considered as a laying. Heidegger first translates *legein* as meaning ‘to lay’ (*legen*) what lies before, in terms of presence or presencing. This giving is qualified. Presence is not given all at once in an exhaustive totality of intelligible and accessible *ideas*. The delimitation of the giving is here called a gathering in the sense of a ‘selecting’ (*lesen*).³⁸ Heidegger stages this by drawing upon the ‘example’ of a harvest (*Lese*). The central import of this harvest analogy appears to be that the gleaning of grapes for the making of wine is not the sole decision of the harvester, but is based on a prior determination. The ‘selection’ is determined by a ‘screening’ (*Auslese*) on the basis of ('demanded by', *verlangt*) a ‘harboring’ (*Bergen*) (VA 201-202). The references to ‘quality’ in the use of the terms *Auslese* ('select') and *Erlesen* ('vintage') give the sense of a *distinction*, something ‘distinguished’, but only in the sense of a selection generally speaking. The motif of distinction is found elsewhere in Heidegger’s use of terms such as *eigen* ('distinct') and *eignen* ('to pertain to').³⁹ The selection itself is ordered on the basis of a delimitation understood as or relation to concealment or harboring (*Verbergen*, *Bergen*). The bringing together (*zusammenbringen*), bringing in (*unterstellen*), and yielding as one (*einbringen*), all qualifiers of *lesen*, occur according to this delimitation named in *Bergen* (VA 202). While the problem of antecedence remains in the sense of a ‘prior determination’, Heidegger refers it here to the concealing and harboring associated with finitude and death, rather than to the purposed-*idea* associated with presence’s self-relation.

Hen panta is the formula for this selection that delimits the harvest, i.e., the giving of presence and time. Heidegger adds a colon to his original citation, rendering the formula *hen:panta* or *one:all* (VA 201). The addition of this colon is crucial. Heidegger uses the colon to replace the verb ‘to be’ (*einai*) in the

38 Heidegger translates *Logos* dually with the German terms *legen* ('to lay') and *lesen* ('to collect or select'). This decision is influenced, at least in part, by the Latin translation of *legein* or *legō* (λέγω) as *legō*, which retains the sense of ‘choosing’ or ‘selecting’ in the Greek. His use of the German *legen* should also contain the sense of ‘arranging’ or ‘ordering’ in the Greek, a matter near to the definitive characteristic of the thetic *logos* as *stellen* (VA 200).

39 As noted in the above section on beginning, the self-intervention of *physis*, in having the structure of a ‘return-to-self’, begets something unique.

fragment, which he remarks is a fitting conjecture on behalf of the philologists, though not befitting the tongue of Heraclitus.⁴⁰ The colon is neither the one nor the many but rather an indication of *topos*. The *panta* is, for Heidegger, everything present or all possible presence (VA 212). The *hen* is the unique unifying one, the steering of everything. Its unifying gives or lays presence insofar as it is selective (*dieses lesend-legende Einen*), but it is not itself the ‘unification’ and thus remains ‘unique’ (*einzig*) in this way (VA 212). It appears that the colon, or *topos*, therefore indicates delimitation as a sort of filter, delimiting the impossible all as a ‘distinct’ (*eigen*) one or whole. Heidegger refers to this delimitation in “Zeit und Sein” as ‘happenstance’ (*das Ereignete*) and refers it directly to the interstice of the topological matrix (*Geviert*) (GA 14, 51). It is reasonable to suggest that such happenstance, in turn, is to be considered as a truth-figuration, or a configuration of presence and absence.

It is likely that Heidegger has this formula in mind when in “Der Weg zur Sprache” he states that *Ereignis* is the *Verhältnis aller Verhältnisse* (‘relation of all relations’).⁴¹ The place of this phrase in Heidegger’s late writings on language and *logos* is notable. It first appears at the end of the essay “Das Wesen der Sprache” (1957/58), where it describes or names language: “Language is, as the saying that sets the world in motion (*die Welt-bewegende Sage*), the relation of all relations” (GA 12, 203). Within two years it appears again at the end of “Der Weg zur Sprache” (1959), where it now describes or names *Ereignis*: “For *Ereignis* is, distinguishing-holding-holding-to-itself (*eignend-haltend-ansichhaltend*), the relation of all relations” (GA 12, 256). It is the latter characterization⁴² of *Verhältnis aller Verhältnisse* that is most suited to the *hen:panta*, for this formula concerns the distinguishing (determining, yielding) and holding (unifying gathering) by what itself is not determined (holding to itself).⁴³ *Ereignis* determines (*eignend, haltend*) without reciprocity.

⁴⁰ At the opening of the essay Heidegger quotes the Snell translation ‘one is all’ (*Eins ist Alles*). Here, however, he appears to be referring to the Diels-Kranz translation where *einai* is translated in the conjunctive (*Eins sei Alles*).

⁴¹ This is the standard English translation given by Peter Hertz and is also used by Krell in *Basic Writings*. Martin Heidegger, *On the Way to Language*, trans. Peter Hertz (New York: Harper and Row, 1982), p. 135.

⁴² It is almost as if the transformation between the two essays is anticipated by “Logos”, worked out in the decade prior. The thinking of language gives an indication (and/or experience?) of *Ereignis*, though *Ereignis* is not itself language, nor something knowably present, like Zeus.

⁴³ It is worth noting that in “Das Wesen der Sprache” Heidegger refers explicitly to the matrix or fourfold, though he does not in “Der Weg zur Sprache”. This chapter attempts a similar movement, first taking up the language of the *Geviert* in attempting to move away from it in later subsections.

On this basis, the translation of the phrase *Verhältnis aller Verhältnisse* might be reconsidered. The term *Verhältnis* can also be taken as something like a ratio or proportionality. Without understanding these words in the sense of a mathematical or metaphysical production of knowledge, it might be said that *Ereignis* is the ‘ratio’ of all relations or circumstances (or all ratios) as the reckoning (delimiting) of presence and (over?) time. *Ereignis* brings together what is disparate in a selection – Heidegger refers here to the *diaphermon* of Heraclitus considered at the close of the previous chapter – and delivers it (*Austrag*). This suggested translation also follows from Heidegger’s remark that *Ver-hältnis*, thought from *Ereignis*, is no mere relation (*Beziehung*), in the sense of coupling or connection, contact between two entities, etc. In the yield or yielding (*einbringen, austragen*) indicated by the formula, what is held is released. This would correspond to how Heidegger describes the selection (*lesen*) as ‘already within’ (*schon eingelegt*) or ‘immanent’ to the giving of presence. If there is a transmutation of the antecedence determining metaphysics, it appears linked to both concealing (death and harboring) and Heidegger’s notion of immanence or intimacy. The ‘already within’ of the selection allows presence to be thought in such a way that formal presence (entity, *idea*, etc.) does not determine thought. To give presence means to bring to lie and let lie, such that what has been given (*das Niedergelegte*) is no longer a concern (*um es sich nicht mehr kümmern*). It is given in order to be let go (*es übergehen*) (VA 202-203). Heidegger’s intention with the hyphenation of *Ver-hältnis* might then be taken as a suspension (the hyphen) of the all, which is separated (*ver-*) as something distinct (*eigen*) in itself. This matter will be returned to.

The reference to Heraclitus’s fragment B51 provides a further clue as to Heidegger’s understanding of how the *hen:panta* occurs. In *Hyperion*, Hölderlin refers to the ‘great word of Heraclitus’, which he quotes as “the one differentiates itself within itself” (*das Eine in sich selber unterschiedne*) to translate *en diapheron eautō*.⁴⁴ Hölderlin’s citation is likely a paraphrase of fragment B51. The *hen:panta* is the manner in which Nature intervenes in itself producing of itself a finite whole that is not ‘everything’ or the ‘all’ (not the infinite). It marks a “totality which includes the finite and announces itself from within the finite”.⁴⁵

The colon is *topos* as an interstice to the extent that it is the mark of *Ereignis*’s intervention. As a symbol, the colon suggests inversion and Heidegger writes

44 Friedrich Hölderlin, *Hyperion* (Digitale Bibliothek), p. 156.

45 Françoise Dastur suggests that this apparent paraphrase of Heraclitus in *Hyperion* represents Hölderlin’s understanding of the *hen panta*. Françoise Dastur, “Hölderlin and the Orientalisation of Greece” in *Pli* 10 (2000), pp. 162-163.

it as such. For either ‘side’ of the colon, ‘one is the inversion (*Umkehrung*) of the other’ (GA 12, 189). The *hen panta* occurs as “one:all, all:one” (VA 210).⁴⁶ If it is the case, as stated elsewhere, that what follows the colon is contained in what precedes it, this apparently must be thought simultaneously from ‘both’ perspectives. The colon thus marks *the finite delimitation of the many or all* as much as *the many or all are a finite delimitation of the one*.⁴⁷ The latter sense refers not to the notion that ‘the one is in everything’ but to the presupposition that everything present *indicates* the withdrawal of the one. What is proper to the ‘one’, *Ereignis*, is to hold to itself (*eignend-haltend-ansichhaltend*) in the giving of presence (and time), to remain unknown in the appearance of the many (GA 12, 256). In either case, the colon, *topos*, remains the middle term as something like an interstice of the impossible expanse of presence.

The ‘Law’ of Nature?

It appears that, for Heidegger, thought catches sight of *Ereignis* through the mark of its intervention; through the fact that a truth configuration or gathering of presence is delimited and is guided by it. Perhaps the *Lege* of *Ereignis* (the finite giving of presence) suggests a law, or better, the rough outline of such a notion. According to Grimm, the *Lege* is the practice (*Handlung*) and locale of laying.⁴⁸ It is also what has been laid (*das gelegte*) in the sense of a layer or layering. The co-defining terms for *Logos*, laying and selecting, in their connection via *legō*, can pass quickly into a language of law. To the extent that *topos* pertains to delimited giving of presence and time, *Ereignis* (following the *lesende Lege*), might be considered a simple or generic law, or proto-law. Recall that, in the context of the vineyard example, the selective laying does not take place first on behalf of those who harvest the vineyard, but rather on behalf of what he seeks to name with *Bergen* (salvaging or harboring). It is not humankind but *Ereignis* (ὁ Λόγος, Zeus) – as *ratio decidendi*⁴⁹ – that ‘decides’ what is up for negotiation.

46 For discussions of the colon, see the essays “Das Wesen der Sprache” and “Das Wort”.

47 In this sense, if concealing is taken to be delimiting, concealing is also allied to a sense of overflow or excess. This will be considered again.

48 Given Heidegger’s penchant, following Heraclitus and Hölderlin, for the figure of the river, the stream, or more generally the ‘current’, it is worth noting that the ‘site’ or ‘locale’ of laying relates to a fishing technique consisting in the narrowing of a brook or stream with poles and boards, in front of which fishing nets or baskets are placed (Grimm). Heidegger’s discussion of the harvest discussed in the previous subsection ends with a parenthetical reference to the Alemannic (south German) term *Legi*, which he defines as “the defense (dam, *Wehr*) that already lies-before (*vor-liegen*) in the stream: the *flowing-in* (*Anströmen*) of the water” (VA 203 – emphasis added).

49 Taken here literally as the rationale (*logos*) for decision.

The happenstance of the *Lege* appears to function in some proximity to the Latin *lex*. The happenstance is the mixing of the four or the truth configuration that is taken in and let go of. The *lex* is not the law itself, but the motion to law. *Lex* is the condition – literally, ‘movement as a processual device’ – begetting negotiation. This would appear to suggest that the given (presence and time) is that which begets or begins a negotiation. The question of course would be, a negotiation amongst whom? Heidegger does not appear interested in elaborating such matters within the realm of human politics and ethics, at least not explicitly. The only matter that seems up for negotiation is the ‘four’ of the topological matrix or, in other terms, the ‘relation’ of presence, time, absence, and humankind (though this is not intended as a like-for-like correspondence with the ‘four’). Yet it almost seems as if this negotiation is ‘decided’ before or in the ‘moment’ that it is ‘sent’. *Ereignis* decides and its decision sets in motion a negotiation.

In “Der Weg zur Sprache” Heidegger does indeed refer to *Ereignis* as a ‘soft law’ (*das sanfte Gesetz*), borrowing the phrase from Adalbert Stifter (GA 12, 248). The term *Gesetz* here no longer takes the sense of ‘to set’ (from *setzen*) but is rather a ‘letting arrive’ (*gelangenlassen*), which can be taken here in relation to *physis*. The ‘soft law’ is the law that allows humankind to ‘arrive’ in its proper relation to *physis*. It should be noted that, within the human sciences, Stifter’s phrase is taken to refer to a “principle” of “national historical logic”, namely the logic of Austrian history that governs the relationship of humankind and nature. Despite the fact that Heidegger links *Ereignis* closely to his understanding of the ‘historical’ (*geschichtlich*), and despite his apparent preoccupations with a certain German ‘historiarity’ (*Geschichtlichkeit*) – the use of these terms in Heidegger’s work has already been covered – the import of Heidegger’s ‘soft law’ in the context of Austrian ‘national’ history, but an adjustment of the tempo to correspond to the ‘slowness’ of national historical logic.⁵⁰ On the

⁵⁰ The historian Mark Blum uses Stifter’s ‘soft law’ to distinguish what is unique about the Austrian historical logic in distinction to a German or North German historical logic. It is notable that his essay “The ‘Soft Law’ of Austrian Historical Logic Since the Enlightenment in the Arts and Sciences” places both Husserl and Franz Bretano – two major influences on Heidegger – within an ‘Austrian’ cultural-historical logic. Blum describes a “morphological logic” as something like a form-in-progress (or ‘form underway’). In Bretano’s words, it is a matter of the ‘one in the many’ rather than the ‘many in the one’, the latter attributed by Blum to German cultural-historical logic. Unity is not imposed on particulars, but rather comes from a sort of immanent source and occurs as the “reciprocity of diversity”. Perhaps Heidegger’s sense of German-ness has always been a borrowing from and conflation with Austrian-ness. See Mark Blum, “The ‘Soft Law’ of

contrary, for Heidegger, the 'letting arrive' of this soft law corresponds only to the spontaneity of *Ereignis*' precipitousness (GA 77, 147).

The question of *topos* as interstice concerns a renewed approach to the problem of human entanglement in *physis* – one that eschews resolution. Near the end of the discussion of the harvest discussed in the previous subsection, Heidegger refers to a collective action or gathering action (*sammelndes Tun*) that does not follow the steps long since carried by the tradition (*deckt sich nicht mit derjenigen der langenden und tragenden Züge*). Perhaps in this remark there is a sort of hint towards what action humans can take. The initial description of the harvest can be taken, at least in part, as a metaphor for the production of technical knowledge or the preservation of presence. In not adhering to the long tradition of this order, humankind does something else. The next paragraph opens by stating that simultaneous to the order of the gathering, the gatherers compose themselves or concentrate (*sich sammeln*) and bring their action together to or upon the harboring (*ihr Tun auf das Bergen versammeln*) in order to act (*sammeln*) from what is collected there (VA 202). Again, the 'moral' of Heidegger's *Spätwerk* is revealed: humans act to or from concealing/harboring.

What was discussed in the previous subsection as a 'selecting' will be discussed again below as a 'filtering'. The import of these motifs is that they concern the possibility of an intervening determination that belongs to or is immanent to *physis*, to all its 'elements', and that does not separate or disentangle but momentarily suspends a unique configuration. Heidegger's discussions of human comportment as a 'building' (*bauen*) or 'dwelling' (*wohnen*) make clear reference to what is shared among *physis* and the elements of the matrix, and between human movement and physical movement, by linking the etymology of 'building' to *phúō* ('to bring forth, produce, grow, appear') via the shared Indo-European root *b^huH- ('to grow, to emerge'). Human practice does not derive from *physis*; rather *physis* and humankind 'arrive' from the same 'source'.⁵¹ This shared or shared immanent 'source' – though the word 'source' is lacking here – is precisely what *Ereignis* tries to indicate by transmuting what the Greeks sought with the term *physis*. In the context of the *Spätwerk* it can be nothing but delimitation as the nexus of the motifs of finitude, death, concealing, and harboring.

Austrian Historical Logic Since the Enlightenment in the Arts and Sciences" in *Writing the Austrian Traditions: Relations between Philosophy and Literature*, ed. Wolfgang Huemer and Marc-Oliver Schuster (Edmonton: Wirth-Institute for Austrian and Central European Studies, 2003), pp. 131–142.

⁵¹ Krell writes that *bauen* in its origin reflects *phuein*, but it said more clearly that both trace back to the same source, which itself is neither.

The ‘raw material’ for such a shared source would appear to be the raw possibility of emergence. In his Aristotle interpretation, it is *kinēsis*, understood as movement into presence, that conceptually delimits *physis* and *technē*, including their distinction. At the very least, what Heidegger finds as primary in Greek thought is ‘before’ *physis* as something like a shared immanence that binds what appears together in time (*physis* and *technē*, concealing and revealing, etc.). In this way, delimitation retains some relation to the kinetic dimension of *physis* or movement plain and simple.

It is not, of course, a law pertaining solely to the movement of or into appearing that would transform human thinking. Emerging in the same way as *physis* and all its elements, humankind is always subject to the partial appearance in or of a configuration of presence. This occurs according to delimitation in every case. The formal (and partial) appearance of the human occurs in the releasing of the *Ver-hältnis*. As will be seen in the following section, it is finitude itself, thought from the hiding or concealing of *physis*, that guides the ‘poetic thinking’ of humankind. The human arrives at or in its proper relation to *physis* in concealment (and ‘in’ what is unknown and entirely non-eidetic). Heidegger reintegrates the concealing of truth and hiding of *physis* by way of the finite conditioning of *Ereignis*, which is determined by its ‘expropriation’ (*Enteignis*) or withdrawal (*Entzug, entziehen*). It is this that determines the ‘soft law’ of Nature, which as a proto-law is more like an impetus. Perhaps it is better viewed as the non-law of delimitation – a liminary.

There is, therefore, this non-law that nevertheless can be said to ‘steer’ Nature to the extent that what is being touched upon with delimitation is also a transmuted *archē* (*Anfang*). Precedence or what is primordial appears to be shifted from the antecedent-eidetic determination of the ontological register to the immanent-unknown determination of thought. In each case, metaphysical and non-metaphysical, the place of the ‘archaic’ is with movement. With the metaphysical it is the movement of appearance as the delimitation of what is knowable determined from the possibility of knowability *in advance*. With the notion of the non-metaphysical developing here, it is a matter of something that precedes only to the extent that it is immanent and relational.

Already in the 1980s, Thomas Sheehan, who translated “AΦ (1939)” for the English edition of *Wegmarken*, had commented on the origins of *Ereignis* in the context of Heidegger’s early reflections on Aristotelian *physis*. In his essay “On Movement and the Destruction of Ontology”,⁵² he points to Heidegger’s 1928 Marburg seminar, where Heidegger appears to equate *kinēsis* and *dynamis*

⁵² Thomas Sheehan, “On Movement and the Destruction of Ontology” in *The Monist*, ed. Eugene Freeman (1981), p. 535ff.

when translating them as *Ereignung* and *Eignung* ('appropriateness', but also 'aptitude') respectively.⁵³ Sheehan remarks that the two Aristotelian terms provided Heidegger with the "raw material" for *Ereignis* understood as the movement of an entity's "autodisclosure". He emphasizes that this movement always contains a dimension of absence and that this "absentiality" is what makes something kinetic. In the first two chapters of this essay, an absentiality was discussed as what keeps technical movement in motion. In the first chapter it was a matter of the 'ungrounded hidden source' of this movement. In the second, now considering the presence of this source, absence was discussed in terms of partiality, the structural absence that allowed for presence's self-relation.

It is important to stress, where Sheehan has not, that even as Heidegger may develop *Ereignis* from key aspects of Aristotelian *physis*, he does so with the explicit task of avoiding relation to individual entities or things. It is for this reason that *Eriegenis* is referred here more generically to 'delimitation' rather than to autodisclosure. Earlier in the essay, Sheehan ties Heidegger's use of *Riss* and *Umriss* to the Greek *peras* as the boundary between presence and absence.⁵⁴ The suggestion here, following in part from Sheehan's own insistence upon absence in presence, is that delimitation is not even specific enough to make a clear distinction of presence and absence, revealing and concealing. On the basis of the previous analysis of the present essay, the sense of 'disclosure' or 'given presence' associated with *Ereignis* could never refer to the disclosure of an entity, but only or at the very least to the manifold indicated with terms like *Geviert* or, better yet, *hen:panta*. Sheehan defends his philological argument against Heidegger's own claim that *Ereignis* cannot be understood on the basis of Greek philosophy by noting that Heidegger develops *Ereignis* from Aristotelian *physis* in order to go "deeper" or "beyond" what is explicitly captured in Greek metaphysics. This only strengthens the decision here to speak generically of delimitation in place of autodisclosure. What is primal in experience is not the disclosure of individual entities, but rather the disclosure of an instantiation of presence and absence together in a relational structure, or truth configuration. Sheehan remarks that Heidegger tends to hypostatize being on the grounds of its (Being's) apparent autonomy. It is true that Heidegger thinks the movement of presence as an autonomous rationality,

53 In "AΦ 1939", Heidegger maintains the translation of *dynamis* with *Eignung*, referring the sense of capacity and possibility implied in *dynamis* to *Eignung* and *Geeignetheit zu ...* ('suitability to ...'). The term *kinēsis*, however, is translated as movedness or 'consummate movement' (*Bewegtheit*) suggesting that Heidegger has moved beyond a direct correlation between *kinēsis* and his use of *Ereignis* (GA 9, 286).

54 Thomas Sheehan, "On Movement and the Destruction of Ontology", 535.

though not necessarily as an ‘underlying reality’, but rather as a dimension of the real (an aspect of Nature). *Ereignis* indicates an immanent relational movement that, in its very relationality, remains independent of entities. *Ereignis*, however, is also not considered as entirely ‘autonomous’, though any sense of reciprocity associated with it will be finite on ‘both sides’, a matter to be further elaborated in the following section.

It is worth repeating now what was said at the beginning of this section, namely that delimitation itself is said in at least three ways here. The first and primary way, the one that also guided the destruction of metaphysics, is as the concealing and/or harboring that delimits everything accessible or intelligible, all form. The second is via the motif of rest. Rest or stillness (=○) is related to a sense of transit or passage, in terms of the finite intervention that allows it. The third is a transformed notion of antecedence/consummation or antecedent consummation. This has been associated thus far with the nexus of death and immanence, suggesting that immanence is something like a generic or universal finitude. The second and third aspects appear to follow from the structural absence inherent to *Gestell*. It remains worth considering whether or not these are all various ways of saying what Heidegger thinks in the term concealing (*Verbergen, Bergen*). It appears that all three are concerned with motifs such as the lack of ontological register or formlessness (*akínēton*) and what is generally held to be inaccessible and unknowable (death, preliminary knowledge of the consummate). If Heidegger’s philosophy begins from the problematic of the manifold ways of saying Being in metaphysics, perhaps his own thinking sets off from and after the many ways that concealing is said.

The Makings of the Matrix

The names and characterizations Heidegger has given to the four elements of the matrix have been and will continue to be subject to study.⁵⁵ These figures, however, are never definitive or ‘systematized’ in themselves, a matter necessitated by Heidegger’s own account of how the ‘playing out’ of the matrix takes place.⁵⁶ However they might be modulated, the central motifs of these figures remain: time, presence/revealing, absence/concealing, humankind, and *Ereignis*. Despite the seeming reciprocity of the four’s relationality – and the charting of the four which crosses out being⁵⁷ – Heidegger’s thought appears

55 This can refer to, for example, any number of present and future studies into Heidegger’s appropriation of the four elements from the poetry of Hölderlin.

56 Heidegger’s reference to the *Geviert* as happenstance (*das Ereignete*) in the seminar protocol to “Zeit und Sein” – referred to above – makes this subsection unavoidable.

57 Upon introducing the graphic intervention of the X or ‘crossing out’ of the word *Sein* in the essay “Zur Seinsfrage”, Heidegger immediately qualifies this in terms of the *Geviert*

to continually favor the motifs of time and concealment as concerns the relation between humankind and *Ereignis*. It can be remarked, for example, that the mortal bears the absence of the divinities and the inverse, that the presence of the human is that of a divinity. However, such lines of inquiry will not be taken up in detail here. This subsection will provide a general characterization of these figures and attempt to set them in proximity to more prominent Heideggerian motifs. The intention of this approach, whether or not it is successful, is to move away from any reliance upon the particular figures.

Chapter 2 ended by referencing the bearing together of *Gestell* and *Ereignis*. The *diaphermenon*, which holds together revealing and concealing as happenstance, may indicate the ‘place’ of technic’s reintegration in Heidegger’s attempts at a non-metaphysical thinking. It can be suggested that the four figures of Heidegger’s matrix represent technical and non-technical axes. Exploring such a possibility would consider the heavens and divinities as representing a technical axis, while earth and the mortal represent a non-technical or ‘poetic’ axis.⁵⁸

The figure of the heavens is concerned with the passage of time and with the production, real or otherwise, of difference, divergence, variation, or simply ‘change’ across time. In “Das Ding”, for example, the heavens are the course of the sun, the phases of the moon, the changing of seasons, and coming and going of the days (VA 144). In the essay “Logos”, similar examples are given as what is ‘borne together’ in the *hen:panta*: day and night, summer and winter, times of peace and war (VA 213). In bearing together what appears disparate, the course or passage of time is the medium of appearance or presence.

What is suggested in the examples from “Das Ding” and “Logos” is confirmed in “Zeit und Sein” in a more recognizable Heideggerian language. He states there plainly that being is determined as presence by time (GA 14, 43). The passage of time here might even account for the appearance of a progressive course for the fundamental forms or concepts that guide technical thinking, in the dialectical process, and in similar modes of thought. In the technic notebooks, time is the fundamental appearance (*Grunderscheinung*) of unconcealment (GA 76, 39). In “Das Wesen der Sprache” Heidegger speaks of time quasi-tautologically to say the same: Time times (*Zeit zeitigt*). The verb *zeitigen* also means ‘to ripen’ and ‘let emerge’ (*aufgehen lassen*) (GA 12, 201). Time is the

with references to the essays discussed in this chapter and collected in *Vorträge und Aufsätze*: “According to what has been said, the graphic crossing through (*Zeichen der Durchkreuzung*) cannot be a merely negative sign of cancelation (the ‘cancelation of being’ – jf). It rather indicates the four regions of the matrix (*Geviert*) and the gathering in the place if intersection or traversal (*Ort der Durchkreuzung*) (GA 9, 41).

⁵⁸ Peter Trawny has attempted to develop something like this in his *Technik.Kapital.Medium*.

medium of formal presence (emergence) and its change, variation, or development (its ripening). Since time takes precedence over presence, it is the obvious background-agent for the history of metaphysics.

Time as the medium of appearance is also tied to perception. In Heidegger’s more figural language, time is connected to the perception of presence by way of references to the weather and atmosphere of the heavens. The heavens are the weather in its hospitality and inhospitality and the depth of the *aether* (Greek *aithein*, ‘to light up, shine’) (VA 144). The course of time bears together presence and absence. The *noein* that perceives presence is translated in this context as *Witterung* (‘weather of a particular or determined period of time’) and *wittern* (‘to sense’). This maintains the identification of presence and perception raised in Part I. The verb *wittern* takes the sense of ‘awareness’, awareness of a particular atmosphere. It is a sensing of what is in the air, no matter how vague, and sensing it out. The ‘sense’ implied in the verb *wittern* is tied rather strongly to a language of hunting, seeking out and discovering, tracking down, etc. Both *Witterung* and *wittern* thus speak of a qualified perception or delimitation of what is perceived.

The divinities that reside in the heavens are also the hinting messengers of the godhead (VA 144). They are indications as partial presences. There are many possible ways of speaking of the presencing of divinities. They might be considered as the phenomenality or accessibility of beings or entities in their formal appearance. These are in turn comparable to the hints given in the self-showing of language. Language, like the divinities, hints (winks, *winken*) and does so in an incomplete or intransparent manner. This is to say that divine apparitions do not directly reveal any thing or any ‘essence’ (VA 184). To humankind, the divinities are something foreign that makes itself accessible in order to indicate ‘another’. As such, their formal indications might be compared with or correlated to thetic or technical apparitions and the partiality of what constitutes *Gestell*’s simulation.

The partiality of the divinities is anchored, of course, in absence or concealing. Humans do not determine them or have power over them, though it is the ‘concealed workings’ of the divinities that ‘guide’ humankind in their gestures (VA 171). As in Part I, the transitivity of partial presence is always an indication of autonomy. The partial nature of presence and its rootedness in delimitation can be said in at least two ways. The first would be to speak of it in itself, in terms of the ‘self-withdrawal’ of what makes itself accessible in some way. Self-withdrawal refers to the movement of delimitation as (self) concealing plain and simple (GA 14, 6fn). Such is the basis of the *nous* that hunts for hints. The phenomenon, the presencing of beings or entities, remains always on the basis of its self-withdrawal and therefore partial revealing. Heidegger

refers this to the sense of conjecture (*vermuten*) found in the sensing (*wittern*) of *noein*. Perception can be nothing more than following and making due with 'hints'. The second approach would be to speak of partiality in relation to time, as Heidegger does in his letter to the student Buchner regarding "Das Ding". The *fault* or flaw (*Fehl*) of the divinities is absence. This 'fault' is not unrelated to the 'soft law' discussed above. The *Befehl* is the dictate. What is necessitated or required for presence is absence, concealment, or delimitation. This absence is not nothing, however, but rather presence that is to be appropriated or acquired (*anzuéignend*) of or from the concealed fullness of 'what has passed' (*der verborgenen Fülle des Gewesenen*), where 'what is passed' is both the 'no-longer' and 'not-yet' (VA 177). In this case, delimitation as concealing is further qualified by the passage of time.

It is in this way that the intrinsic relation of the heavens and divinities is anchored in a peculiar sense of simultaneity as the delimitation of constant time. Time is constant, in the same manner of presence, to the extent that it constantly passes (GA 14, 7). This constant passage occurs such that what occurs in and by way of time – presence – is equal in terms of time's 'letting emerge'. This 'equal time' is a sort of Heideggerian 'simultaneity' (*das Gleich-Zeilige*). The past (*Gewesenheit*) and present (*Gegenwart*) do not form a strict order or hierarchy of appearance, but rather continuously arrive 'together' as the 'future' (the 'to come' or 'coming to', *Zukommen, Zukunft*) (GA 12, 201). Perhaps this sense of the 'future' is to be taken in relation to the developing sense of presence's transitivity and transit throughout Heidegger's work. The arrival of presence is an amalgam of 'past' and 'present' presence. It is in this sense that the divinities are immortal. They occur as the continual arriving of past and present. Their partiality is what remains withdrawn or concealed in a given emergence or arrival (future). The unified arrival of 'past' and 'present' occurs on the basis of a (constant) delimitation of constant or equal time.

The mysterious figure of the earth appears to be what bears the heavenly passage of time and formal indication of the divinities. The earth seems to be named almost everywhere as a metonym for withdrawal and concealment as grounds, though whether or not it is a true metonym for concealing as such is difficult to say. It could be taken as the *kryptesthai* of *physis* and in this way the 'abyss' (*Abgrund*) upon which everything appearing rests. This would include the abyssal bearing of the interstitial appearance of *topos* or of the topological matrix. Heidegger remarks here that the earth is an abyss that carries the in-between of a technical desert (total presence) and concealed beginning (GA 71, 85). Put otherwise, the figure of the earth indicates the lack of grounds or inability to account for the delimitation that 'forges' a topological articulation of presence and absence. In "Der Ursprung des Kunstwerkes"

the earth is what harbors (*bergend*) in emergence and, as such, remains the self-occluding (*Sich-verschliessende*) (GA 4, 28, 33). In “Das Ding”, “BWD”, and “DwdM”, very little is said about the earth itself. It is what serves as a bearing (*dienende Tragende*) and a bearing that builds (*bauend Tragende*) (VA 143, 170). Its bearing (*tragen* and *austragen*) belongs to the lexicon of *Ereignis*, while its building belongs to that of humankind. Its relation to absence and/or concealing establishes its particularly intimate relation to humankind. The ‘familiar’ action of humankind, its building and dwelling, occurs ‘upon’ the earth, suggesting that it is this ‘upon earth’ – upon non-grounds, within or upon a chasm of presence – that makes human action ‘familiar’ (VA 141).

The human is the mortal and as such is close to the earth. It is capable of death and could even be said to be the very enablement of death. The speculative translation of *vermögen* as ‘enable’ is borrowed here from Mitchell. The sentence “*Es vermag den Tod*” says as much as it achieves or accomplishes death. This ‘enabling’ of death presents one way of looking at the relationship of humankind to the seeming ‘infinite’ and ‘immortal’ nature of the heavens and divinities, the latter in particular. Humankind would offer the ‘gift of death’ to that which could not achieve this of its own capacity.⁵⁹ This ability is its distinction.⁶⁰ With this distinction Heidegger can shed both the animal and animate (*zóon, zōé*)⁶¹ and the *anthropos* from the *logon echōn* (the *zóon* or *anthropon logon echōn* that defines humankind in the western tradition). The rational animal must first become mortal, as he says again and again. In doing so, the human obtains something like its own consistency, a consistency similar to the constant passage of time: the human dies and does so continuously (*fortwährend*) (VA 144).

It could be said that mortality takes the place of groundless, metaphysical antecedence or the antecedent constitution of technic. Put otherwise, death is itself what enables ‘topology’, enables the playing out of the topological matrix and requires human ‘participation’. This is the case secondarily by way of a rather surprising etymological link that Heidegger would have likely been aware of. The Greek term for mortal is *thnētos*, which means ‘liable to death’, and derives from the verb *thnēiskō* (‘to die, to be dying’). Helmut Rix’s *Lexikon*

⁵⁹ This line of inquiry is certainly in line with Hölderlinian motifs and is undoubtedly entertained by Heidegger. This thread will be touched upon here, though not pursued in detail. Andrew J. Mitchell, *The Fourfold: Reading the Late Heidegger* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2015), p. 228.

⁶⁰ Heidegger elsewhere equates the phrase ‘*es ist*’ (‘it is’) with ‘*es vermag*’ (‘it is capable’, ‘it enables’) (GA 14, 12).

⁶¹ For the etymology of *zóon* is precisely the opposite of *thnētos*, from which mortal and mortality derive.

der Indogermanischen Verben traces *theiskō* back to the Indo-European root *d^henh₂- which means ‘to set oneself in motion’ (*sich im Lauf setzen*) and ‘to set off’ or ‘die’ (*sich davonmachen*). Rix’s reconstruction sets *thnēiskō* in proximity to the Sanskrit *dhanvati* wherein ‘going’ (*läuf*) and ‘flowing’ (*strömt*) come from the same place as dying.⁶² Death appears to precede and set the human ‘in motion’. Such a notion is not foreign to two of Heidegger’s favorite interlocutors, Heraclitus and Hölderlin. Heraclitus fragment B48 reads: ‘the name of the bow is life, but its work is death’.⁶³ Hölderlin ends the late poem *In lieblicher Bläue* – Heidegger’s muse in “DwdM,” which is central to the discussions of the following section – “Life is death and death is also a life” (*Leben ist Tod, und Tod ist auch ein Leben*). Heidegger’s reversal is perhaps more radical than his predecessors in this case. For here, *death is set out in advance as accomplished*, in such a way that it may not be possible to understand humankind from the perspective of life, it never ‘lives’.

Here ‘life’ and ‘living’ should be taken in relation to the animate. In turn, this must be read through Heidegger’s reading of Aristotle and metaphysics/technic more generally. The human’s peculiar relationship to *topos* shares the *akinēton*, in the sense of being a ‘limit case’. The human never attains ontological register, and like the ‘earth’ appears only in its divine reflection in the sky. That the human is ‘always already dead’ *salvages* it from the incessant formal placing and determination of technic. Heidegger’s point here is by no means morose or pessimistic and is intended as precisely the opposite.

As antecedent, death can also be spoken of in terms of consummation. The end or limit – explicitly in the sense of consummation in one of Heidegger’s notebooks – is death and not life (GA 71, 193). The ‘completeness’ of death is the beginning, not birth. It sets underway an internal course or intra-going (*Untergang*; see below). In this way it is the consummation of *Dasein*’s immanence. It is therefore death and nothing else that enables the human as whatever it is. The human is not otherwise determined. It has its end or consummation ‘in front of’ itself. The choice to use consummation throughout this essay may be more legible in this context. It is the ‘highest unity’, in the sense of requiring nothing else. And it is very likely this that allows Heidegger to situate humankind in such proximity with *topos* (the question of *Dasein*). With *nothing* to determine it, Heidegger draws the question of humankind into the realm of concealing and absence, where it is unlikely to be given an

⁶² While individual lexical entries have been largely left out of footnotes to this point, it seems important to give a direct citation here: Helmut Rix, *Lexikon der Indogermanischen Verben* (Wiesbaden: Ludwig Reichert Verlag, 2001), pp. 144–145.

⁶³ In the Greek, the word for ‘bow’ is *bíos* and ‘life’ is *bíos*.

answer. It is a sign without meaning (=o), suggesting that it is ‘ready’ to receive and emit or effuse meaning.

In Heidegger’s account of the topological matrix, the ‘enabling’ of death is seen in the distinguished relationship of humankind to *topos*. This distinguished relationship is a ‘sharing’ in the active dimension of being that Heidegger also names the ‘nothing’ (VA 171). What defines the *topos* in its ability to ‘contain’ and/or mix presence and absence across time is its emptiness, which Heidegger also understands as the ‘nothing’ of the vessel. The *topos* or vessel is ‘figured’ or ‘formed’ (*gestaltet*) of emptiness (VA 161). Perhaps better put, the *topos* is the (non)form of nothing. It is the figuring of nothing. In this way the human has a sort of ‘immanent’ relationship to death.⁶⁴ In ‘living’, it is already *in* death. It is in *topos* to the extent that it is in death.

Before transitioning to the movement of the matrix itself, a final and essential remark on the transformation of death in Heidegger bears mentioning. Death concerns delimitation. Delimitation is continuous and in accord with the speed or instantaneousness of *Ereignis* (its ‘flash’ of light). Just as *instantaneous* is the death of the mortal ‘who’ dies continuously and does so such that the emphasis is no longer on the death of individuals or the ‘moment of death’, though this does occur. Death is no longer ‘my own’ as it is in *Sein und Zeit*, but rather what unifies humankind as humankind.

Topos as World Filter

Heidegger’s figures of *topos* in “BWD” and “Das Ding” are characterized in large part as ‘things’ of transition or passage and are determined by their vascularity (*Gefäß*). The jug and bridge are both ‘sites’ of transition or passage (*Übergang*) (VA 146). This accentuates the *per- (‘to cross or pass’) and *poros* (‘passage, ford, narrowing’) of the limit. These figures of vascularity can be considered in terms of what has been discussed under the colon and =o thus far. The thing is delimited by its emptiness: it is a thing insofar as it is a vessel (VA 161). What allows it to contain or grasp (its quality of being *fassend*) is emptiness, nothing. A *topos* is not determined by what it might receive, which is to say what it delimits, but rather seems ‘determined’ only by this selfsame nature named in the term nothing, viewed by Heidegger metonymically with death.

This emptiness of *topos* is understood as a unity, not from the perspective of its receiving capacity, but rather from its *effusion*. This is not to say that effusion is not already implicit in emptiness. It emphasizes instead that what *topos* receives, it does not keep. A *topos* is not indivisible to the extent that it receives

⁶⁴ This is the ‘immanence’ or standing-in (*Inständigkeit*) of capacity or enabling (*Vermögen*) understood in relation to death) (VA 155).

and, in receiving, produces what belongs to it as an indivisible whole or unity. The thing or vessel (*topos*) is withdrawn from or withdraws from what it ‘produces’. Unity is found in the release, in not-keeping what had been received, because the thing or *topos* itself is little more than the delimitation that gives way to something else. In above discussions of the essay “Logos”, this effusion was referred to as a ‘moving on’ (*übergehen*) from given (or received) presence. The vessel takes in and retains (*einbehalten*) what is accepted (absorbed or recorded, *das Aufgenommene*) only in order to pour it out (*ausgießen*) in what Heidegger refers to in “Das Ding” as a libation (VA 161-164).

The bridge offers a slightly different image of reception and effusion to the extent that it refers to a manifold crossing, which might be associated more directly with the crossing or crossroads of the ‘fourfold’, though the vascular nature of the thing remains the same. With the bridge, mortals cross to either bank of a river, while the course of the river crosses that of the heavens. The bridge takes in these manifold flows, holds them for a moment (*Augenblick*), only to set them free again (VA 146-147). What is ‘received’ of course, is the ‘four’, which are ‘mixed’ (delimited in their crossing) and released as delimited. It is important to recognize that the ‘release’ here not only speaks to the consummate nature of *topos* – insofar as it needs nothing else and is not determined by what it receives –, but also to the fact that it is not a place in the traditional sense. Heidegger’s use or appropriation of the term *topos* does not imply a ‘place’ where things can be located, nor is *topos* itself locatable.

The mixing and mixture associated with the ‘empty delimiting’ of *topos* is described in the essay “Das Ding”. What is discharged from or let through *topos* is a sort of mixture, the co-incidence (*Zu-fall*) of the elements or ‘four’. Put in the language ventured in the previous subsection, it is something like the delimitation of presence according to time borne by the absence of grounds. Heidegger seems to imply here an absence of human intervention (into the ‘allotment’ of presence), though it is difficult to speak definitively of a total passivism. This discharge of presence – which is not unlike the configurations of presence discussed in Chapter 2, though here it is conditioned by a certain notion of time rather than structural circularity – is what has thus far been called happenstance. Happenstance is perhaps the only thing like a traditional philosophical entity remaining in Heidegger’s later thinking, given that the being (*Seiende*) is more or less subsumed by or as partial presence (*das Anwesende*). It could be said that happenstance (*das Ereignete*) is a transmuted, non-metaphysical understanding of the entity (*das Seiende*). Heidegger gives two further names to this in “Das Ding”: *Geschenk* (gift) and world.

In the language of the fourfold, Heidegger refers to the production of a world⁶⁵ as a manifold reflecting (reflection) or mirroring, a mirror-play (*Spiegelspiel*). The notion of ‘reflection’ here is not the self-reflection of consciousness associated perhaps most closely with German Idealism and not the recursive movement of *Gestell* as presence’s self-relation, which are likely to be understood as similar if not the same for Heidegger. His use of reflection here might be considered closest to what he finds in Hölderlin as distinct from all other key figures of German Idealism, namely, an understanding of the ‘force’ or ‘power’ of reflection (*Reflexionskraft*) in Hölderlin as the ability (*Vermögen*) to let everything ‘shine back’ (GA 4, 160). The mirror-play is also referred to as a *Vereignung* (‘appropriation’), which immediately draws mirroring and reflecting into the lexicon associated with *Ereignis*. Heidegger uses mirroring with the intention of saying that each ‘element’ never be thought of as giving itself (as such, in its ‘essence’), but rather it mirrors the other elements in a world or happenstance, withholding itself like an opaque surface. Each element appears only in being reflected. This accounts for the harboring or salvaging of *Bergen*, or the concealing and remaining-concealed of *Verbergung*. The mixture itself is therefore something like an amalgamation of each viewed through the other, which Heidegger also refers to as a *Vereignung* to one another (VA 172).

Heidegger’s neologism appears to draw upon the sense of the prefix *ver-* as ‘movement away’ (*ausgießen*) that passes into ‘failure’, in terms of a botched appropriation or, perhaps better put, a negotiation of what can never be a ‘full’ or ‘absolute’ appropriation. The *inappropriateness of a world* in relation to its elements is summed up by Heidegger mid-discussion in the following sentence: “Within the *Vereignung*, each of the four is dispossessed to *something distinct*” (VA 172 – emphasis added). The dispossession or expropriation (*enteignen*) here does not emphasize the withdrawal into themselves of the four elements, though this is also at play. It is concerned instead with the *inappropriate mirror image that is the mixture*. Note that this is not unlike the ‘simulation’ considered in Heidegger’s writings on *Gestell* and technic, which is formed of partialities. Heidegger does not write that the elements are expropriated to

65 A distinction will be made below between the World, written with the definite article and a capital ‘W’, and a world, written with an indefinite article and lower case ‘w’. The World is the simulated World discussed in Chapter 2, which forms the simulation out of or as a technical standard. In distinction from this, a world is what is emitted from the topological matrix and is close to what is discussed here as happenstance. A critique will follow concerning whether or not Heidegger’s choice to maintain the word ‘world’ in the topology is a useful one.

their own (*ihrem Eigenen*) in the sense of withdrawing from the hold of the world-mixture. He writes that they are expropriated to *something distinct* (*zu einem Eigenen*).⁶⁶ This is also referred to as the single-fold of the ‘four’, another metonym for happenstance, world, etc., and should be understood as a sort of in-folding or forming-into-one of mirrored articulations of the elements. This is a dispossession to the extent that the mirror images of the four produce something entirely improper to any, something therefore distinct. What is emitted from *topos* is always a unique determination of the four.

Before speaking of world, Heidegger first names the emitted mixture *Geschenk* (gift), again using a collective noun to highlight that this is something (constantly) occurring. He comes upon this word by referring to the effusion as a libation and calling this libation a giving (*schenken*) (GA 165). Happenstance is a gift. This is a variation on a configuration of presence as what is given in the *es gibt* (there is, indeed, presence). The term also draws the gathering of *topos* (*Ort, logos*) again in close proximity to a gathering of humankind. The language of pouring a libation is that of drinking (alcohol) and festivities and feasts (*Schenk* refers to the pouring of wine in particular).⁶⁷ There is therefore something of a conflation between the ‘linguistic relationality’ of humankind – the human dimension of the thing’s gathering and negotiation –, here perhaps as a sort of gathering together in the space of the withdrawn, and the gathering *logos* that mis-propriates and negotiates the elements of the matrix, the very ‘thing’ that would beget the speaking together of humankind.

Again there are vague references here to possibilities for a communicative practice rooted in a ‘thinking of *topos*’ and/or ‘experience of *Ereignis*’ which are left unpursued by Heidegger in favor of continued attempts at articulating the latter. In advance of the discussion of ‘poetic practice’ below, it can be noted that *Geschenk* is more or less analogous with Heidegger’s understanding of the word ‘poem’ (*Gedicht*), which he understands not as a single poem, but as an entire body of poetry (the collective noun for *Dichtungen*) (GA 12, 33–35). In the context of poetry, the libation is understood as a wave that swells from

⁶⁶ To understand this otherwise could only come from a fixation with the question of propriety in Heidegger’s thinking and in the lexicon of *Ereignis*. While such a motif certainly exists, it should not get in the way of what is actually being said. A similar gesture was made above when *eignend* was translated as ‘distinguishing’. *Ereignis* ‘distinguishes’ in ‘holding’ (determining), while ‘holding to itself’ (not being determined or determining itself in any way).

⁶⁷ And the delimitation of *Ereignis* is what holds together Hades and Dionysus (VA 214). Beekes suggests that the name for Hades is derived from Indo-European *n-uid and means the ‘unseen’, but notes that others argue its origins in relation to the Sanskrit *sam vid-*, meaning to congregate (*Sichzusammenfinden*). Beekes, *Etymological Dictionary of Greek*, 34.

the locale quite literally as the speech of the locale (its idiom as the said). It is important to note that the *Gedicht* is the speech of *the locale* or *topos* and not the speech of some individuated human consciousness. Here again there is a sense of *topos* (or *Dasein*) as an ecological awareness. The source of the wave is harbored in the locale (returns to itself, withdraws) as what metaphysical language would call rhythm. The transmutation of rhythm into idiom therefore looks like a generic structuring of happenstance, attributable to topological delimitation. Perhaps here is the Aristotelian sense of *topos* as a dimensional interval. The awareness of a topo-logical speech overlaps with a sense of structuring as articulation.

Heidegger persists in naming all of this – happenstance, gift, poem – ‘world’. This forces his readers to now make a distinction between *the* simulated World of *Gestell* and world, *a* world, as the effusion and/or happenstance of the topological matrix. The usefulness of retaining the word ‘world’ here, in light of the metonyms already discussed, is questionable. A world ‘produced’ in the topological matrix, in that it is a ‘slice’ or individuation of the ‘common world’, is distinct from the simulated World of *Gestell*. Topological world and simulated World might be considered as two ways of being partial, but appear to be fundamentally different ways of the revealed aspect of truth. However, Heidegger’s gesturing towards etymology in the supplement to the Bremen version of “Das Ding” again raises the question of a ‘man-made’ world, though now perhaps as a proliferation of worlds (GA 79, 22). His hyphenated *wer-alt* (Old High German) refers ‘world’ to an age (*alt*) of humankind (*wer*) by way of the Proto-Germanic **weraldiz* (‘lifetime, worldly existence’). Why he would draw on such suggestive etymology here is unclear. The sense of temporal succession implied in a phrase like ‘age of man’ only threatens to reinstate the metaphysical history of humankind, the succession of epochs as the succession of generational worlds. Yet, as will be seen in the Interlude, the radically generic nature of delimitation and Heidegger’s later understanding of individuation (or isolation) cannot account for the seemingly large epochal structures implied here. To the extent that a rigorous elucidation of relation between ‘moments’ of delimitation or limit(s) is lacking in Heidegger, his references to world-historical superstructures serve as little more than fantastical placeholders for undeveloped thought. The trouble with speaking of worlds (as **weraldiz*) is thus to transmute the simulated World into individual *cosmoi* for each human, as if in response to the simulated, common world, he were resigned to stating ‘to each their own simulation’.

The language surrounding the production of world in the Bremen essay also remains rather close to that of *Gestell*. At most a rhetorical shift and softer tone can be observed. Malleability in the sense of manipulability becomes ‘easy’

(*ring*), ‘slight’ (*gering*), ‘pliant’ (*schmiegsam*), and ‘acquiescent’ (*fügsam*). The only difference is that now these motifs are being applied to amalgamations of presence, absence, time, and humankind, rather than the totality of constant presence. The circularity of *Gestell’s* placing becomes the grappling (*ringen*) negotiation of the matrix. The active dimension of the thing (its *dingen*)⁶⁸ thereby yields a supple moment, wherein the four have yielded to one another. Heidegger again names this with a collective noun, *Gering*. The shift in language here appears to suggest a finite conditioning of the ‘total simulation’ of *Gestell*. If world is not a simulation here, it is nonetheless a suspending (a snapshot) of the matrix that is as fragile as the blink of an eye.

The notion of the thing, on the other hand, changes radically by the time of the Bremen lectures, so much so that it is no longer recognizable within any general philosophical register that would speak of things, entities, objects, or beings of any sort. Once the figure of the thing – as jug or as bridge – is worked away (*abarbeiten, verwinden*), it becomes *topos*, delimitation, the vessel of the matrix, an interstice at the heart of anything that could be called ‘intelligible’ or ‘formed’ in a ‘topological orientation’. The thing becomes just as foreign to philosophical discourse as the quasi-mythological figures of the matrix. Or, it nearly does.

Heidegger not only appears to place *topos* in a mutually dependent or reciprocal relation to world; he also ends the essay with an enumeration of entity-like things, even if many of these are things concerned with passage and the caring for the earth and its resources (ploughs, ponds, and, somewhat oddly, animals). What thing becomes, he states, occurs (*ereignet sich*) from out of the mirror play of the world. This ‘becoming’ could only be ‘valid’ in the instance of world-formation and -effusion. Otherwise the apparent inversion seems unnecessary. For all the work Heidegger has done to transform the thing into a topological context, he appears to revert, at the last instance, to a thinking from 15 years prior. In the closing passages of the essay the thing looks more like the ‘world-orienting’ work of art than it does the vessel that has been otherwise analyzed here.

⁶⁸ The ‘thinging’ (*dingen*) of the thing does not appear to be a mere tautology, particularly if the reader remains fixated on the notion of the thing as an entity or object. The verb *dingen* contains much of what was given in the above etymology of *Ding*. The verb concerns, according to DWDS, a long or thorough negotiation, in the sense both of arguing or haggling or a legal trial.

If Heidegger wanted to radically transform the philosophical notion of world as he had *almost* done with the thing, this attempt remains among the weakest aspects of his later thinking. Moreover, why wouldn't he have emphasized that, in providing the (non) place for the mixing which is discharged as world, the thing itself ‘withdraws’ – in accordance with the structure of Heidegger's thought (*almost*) *everywhere* –, the thing being no part of world and providing no orientation, but harboring itself in its emptiness? As with the Laying of the *Logos*, it moves on from the world at every moment. The world would then be entirely *for another* or for no one at all – sincerely a libation or *Schenken*.

Perhaps the philosophical notion of World, both in the metaphysical sense and, apparently, in its etymological grounds as Heidegger restates them, carries too much weight for a proper transmutation in Heidegger's later thought. As mentioned, its metonym *Gedicht* takes a far more useful and direct relation to the sense of ecological awareness and articulation that will be associated with *Dasein* in its conflation with *topos*. Many of the motifs surrounding world in “Das Ding” – fragility, suppleness, fugacity, uniqueness – can be connected to today's common, scientific understanding of ecology. Insofar as the thing (*topos*) is understood in direct relation to delimitation or as delimitation, the sort of reciprocity between thing and world that Heidegger speaks of at the end of the essay would remain questionable. If from delimitation there arises simultaneously an articulation and awareness of an ecology, this does not, in turn, have a reciprocal effect upon delimitation, which remains with itself.

To carry Heidegger's transformation further, where he did not, it could be said that a world rises and, in far less than the blink of an eye, has collapsed again. If Heidegger's late thinking has a gnostic dimension vis-à-vis technoscience and makes use of an orientation by non-knowledge to ‘twist free’ of technoscientific formalism – and this remains to be decided – it cannot be a thinking of the World or worlds as just described here, neither the simulated world, nor a world of the matrix. Thought must be directed elsewhere, towards delimitation, towards what is named with *Ereignis*. It is worth considering another way in which Heidegger's sense of world is brought nearer to the emptiness of the thing and the sense of nothing and death associated with the human. *The production of the world is a manifold expropriation of things-in-themselves*, which is to say that there is no such thing as a ‘self-sufficient’ entity. Phenomena are nothing more than aspects of relation. World takes the place of the possibility that individual entities be considered in themselves. But this again transmutes the entity into happenstance, paradoxically making it such that entity becomes world where thing becomes nothing.

3.3 Interlude: Heidegger on Difference as the Immanence of the Limit

The following ‘Interlude’ consists in a commentary on Heidegger’s construction of the term ‘difference’ (*Unterschied*) in the *Spätwerk*. It will do so specifically as difference relates to the nexus of the motifs of consummation, antecedence, delimitation, and immanence raised throughout the previous section. Much of the material that will be commented upon here comes from Heidegger’s 1941 workbook *Über den Anfang* (GA 70). For this reason, it should not necessarily be taken as a definitive statement on the notion of difference as it develops through Heidegger’s later work, but rather as a contribution to understanding it within the purview of the current essay. It is concerned with showing that ‘difference’ in the *Spätwerk* is no longer what Heidegger refers to as the ‘ontological difference’, the difference between Being and beings or entities, wherein Being must always be understood as presence (*ousia*). Difference (*Unterschied*) is not reducible to the difference between the what and how of entities. The notion of difference sketched here will concern a topological orientation of thought, which is to say an orientation by something other than presence and its formal self-articulation.

The ‘how’ of formal appearance has already been accounted for in the technical production of the *idea*. In Chapter 2 it was shown that this ‘how’ as the making-present (the appearing) is actually the self-relation of presence following the logic of entities. Entities are both the means and product of the maintenance of presence’s self-relation. While it may be argued that the development of *Ereignis* arises out of a similar ‘how question’, and perhaps even responds to it in another way, its/this thinking occurs without concern for entities. The ‘ontological difference’ is the differentiation internal to presence that, through the repetition of this binary (its recursive movement), presents, at the very least, the semblance of a theory of material change or becoming. Difference as it will be discussed here, by contrast, is not the engine or cause of a process of material change or resolution.⁶⁹ At least this is not the primary sense Heidegger gives the term in his workbooks, where he instead elaborates idiomatic difference (*Unterschied*) as it is constructed from two other central terms: *Untergang* ('downfall, demise') and *Abschied* ('departure, farewell').⁷⁰ The following will attempt to elaborate the interplay between these two terms. As is

⁶⁹ Difference or differentiation is not the ‘negation’ that is the fundamental act of thinking in Hegel’s dialectic (GA 70, 71).

⁷⁰ “Difference (*Unterschied*) is thus the word of *Abschied* and *Untergang* (GA 70, 32 – italics in original).

generally the case, Heidegger’s analysis moves from the metaphysical speculatively towards the non-metaphysical.

Heidegger states that metaphysical difference or ‘differentiation’ – in the sense of the ontological difference – is the ‘formal rule of thinking’ (GA 70, 69). In his analysis of metaphysics, the difference between *physis* and *technē* is resolved as a difference within *technē* itself. It is the difference within presence. This is the difference between form and formation, which has been modulated here in a variety of ways. This ontological *ur*-difference is an essential aspect of the metaphysical mode of manifestation and thinking. Heidegger finds the *possibility* of this difference and its structuring in the derivation of Being from beings (appearing from appearance, etc.). The basis of metaphysics thus lies in the antecedence of beings or entities. The thought of the intelligible precedes a thinking of intelligibility, and this is a matter of structural antecedence. Being, as a historical and metaphysical notion, is taken as an entity insofar as it is derived from the recognition of all entities (beings as a whole) and set in opposition to them. The metaphysical notion of difference is thereby saturated with beings. In other words, there is never any difference-between without the doubling of the entity into its essence and existence, its what and how.

Heidegger’s analysis in GA 70 appears to focus on the ‘between’ implied in the ontological difference between beings and Being and seeks to isolate this ‘between’ as a possible ‘site’ for the transmutation of difference. It has been suggested that, within the analysis of metaphysics, the formal arrangement for difference-between is seen to be continually shifting. At the scale of the metaphysical canon, this has been interpreted as the intra-paradigmatic shifts which create the semblance of a successive metaphysical history. Each iteration or ‘epoch’ of metaphysics manifests the ontological difference in its own way, which in turn organizes a philosophical understanding of the world. In the analysis of *Gestell*, this has been interpreted as the constant shifting of technical frameworks through the repetition of the binary function maintaining presence’s self-relation. In terms of his lexicon, Heidegger ultimately reduces this to the difference between *bestellen* and *bestehen*. In seeking a more ‘primal’ mode of thought, one which precedes and exceeds the metaphysical-technical framework, Heidegger focuses his attention on the ‘between’. Like the image of the technical *logos* ‘discovered’ in the analysis of Chapter 1, the ‘between’ is a ‘constant’ among or within a constantly shifting framework.

In the passages where Heidegger's 'deconstruction' is most clearly at work, his focus is on the late metaphysical vocabulary of 'representation'. It will be recounted here in terms of the basic structure of metaphysics/technic considered in the previous two chapters. The term in question is *vorstellen* (to present, to represent).⁷¹ Heidegger appears to find this verb most conducive to understanding difference-between as a formal rule of thinking. This is to say that he uses the verb to both lay out the stakes of difference-between in its technical capacity, and to 'reveal' the point at which a transmutation may occur, which will pinpoint 'where' this formal rule comes from. It should be noted that the verb *vorstellen* could be understood in a variety of ways, all of which Heidegger's work draws upon: it is a presenting, a representing, and both of these as a placing-before (*vor-stellen*). It might be understood, therefore, in line with the entire trajectory of the foregoing analysis, ranging from the 'pure placing' of the technical *logos* to the 'placing as reconstructing' that begets the simulated world. According to Heidegger's workbook, difference-between as a formal rule of thinking manifests itself most clearly when thinking is taken as the 're/presentation of something'.

The 'representation of something' contains in itself the difference-between representing (*Vorstellen*) and being-represented (*Vorgestellte*). Differentiation (*Unterscheidung*) is the re/presentation of both re/presenting and being-re/presented. It follows that differentiation demands representing (Being) be taken as entity. The reification – the making into an entity, *idea*, appearance – of Being follows the basic logic Heidegger continually lays out. Representing is ultimately derived from being-represented. The 'something' that is represented is grounded in itself as the possibility of 'being-represented', as =x. The =x indicates the possibility of 'being represented'. While it may seem that Being or presence as the 'means' of the represented entity (as representation itself) precedes the entity plugged into the formula, it is ultimately the case that the formula for representation itself derives from the possibility of =x, of being-represented. *The anticipation of the represented entity is the anticipation of the representation of Being itself.* The difference-between representation or representing and what is represented thus gives way to the presentation of empty representation, the 'entity form' of Being 'as such' (GA 70, 68–71). When Heidegger states that the differentiation between Being and entity is the representation or presentation of both, he immediately refers to this in terms of

⁷¹ The proximity of re-presenting or 'placing before', two ways of understanding Heidegger's use of *vorstellen*, to the mimicking and reconstructing of *nachstellen* should be kept in mind. When thinking is taken as the 'representation of something', it is taken in terms of the world's simulation.

the inflected verb; the “*Vorstellen beider*” gives way to the *Vorgestellte des leeren Vorstellens*. The presentation of both representing and being-represented is the presentation of the unified double (*noein-legein* in Chapter 2). The presentation of ‘differentiation’ is empty presentation. This is to say, to repeat, that ‘=x’ is the *reification of presentation as such*. To maintain the connection to Aristotle’s doctrine of *physis* here, it can be noted that the ‘presentedness of empty presentation’ looks very much like Heidegger’s understanding of Aristotelian *energeia*, insofar as *energeia* ‘reveals’ the image of the technical *logos* as the image of ‘placing-into-presence’ (itself the unified double or binary). The presentedness of empty presentation is the image of the technical *logos*.

The passages under consideration show Heidegger’s analysis both at the limit of metaphysical thinking and touching the possibility of non-metaphysical transmutation. The presentation of empty presentation indicates the constant ‘between’ where difference may be transmuted. This is best exemplified by a series of ‘here/there’ formulations: ‘Here we remain in the presentedness of empty presentation, but there in the immanence or autonomous urgency (*Inständigkeit*) of beginning (*Anfang*) and what belongs to it. Here in empty representation is the most banal process of human opining, but there the indivisibility of *Ereignis* occurs [...].’⁷² The formal representation of an entity is likened to ‘banal opining’ and contrasted with the indivisible occurrence of delimitation. The presentedness of empty representation is referred to *Inständigkeit*. At this particular point, as Heidegger considers twisting metaphysical difference into a transmuted sense, he draws upon the motifs of immanence or ‘standing in’ and unicity or indivisibility. The former motif is, moreover, closely associated with *energeia* (as ‘standing-in-the-work’) and therefore as the transmuted sense of *energeia*: from the presentation of empty representation, which is another iteration of presence’s self-relation, to the immanence of the limit.

On either side of the passage in question, Heidegger appears to link metaphysical difference or difference-between to his own notions of the open or openness (*Offenes*) and clearing (*Lichtung*) (GA 70, 70 & 72). Both terms are used in proximity to this =x. Both may also be referred to topological motifs considered in the previous subsection, particularly the ‘emptiness’ associated with presentation, but also the ‘nothing’ and death. The open has been

⁷² “Hier halten wir uns im Vorgestellten des leeren Vorstellens, dort aber in der Inständigkeit des Wissens des Anfangs in seiner Anfängnis. Hier im leeren Vorstellen ist das Allgemeinste eines Verfahrens menschlichen Meinens, dort west die Einzigkeit des Seyns selbst [...]” (GA 70, 71). The spelling of ‘Being’ as *Seyn* as opposed to *Sein* is often an indication that Heidegger is thinking of what would otherwise be referred to as *Ereignis*.

previously linked to formal malleability in discussion of *Gestell*. Such malleability may also be referred to the appropriative mixing (*Vereignung*) occurring in accordance with delimitation. There is thus a strong concatenation of the *Spätwerk*'s central motifs at play here. It is the term *Lichtung*, however, that leads the present analysis from Heidegger's discussion of modern representation to the transmuted construction of difference as *Abschied* and *Untergang*.

The *Lichtung* – which according to Heidegger can or does take the name *Dasein* (GA 70, 72) – is not a clearing *for* entities in their presence or formal appearance, but rather the clearing *away* of entities or beings.⁷³ Being (presence) is a product (an effect) of entities, including the ego (the "I am 'x'") (GA 70, 76). An analysis of difference might therefore begin with the term *Abschied* or departure, a departure from beings – *and so from Being*. In order to think difference such that it is not differentiation, not the difference-between, entities and causality must be cleared away or departed from. Delimitation, *Ereignis*, effects nothing, nor is it effected by entities; it occurs separate from them, in or as a place apart.⁷⁴ A similar motif was discussed above, insofar as *topos* is not identifiable with the product or world of its mixing. Heidegger links the 'determination' (*Bestimmtheit*) of differentiation to this clearing-away, as if to suggest this is the very possibility of difference, the between. His analysis leads to the following consideration (*Besinnung*): *Ereignis* (*Seyn*) is beginning and this as arrival. The carrying out of 'downfall' (*Untergang*) belongs to beginning as 'departure' (*Abschied*). *Ereignis* is departure (GA 70, 72).⁷⁵

Heidegger states explicitly that a transmuted sense of difference must be understood from its construction from the terms *Abschied* ('departure') and *Untergang* ('decline'). He writes: *Unterschied* is the word of *Abschied* and *Untergang* (GA 70, 32 – italics in original). His italics stress that the components of difference are the *Schied* in *Abschied* and *Unter-* in *Untergang*. The terms serve as elaborative and inter-related metonyms for *Ereignis*, as seen in the above citation. *Ereignung* 'is' itself *Unterscheid* (GA 70, 76). This is especially visible in the workbooks, as these terms interact in order to elaborate the transmuted sense of difference. Analysis here will begin with the term

⁷³ Central to the topological orientation of Heidegger's later thought is this 'departure' from beings. Recall that this has origins in Aristotle's notion of *topos* as distinct from both matter and form (*Physics* 210a 6).

⁷⁴ "Seyn is *Er-eignung*, but *Er-eignis* effects (*wirkt*) nothing" (GA 70, 76).

⁷⁵ "Seyn ist Anfang und als Anfang die Ankunft. Zum Anfang aber gehört der Austrag des Untergangs als des Abschieds. Seyn ist Abschied."

Abschied. The ‘essence’ of differentiation (*Unterscheidung*) is *Unterschied* as *Abschied*, difference as departure (GA 70, 73).

As stated, Heidegger’s emphasis with the term *Abschied* in constructing difference is on the base ‘*schied*’. His discussions of *Abschied* should thus give a sense of how ‘division’ or ‘dissolution’ (*Scheidung, Schiednis*) is integrated into the notion of difference developing here. The word *Abschied* can be understood as ‘departure’ in the sense of leaving, taking leave, a farewell (also a divorce). The verb *abscheiden* means both to ‘dissociate from something’ and to ‘pass away or die’. The sense of ‘division’ or ‘dissolution’ integrated into difference is qualified by the prefix *ab-*, which implies movement away from or deviation from. Following from what has been said above about the saturation of metaphysical difference with beings or entities, it is reasonable to assume that the sense of departure here is a departure from (or dissolution of) beings. This would make it such that the ‘division’ implied in difference is removed from any sense of binary found in metaphysical difference. Neither is it the difference between entities nor between an entity and its presence (or Being or ‘how’ or intelligibility). In dissociating division from entities, the term *Abschied* appears to move towards an isolation of ‘division’, which is to say, a movement towards division in itself, without reference to ‘the divided’. According to Heidegger, *Abschied* ‘captures’ (‘begins’, *fängt an*) the dividing or division of *Ereignis*, its delimitation; it is through *Abschied* that delimitation has its unicity (GA 70, 75).⁷⁶ Like *Ereignis*, division holds to itself.⁷⁷ It has been noted that the transmutation of *physis* as *Ereignis* seems to identify Nature entirely with the occurrence of delimitation. The language Heidegger develops here goes further in that it actively isolates delimitation in thought – a division or intervention that holds to itself.

The immediately preceding citation invokes the above-discussed *Anfang* lexicon that has been associated with a transmuted (non-technical) sense of Nature’s self-intervention. The ‘departure’ of *Abschied* is perhaps also to be taken in relation to Nature’s departure and return to this departure, which is drawn from Heidegger’s classical understanding of *physis* as the movement of self-intervention. In this case, it might be said that the ‘return’ to the departure-from-beings marks the consummation of Nature’s self-intervention, its unicity. Note that the return here is not a ‘return to self’ in the sense of Nature’s technical intervention, wherein the second ‘position’ (*noein*, etc.) is produced to

76 “Im Abschied fängt die Schiednis als Unterschied der Er-eignung an und hat in solcher Anfängnis seine Einzigkeit” (GA 70, 75).

77 Recall from the earlier discussion of *Anfang* that, to say departure *fängt an*, is to say that it ‘takes to itself’ (*An-sich-nehmen*).

facilitate the return. It is not the ‘return’ implied in presence’s self-relation. As a deviation it returns to itself as deviation; it is a return which is perhaps better understood as a ‘remaining with’ (delimitation). The difficulty here is to think difference in terms of Nature’s self-intervention apart from the absolute self-relation of presence, which is by contrast the product of entities and ‘passes through’ them in returning to itself.

The ‘solution’ to this difficulty comes in the implied, inherent finitude of *Ereignis* or Nature. One way to put this is as follows: The technical self-relation of Nature, or the absolute self-relation of presence, requires the reciprocal movement between two positions, the ‘result’ of which is a differentiating ‘effect’ that is actually the consistency of binary reproduction. It is by way of this that presence maintains its absolute self-relation and that ‘presence presences’ ‘infinitely’. The selfsameness of delimitation has *no relation* to any such reproduction, which, from the perspective of presence, is the reproduction of totality, of *das Seiende im ganzen*. *Ereignis* does not distinguish itself from anything that would not be ‘immanent’ to it. Its relationship to the constant flow of presence is to ‘allow’ it *with no reciprocity*. And as self-intervention is understood as a deviation, it could have no relationship to a totality. It can perhaps be likened to a supernumerary (primitive) ‘nothing’, the =o that cannot ‘be’.

Abschied’s role in ‘isolating’ delimitation also serves as the basis for Heidegger’s transmuted or non-metaphysical sense of individuation (further discussed below). The term for it is *Abgeschiedenheit*, which can be taken to mean ‘solitude’ or ‘isolation’ but is perhaps best understood as a ‘sequestering’ or ‘being-sequestered’. Translating *Abgeschiedenheit* in terms of sequestration here gives a sense of ‘separation’ for the sake of ‘preservation’, found in the Latin ‘*sequestro*’ (to give up for safekeeping, to surrender).⁷⁸ This would correspond to Heidegger’s sometimes interchangeable usage of concealing and salvaging (*verbergen* and *bergen*) and its ‘opposition’ to the type of preservation of presence that occurs in technic. This sense of preservation will be taken up in the following section with the question and act of preserving the unknown. What can be said here is that *physis*’s self-intervention, thought now from *Ereignis* and/or delimitation rather than from the production of self-knowledge (technic), appears to serve as a safekeeping ‘from’ technical knowledge, as retaining and preserving what remains absent from presence/technic.

⁷⁸ The Indo-European root of sequester is *sekʷ-, which has three possible meanings. The first, which is attributed to ‘sequester’ is ‘to follow’, the other two are ‘to see’ and ‘to say’. All three meanings are relevant to Heidegger’s development of *Ereignis*, particularly in the essay “Der Weg zur Sprache”.

To this point, and mostly in passing, the word *Untergang* in this essay has been referred to something like an inward or immanent course (*unter* as *inter* or *infra* and *Gang* as course). Heidegger’s use of the word does not point primarily to a ‘perishing’ (*Verendung*), ‘cessation’ (*Aufhören*), ‘failure or incapacity’ (*Unvermögen*), or ‘decline and decay’ (*Verfall*) (GA 70, 94). It should be noted, however, that these senses of ‘passing away’ link to the euphemistic sense of *Abschied* as ‘dying’. Finitude is implied in both terms and is likely linked, for Heidegger, to the *unter* in *Untergang*.⁷⁹ Heidegger’s idiomatic understanding draws upon and stresses the etymological link between the German *unter* (‘below’, but also ‘among’) and Latin *inter* (‘between, during’).⁸⁰ Rather than referring to a decline or passing away, *Untergang* refers to the active sense of finitude just noted, the occurring or playing out of finitude. As with *Abschied*, this could be taken in the context of *Anfang* (‘beginning’) as it indicates Nature’s finite self-intervention and what belongs to this intervention. The ‘internal course’ or ‘passage inward’ of *Untergang* is the intimacy or immanence (*Innigkeit*) of what belongs to a ‘beginning’ (*Anfängnis*) (GA 70, 24). If *Anfängnis* is the ‘subsequent playing out’ (*Nachspiel*) of *Anfang* associated with *Dasein*, *Untergang* would be the playing out of this as an ‘inward’ or ‘immanent’ course. Such a course would be the course of a departure from technical knowledge as a departure from entities.

This ‘playing out’ constitutes one of at least two potential interpretations for Heidegger’s idiomatic employment of the term *Untergang*. It takes *Untergang* as the tracing out of a unique course of Nature (an ‘internal course’), which plays out as intervention (departure) returns itself. The second interpretive direction is to take *Untergang* as a ‘passage inward’ in the above-discussed sense of an isolation of delimitation. These interpretations are not necessarily mutually exclusive. Broadly speaking, their divergence marks the difficult tension in Heidegger’s later work between the motifs of movement/being-underway and stillness/consummation. This was raised earlier in the chapter simply as the tension between progress and stillness in the *Anfang* lexicon. It will therefore be a matter here of designating them both, while choosing to emphasize the interpretation that would be primary for Heidegger, specifically as it relates to the construction of *Unterschied* (difference).

⁷⁹ On this point, and on the earlier suggestion of ‘death’ as something the human is *in*, a study of Heidegger’s reading and intricate reconstruction of the poetry of Georg Trakl in “Die Sprache im Gedicht” could be pursued. The terms *Untergang*, *Abschied*, and *Abgeschiedenheit* feature prominently in Trakl’s poetry as well as in Heidegger’s interpretation.

⁸⁰ The Proto-Germanic and PIE are, respectively, *under (‘beneath, between’) and *h₁entér (‘between’).

In the case of the first interpretative possibility, *Untergang* would be taken as a finite tracing out of *physis*'s self-intervention as it forms a unique course. This could be understood as the production of a unique mode of revealing or truth constellation. In the context of "Das Ding", such a course was discussed as the misappropriation of the matrix's four elements in the production of world, gift, or poem as inappropriate to any of the elements in themselves. Problems arise, however, with the question of 'continuity' as concerns this productive dimension of *topos*. What would constitute a 'course' and, in turn, hold it together, if not entities, if not the guiding 'winks' of the divinities that mark the way? Moreover, when Heidegger refers *Untergang* to the *Einzigkeit* of *Ereignis*, the latter appears to refer to the uniqueness of delimitation *each time* rather than *as such*. Yet he says little to nothing about how such 'each time uniqueness' would beget continuity or be 'strung together' in such a way as to even provide a semblance of continuity to the unique course.

The problems presented by this interpretation concern the utter generality of Heidegger's language and the lack of a more specific, descriptive language that would distinguish it from or draw it into proximity to other philosophical notions of 'continuity' which Heidegger appears to reject (such as the 'becoming' of world and worlds). Moreover, any sort of continuity between delimitation as it continually or constantly occurs would imply a theory of relationality or a 'stringing together' of delimitation(s), which, while hinted at in Heidegger, is nowhere developed in any practical sense or in any way conducive to summarization or interpretation here. As stated above, *topos* has, in any instance, its own range and coincidental construction, the latter of which implies a strong sense of contingency in temporal structure.⁸¹ While Heidegger's later writings on language point to these matters with their motifs of way-making, movement, proportionality and ratio, they only go so far as this generic descriptive language. It might be suggested that what is at stake in 'continuity' is a constant development of and strong comportment towards idiom or the colloquial and shared idiom, something Heidegger associates with the 'physical' aspect of language. Yet, it might also be suggested that the 'details' of this remain to be worked out in or by the technical dimension of *physis* as consistency of metaphysics. This is the limitation of Heidegger's *Spätwerk*. His emphasis on developing *Ereignis* and directing thought thereto eschews a more comprehensive discussion of the place of presence as technic in a thinking of *Ereignis*.

It is therefore unsurprising that when it comes to what is ultimately at stake for Heidegger in the development of the term *Unterschied*, what is at stake in thinking difference, 'continuity' is out of the question. This appears to be the

⁸¹ This is perhaps a difficulty of thinking time's simultaneity.

primary condition that *Abschied* places upon *Untergang* in the elaboration of *Unterschied*. Heidegger states that sequestering (*Abgeschiedenheit*)⁸² – the ‘preserving departure’ – is a ‘slipping away’ or ‘escape’ (*Entgängnis*) into the unicity or uniqueness of the abyss or non-ground. Delimitation itself – the unicity of the abyss – is not a perpetuation (*Fortdauer*) or continuing (*Andauern*), but the remaining of a chasm or fissure (*Kluft*).⁸³ Sequestering is a ‘going into’ concealing (*Untergang in die Verbergung*) (GA 70, 15). Delimitation (*Ereignis*) is the suspension and/or preservation (*Verwahrung*) of ‘departure’ (GA 70, 21). The sense of a movement inward or/as a suspension of the ‘inner’ may remain here, but it does so without raising any question of forward movement, becoming, progress, or continuity generally implied by a course. It might therefore be said that the word ‘course’ (*Gang*) in *Untergang* indicates something intrinsic to or correlated with the ‘world(s)’ produced in the topological matrix, though this course ‘itself’ is not the object of thought (*ist entgangen*). The ‘departure’ and ‘sequestration’ of *Abschied* serves as a ‘check’ on this in Heidegger’s elaboration of difference. The *ab-* assures the absence of entities in relation to the course in *Untergang* (*Abgang*).

This ‘conditioning’ of *Untergang* with *Abschied* could also be taken up in the context of the consummation implied in delimitation. Perhaps with this language Heidegger wishes to draw a radical distinction between a movement of continuity and a ‘movement’ from the point of consummation ‘inward’. *Untergang* would then imply an afferent movement both inward and within a consummate ‘thing’. This raises the issue of a self-sufficiency, which is both similar to technic and generally difficult to dissociate from Nature. Yet even here it bears repeating that Heidegger provides only a limited framework. His primary motivation here seems to be an attempt to reconcile or think together stillness and movement, consummateness with being-underway, a twisting of *kinēsis* from its metaphysical sense. For a movement that is already ‘complete’ with its very being-delimited, ‘from end to end’ would mean as much as ‘from beginning to beginning’. An afferent movement moves ‘within’ what is already consummate.

The ‘check’ of *Abscheid* on *Untergang*, which disengages the ‘world-emphasis’ of courses or paths or becomings, can also be referred to the ‘check’ on the thetic or technical dimension of Nature referred to at the end of Chapter 2. This was raised in the context of a ‘getting over’ (*Verwindung*) metaphysics that would replace the anthropocentric and dialectical senses of overcoming with

⁸² *Abgeschiedenheit* could be understood here as the ‘state’ associated with *Abschied*.

⁸³ Note that delimitation as (non)ground or abyss is brought back into proximity with Hesiod’s *chaos* here.

a torsion (*Verwindung*), a twisting free from technic as a being-dislocated from it. In the workbook currently being analyzed, Heidegger refers *Verwindung* to the suspension of *Ereignis* as 'passing into' 'division' (*Untergang des Abschieds*). *Verwindung* implies (or 'comprises', *in sich schließen*) entering into the intimacy or immanence of *topos* or delimitation (GA 70, 22). *Untergang* is a passage into delimitation. The thought of a passage into delimitation is admittedly a rather cryptic and vague thought, but it cannot be ignored in attempting to understand the development of difference in the *Spätwerk* and its experimental 'course' in language overall.

The sense of *Untergang* that speaks to the isolation of delimitation is therefore the more clearly formulated sense provided in Heidegger's workbooks. This is not surprising given his emphasis on the function of *unter* in the construction of difference. Difference is an entering into (*unter*) a division or intervention (*schied*) that is itself indivisible. *Einzigkeit* is the unicity or indi-visibility of delimitation which is 'entered'. Entering delimitation, thought enters that which does not concern and is not concerned with entities (GA 70, 41). The isolation of delimitation appears to be that to which the thinking of difference comports; elsewhere Heidegger attempts to 'name' it the imageless word (GA 70, 92). The imageless word avoids the trap of an unfolding mode of revealing that would instigate any inclination towards formal presence (*eidos*, technical *logos*). At the end of Chapter 2 this was considered as an acting or dealing in absence or concealing. Perhaps the negotiation of the thing, of *topos* as delimitation, is the check on technical knowledge that Heidegger hopes will clear the way for a different use of language, a different communication. The question of unique courses or paths of delimitation(s) remains open.

Heidegger's emphasis on the isolation of delimitation – which might now be considered the central motif of his later thinking – provides a different view of individuation than seen in his earlier work. It must be clarified that the phrase 'isolation of delimitation' refers, in the first place, to an exercise *in* language *for* thought. Heidegger's use of the German language in these workbooks (and throughout his work) is intended to produce an experience of or encounter with delimitation. Individuation, as sequestering or being-sequestered, is now concerned with 'entering' or 'remaining with' what remains sequestered and apart from the world/entities. What remains apart from an experience of the World or worlds or of entities is found in the motifs of concealing, delimitation, and *Ereignis*.

When individuation is thought as sequestering, any remaining influence of the ‘I-entity’, the ego, is even further removed than in Heidegger’s fundamental ontology. One potential implication of directing thought away from the formal presence of entities (known things) is to subject thought to an always-unique instance or iteration of the production of the matrix – whether the product be thought of as world-entity or as truth configuration. This is to say (or repeat) that when thought comports primarily to the ‘fact’ of delimitation, it subjects itself to the ‘uniqueness’ of what the *logos* articulates. This (each time?) singular articulation of the *logos* – which is no longer reduced to the technical *logos* – is what Heidegger elsewhere refers to as the language of *Ereignis*’s ‘lonely’ monologue (*einsamer Monolog*) (GA 12, 229–232).⁸⁴ In this instance, the *logos* speaks only with itself. It does not produce a second position to ‘receive’ its saying. Humankind, according to the manifold appropriation begotten by delimitation, is *in* a configuration as much as any other ‘element’. Without having the capacity to get outside of this configuration and ‘effect’ or ‘determine’ it, its scope of action remains unclear. Thus, to be ‘subject to’ here means as much or nearly as much as to be ‘identical’ with. Here again, the human as mortal or *Dasein* is drawn close to a sense of ecological awareness and articulation.

This might give a better sense of ‘why’ Heidegger attempts to direct thought to the unknowable ‘how’ that is delimitation.⁸⁵ It serves to distinguish generalized human thought and action from the specialized activity of mathematics and science, the latter of which attempts the ‘dangerous’ activity of corresponding to and fleshing out the auto-technical or auto-formal dimension of Nature. Again, this is not to diminish or denigrate the obviously needed and useful attempts to decode and re-encode or translate and transcribe the technical movement of Nature. It is simply to note that such action requires a positioning ‘outside’, a transcendental position, a position which, as has been shown, always brings with it the danger of misidentifying with technic, of mistaking ‘assuredness’ for ‘certainty’ and thereby presenting the partial as the precise. Generalized human action, on the other hand, must recognize itself in terms of a sort of ‘immanence-to’ or ‘awareness-as’ in terms of delimitation.

Another shift that occurs here concerning Heidegger’s use of language prior to the *Spätwerk* is away from the ‘one’s own’ most often associated with death,

⁸⁴ The opening paragraph to “Der Weg zur Sprache” refers to a Novalis text entitled “Monolog”. As a leitmotif for his essay, Heidegger cites the line: “Precisely what is peculiar to language – that it concerns itself solely with itself (*dass sie sich bloß um sich selbst bekümmert*) – no one knows” (GA 12, 229). Attached to the phrase *sich selbst* is a footnote that reads: “Reflection?”

⁸⁵ Section 3.4 will take up the unknowability of *Ereignis* in more detail.

one's own death. This has already been mentioned but is worth reiterating. 'One's own' can no longer refer to ownership. It has shifted to the 'uniqueness' produced in or by appropriation (*Vereignung*). Death is the term that unifies humankind across every unique occurrence of the topological matrix, what designates each human as *the* human. The generality of death cuts across both the uniqueness of the topological matrix and the universalization of presence as technic.

Individuation is not allied thematically to the world or entities – including 'being in the world' – but to *Unterschied*, *Abschied*, *Untergang*, *Dasein*. Being sequestered, which is to say being-*in* individuation, can therefore also be considered in relation to the *lathoi* of Heraclitus fragment B16 introduced in section 1.3 – *lathoi* as a 'hiding' in terms of concealing.⁸⁶ Sequestering is a 'hiding away' by way of 'isolation' that is, at the same time, a safekeeping, a keeping safe from something. It is anything but an isolating in 'physical space' or an isolation of an individuated ipseity. Being sequestered therefore refers to how something might be salvaged from the constant movement of technic (presence's consistency as that which never sets). Put otherwise, being-sequestered refers to the possibility of thinking what somehow escapes technical formalization.

The sense of isolating what remains apart from or removed from the technical production of knowledge may also help explain what moves Heidegger – during a seminar at Le Thor in 1969 – to say that the 'privation' in *physis* can also be understood as an 'excess'. In this particularly late seminar, he suggests that philosophy, metaphysics, arises from an experience of what is entirely excessive. The 'misstep' of metaphysical thought is to deal with this excess through the technical movement that 'first philosophy' uncovers in Nature, which was the topic of Chapter 1 (GA 15, 331-332). What is sequestered is what (constantly!) remains in excess of technic's striving towards universalization. What is salvaged in generalized, 'poetic' comportment towards delimitation is everything that remains in excess of technical knowledge. This can be taken either as a limitation of the auto-technical production of knowledge (technic as finite universal) or as a limitation of human thought's ability to correspond to it, the latter as what Heidegger sees as the danger in or of mathematical and scientific productions of knowledge. This excess is also likely how Heidegger

⁸⁶ The translation provided of fragment B16 in Section 1.3 was 'How can someone preserve themselves or remain hidden before that which never goes down'. This can be slightly altered to reflect the situation of a 'de-centered' humankind in Heidegger's later philosophy. The fragment now asks Heidegger how 'something' be retained or preserved when faced with the constant, universal placing (formalizing) of technic.

understands the famous conclusion to Hölderlin’s poem “Andenken”: ‘what remains is founded by poets’.

Being sequestered is being in a place ‘apart’ from entities to the extent that entities are considered from ‘secure’, formal presence, i.e., in terms of metaphysical knowledge. In the context of a technical, ontological register, an individuation of this sort is not locatable; it is a ‘non-place’. Being-sequestered takes the sense of being subject to a sort of radicalization of individuation in the form of an (each time?) unique relation structure (*Vereignung*). The dimension of intelligibility, therefore, could only be understood in its belonging to the relational structure. It would appear that the ‘decentered’ human can only fulfill the same role as all the other elements of the matrix, namely to reflect them back ‘as they are’ (though partially); and to let itself, in turn, be ‘cloned’ in this mirroring and reproduced in a world. The human is ‘subject to’, ‘thrown’ into the blender of delimitation because it cannot overcome the finite reach of its thought. Yet Heidegger invariably bestows upon humankind some special status, which is to ‘keep’ appropriation (*Vereignung*): to account for it as that which brings technical knowledge into question and thereby checks its ‘certainty’ with finitude. This must be the point where humankind’s ‘taking on *Dasein*’ amounts to the ecological awareness and articulation being suggested here.

For Heidegger, issues of subjectivity, such as the continuity of consciousness and memory, are in large part due to the stability of formal presence and its ‘reserve’, i.e., the (auto)technical dimension of *physis*. Metaphysical subjectivity is bound intrinsically by or to a relationship to the world/entities.⁸⁷ Its properties or functions can in no way be reduced to a ‘self’ in the sense of a selfsame ego, unless of course, this ego is understood ‘technically’. The functions of metaphysical subjectivity are the functions of technic. This was seen in Chapter 1’s discussions of *noein* and *legein*. From the ‘topological perspective’, what is the same is delimitation (Aristotle’s *en autō ho tópos*), and not the technical *logos* that binds presence and perceiving. Death allows for a coherency of delimitation that would be *expected*, yet is viewed subsequently (*Nachspiel*). In this way there remains a proximity of Heidegger’s idiom to the common understanding of *Untergang* as ‘downfall’ and *Abschied* as ‘farewell’. Death is consummation without (pre) determination. If the mortal assumes death, it is no longer toward it but *in it*.

⁸⁷ Heidegger evokes metaphysical aporia of autopoeisis noting the spontaneity of consciousness (*Bewußtsein*) in its mutually effectuation relation with entities in the production of Being (GA 70, 76 – emphasis in original).

Heidegger's early move to tie individuation to 'one's own death' seems to have been – in a manner similar to his *Antigone* interpretation – a 'human defense' against the 'overwhelming' anonymity of *physis* in the technical production of knowledge. Put otherwise, it was utilized as *Dasein*'s safeguard against the leveling of technical knowledge production. The later Heidegger appears to have found a way to embrace such anonymity. One reason for this may be that the full elaboration of metaphysics as *Gestell* and its potential reintegration in the Janus-situation has allowed for the outsourcing of 'uniqueness' and its 'preservation' to the technical, knowledge-producing dimension of *physis*. It could at least be surmised that intervention (*Ereignis*, delimitation) plays out or occurs with and within the stability of intelligible or formal presence held by the technical dimension of *physis*. This is to say that what 'enters' the topological matrix or what is subject to delimitation is legible or intelligible in some form prior to – and perhaps in a 'different way', after – delimitation.

In other words, the 'elements' of the matrix are, to some degree, always already known 'prior to' any given delimitation in the topological sense. Entities, in the formal-metaphysical sense, enter the matrix and thereby 'belong' to what is produced there. At the same time, the production of the finite 'relational-space' that is the topological matrix presents the possibility of formal knowledge in the first place. To be clear, there is no 'absolute beginning' to be found here. The movement of universalization, the process of formalizing all presence, defines *Gestell*. Yet, as was seen in the previous chapter, the product of this movement, the so-called universal forms (of entities), occurs in the movement of *Gestell* as localized formal change. The movement of the universal must thereby account for or be applied to each disruption or intervention associated here with *Ereignis* as delimitation. Thus the process of reintegrating the universal into Nature comes *through* Nature's very disruption of this process, the disruption which begets the continual flow of presence and which has also been referred to here as structural absence. Such a knowledge, then, the knowledge produced by *Gestell*, could only exist 'nowhere'.

The outsourcing of 'human capacities'⁸⁸ by way of a technical externalization has been well explored in the work of Bernard Stiegler, beginning with his *Technics and Time I*, which builds upon the claim that technical externalization

88 This is also similar to one of the basic thesis of Reza Negarestani's speculative work on a theory of 'General Artificial Intelligence'. In this case, the human intellect is but a temporary vessel on the developmental path of 'intelligence', a path or movement he places in a Hegelian framework. The intellect is therefore something 'outside' humankind that it has access to. This was referenced in the first part in remarks concerning the autonomy of *noein*.

is inseparable from an ‘anticipation’ rooted in death.⁸⁹ Here, with Heidegger, it is a matter of the constant return of presence to a topological situation wherein something of ‘past encounters’ – former formalizations and inscriptions of presence – constitutes the ‘already intelligible’ dimension of delimitation. For Stiegler, these former formalizations manifest as large technical backdrops of intelligibility and memory that he calls ‘tertiary retention’ (inscriptions in the world in the form of the technical, which is to say, exteriorized).⁹⁰ For him, the inscriptions that form tertiary retention stand in relation to finitude or death. For Heidegger, the sequestering of (in?) Nature is known only in and by death. If this constitutes a course, it would only be known in a consummation that deviates from the technical backdrop of intelligible presence in ‘individuating’ it (which for Heidegger, is ultimately inseparable from beginning) – the point from which it moves ‘inward’. The outsourcing of change to technic allows for the anonymity of the ‘moment’, a moment in which the human ‘is’ first and only what it ‘is’.

Heidegger’s difference lexicon also provides insight into the type of ‘temporality’ associated with a topologically-oriented thought. The word ‘temporality’ remains somewhat awkward here and it must be recalled that Heidegger links or transmutes *Zeitlichkeit* to *Anfänglichkeit*, a term indicating the consummate nature of a ‘beginning’ or of delimitation. It refers here to at least two motifs considered above: the constant passage of presence as time’s simultaneity; and the tension between stillness and progression, movement and completion. In *Über den Anfang* he introduces the term *enstasis*: *Untergang* is the *enstasis* of time (GA 70, 84). *Enstasis* may provide a link between a more commonly used term, *Zeit-Spiel-Raum*, and the *Inständigkeit* that appears to transmute *energeia*. What can be seen here with the terms *Inständigkeit* and

89 Bernard Stiegler, *Technics and Time 1* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), pp. 152, 163.

90 A primary example of such ‘technical backdrops’ for Stiegler would be the ‘grammaticization’ that allows for recorded, transmissible, and recognizable speech, the basis and focal point of Platonic education. Another example given in his *Nanjing Lectures* draws from Marx’s analysis of the machine, namely that the knowledge of the worker is exteriorized in the machine. He refers to this expropriation of knowledge as a process of ‘proletarianization’. The type of education Stiegler seeks to elaborate in response to this is concerned with returning knowledge, in some form, to the ‘site’ of humankind (a ‘de-proletarianization’). Such a project could certainly be said to follow from Heidegger’s critique of Platonism and Platonic education. Bernard Stiegler, *Nanjing Lectures 2016–2019*, trans. Daniel Ross, pp. 25–26, 74.

enstasis is something like a ‘coherence’ in or of time. As such they remark a coherence through or with which consummation is experienced, though it is not experienced ‘all at once’. This sense of coherence minimally describes how the ‘unfolding’ (*Untergang*) of delimitation is distinct from the unfolding of a forward or progressive sense of time (time moving by a forward arrow) or of a becoming.⁹¹ The time-aspect of difference suggested by the term *enstasis* will conclude the analysis of *Unterschied* here by way of a detour through further consideration of the relation between *physis* and *Ereignis* in Heidegger.

What might be called a topological time in Heidegger is really a temporal leeway, a leeway in or of time (*Spielraum* is leeway).⁹² If this temporal leeway is thought in connection with *Untergang*, and the question of its ‘unfolding’ is not tied directly to the experience of time produced by entities, this raises the possibility of thinking delimitation as a ‘unique range and coincidental construction’ apart from entities. Heidegger states that delimitation (*Ereignis*) renders (*erbringen*) a temporal leeway or leeway in time (*Zeit-Spiel-Raum*) *in which and with which* its ‘passage inward’ or ‘internal course’ ‘unfolds’ (*in der und der es selbst seinen Untergang erwelt*; GA 70, 51). When humankind or thought gives itself to the time rendered by delimitation (an *untergängliche Überlassung*), the possibility of a ‘striated time’ – a chronological time punctuated by presents or nows⁹³ – disappears. Here ‘striated’ and ‘chronological’ imply sequentiality and linearity, and would likely include any notion of ‘forward moving’, ‘developmental’, ‘progressive’ time, for all of these adjectives are out of place in a discussion of something that is experienced as consummate.⁹⁴

Heidegger ties ‘nows’ and ‘thens’ directly to the question of entities. Without a ‘now’ or ‘then’, there is no longer a question of entities. In particular there is no ‘big bang’ question of what came first, the represented or representation. There is no sequence to ‘true’, enstatic time. Nothing arises from nothing, there is no cause, nothing which comes before.⁹⁵ The metaphysical understanding of difference entails the reification of presenting or of its possibility, in order to

⁹¹ Heidegger suggests that while a metaphysical *archē* is that from which something goes forth (*Fortgang*), the ‘movement’ of delimitation (beginning, *Anfang*) is ‘inward’ (*Untergang*) (GA 70, 21).

⁹² The ‘spatial’ dimension of this is addressed in Section 3.4.

⁹³ Heidegger refers to this as the possibility of a coming ‘then’.

⁹⁴ Though it is, of course, the case that the experience of metaphysical progression has been tied to the presumption of an ‘absolute knowledge’ an ‘end’ that guides the progression of technical knowledge.

⁹⁵ The present essay’s use of the phrase ‘nothing arises from nothing’ might be taken up in relation to Heidegger’s well-known citation of Angelus Silesius in his 1956/57 lectures on Leibniz published as *Der Satz vom Grund*: “the rose is without why, it blooms because it blooms” (GA 10, 53ff.)

speak of presenting as such. Being as entity (*Vorstellen* as *Vorgestellte*) precedes Being as such. Metaphysics cannot escape this reciprocity. To get rid of entities (*Abschied*, *Lichtung*) is to get rid of sequence and to introduce *Spielraum* and vice versa: temporal leeway is the ‘time’ of *sequestration from the presencing of entities*. Heidegger even uses the qualifier ‘between-time’ (*Zwischenzeit*), as if to confirm the above analysis and say that it is the ‘between’ that presents the possibility of metaphysical difference. Between-time lies concealed at the extremity of ‘inwardness’. It is the consummate picture that first allows the distinguishing assertion.

The notion that delimitation would resolve a striated or sequential time may appear counter-intuitive. It is perhaps more intuitive to understand the cut or division of delimitation – the *Schied* in *Unterschied* – as what continually institutes the cadence whereby any such sequential time is known. Heidegger’s move seems to rest almost entirely on tying delimitation, and with it ‘difference’, to the manifestation of a unique whole, which is consummate but not predetermined, and, with this, the assertion that consummation of a whole is never *the whole* (never the totality of beings). Because delimitation renders a finite intervention that is in itself consummate, it cannot be divided into nows and thens; and therefore it does not provide thought with a tool for following the (developing) chains of formal presence. If there were a sequence, it would be a by-product as far as thought is concerned, something never accessible from *within* delimitation. If there were a forward arrow, it would never be *the* forward arrow of time, because the all-form (*das Seiende im ganzen als ein solches*) is never what is delimited. It would simply be what guides the reconstruction of something (time’s coherence?) after the fact.

The temporal movement that inheres in the ‘consummate whole’ instantiated by delimitation is therefore not a passage of time (for it has already been consummated) but a coherence of time that is not experienced all at once. Time ‘hangs together’ and human experience is its exploration. In this way, the movement of time’s coherence, its ‘unfolding’, could be considered in terms of what was referred to above as the afferent movement of consummation, the ‘inward’ of *Unterschied*. Enstatic movement is any movement that adheres (inheres) to delimitation. Whether or not the leeway of time also constitutes the scope of human action is unclear. Some may take this as a frightfully passive conclusion, though the lack of details is enough to deem this conclusion unnecessary. Regardless, there is the suggestion of a sort of double finitude here: first that of delimitation itself, and then that of human experience. By way of this double finitude, it might be said that, in terms of an experience of *Ereignis*, the anonymous and preemptive nature of constantly occurring death resolves striated time into a temporality of coherence.

The replacement of sequence with coherence is related to the central role *Ereignis* plays in the development of this thought. This requires a continued consideration of the prefix *er-* that Heidegger uses to inflect terms oriented by *Ereignis* throughout the topology. The sole definition given by the DWDS for this prefix in verbal formation is to express the completion or achievement of something.⁹⁶ If Heidegger was aware of this, and it is quite reasonable to assume he was, then *er-* is most certainly linked with the importance of consummation. This can be seen in a verb like *erbringen*, where ‘to bring’ becomes ‘to yield’. The sense of completion also often refers to death. ‘To squeeze’ (*drücken*) becomes ‘to squeeze to death’. James Shannon Blackwell’s 1888 English language study of German prefixes and suffixes draws this sense of consummation from what he views as the prefix’s most primitive sense of ‘from within out’. In this understanding, consummation or achievement is understood from something like an ‘immanent cause’ (the ‘cause’ in this case being the limit or delimiting). The sense of *er-* as ‘from within out’ is derived from the proto-Germanic root **uz-* (‘up, out’). This is found in words that bespeak a certain autopoietic quality and suggest the ‘natural’, such as *ersprießen* (‘to sprout, spring up’) or *erwachsen* (‘to grow, mature’). The proto-Germanic **uz-* also links *er-* to *ur-*, which in Old High German could mean ‘thoroughly’, connecting it to the sense of consummateness in *er-*.

It could be said then that *er-* is linked to Heidegger’s understanding of *physis* in at least three ways: its sense of consummateness or completion; its derivation from a sense of growth or self-movement in **uz-*,⁹⁷ and the link this suggests to *ur-*, providing a sense of the primitive. The primordial dimension of *physis* becomes the generic and reduced dimension of *Ereignis*. Analysis of the prefix *er-* further supports the argument that, for Heidegger, *Ereignis* is a transmuted sense of *physis* or *phúō* in such a way as to precede it (‘precede Nature’). Heidegger has always attempted to think *physis* as a movement out of itself that immediately returns to itself (completes itself) without regard for entities. In order to do this, he is forced to pass through metaphysical logic, where this movement only occurs on the basis of entities (their totality), in order to arrive at *Ereignis* as the indivisible.

Yet the term *Ereignis* is generally taken in the scholarship to signify something like the ‘event’ of an entity’s ‘autodisclosure’, appropriation as the seizure

⁹⁶ The full definition in German reads: “drückt in Bildungen mit Verben aus, dass etw. erfolgreich abgeschlossen wird, zum gewünschten Erfolg führt, dass man eine Sache bekommt, erreicht”.

⁹⁷ The self-sustaining aspect of *physis* that is emphasized in metaphysical thought, if it remains in *Ereignis*, is minimized beyond recognition in terms of Heidegger’s understanding of technical self-sufficiency.

of the possible into appearance (be it full presence or presence-absence). An event of appropriation or disclosure, however, need not refer to an entity, but could be taken in-itself as well. It was mentioned above that Thomas Sheehan traces such an interpretation to Heidegger’s 1928 Marburg course on Aristotle. Movement (*kinēsis*) seizes upon what is dynamic (*dynamis*) in the occurrence of autodisclosure. Though this interpretative trajectory supports the tie between *physis* and *Ereignis*, there is no reason to believe that Heidegger would keep his development of *Ereignis* so bound to the metaphysical sense of *physis*, which is to say, to the disclosure of entities. Sheehan’s interpretation is, however, supported where the prefix *er-*’s sense of achievement passes into the sense of ‘coming into a state’ (Blackwell). The dynamic (*Eignung*) appears when it is seized or appropriated (*Ereignung*).

Referring *Ereignis* etymologically to the now defunct verb *eräugnen*, as Heidegger does on several occasions, moves Sheehan’s sense of ‘autodisclosure’ towards the understanding of *Ereignis* being developed here (GA 12, 249, 253fn.; GA 79, 125). Definitions for *eräugnen* can be found in Grimm. The verb means as much as ‘to appear’, ‘to manifest’. Like the verb *ereignen* (‘to occur’), *eräugnen* takes this meaning only in the reflexive. Non-reflexive understandings of these terms bring them closer to the central motifs of difference. Grimm is the only source for non-reflexive characterizations of these terms, which are given by way of Latin correlates: *contigō* and *accido*. *Contigō* is similar to the English ‘contiguous’ and means ‘to touch on all sides’, ‘to seize’, ‘to extend to’, or ‘to befall’. *Accido* means ‘to begin to cut into’, ‘to cut’ and ‘to fall upon’, ‘to befall’. Such terms are in line with the motifs surrounding a notion of difference (*Unterschied*) formed by Heidegger’s idiomatic understanding of *Abschied* and *Untergang*. The most primary or primitive sense of *eräugnen*, and by extension *Ereignis*, is the sense of occurrence (‘to befall’) as a cut, intervention, delimitation, which at the same time ‘contains’ (or moves inward) with some sense of contiguity or coherence. Speaking of *Ereignis* as ‘autodisclosure’ could thus only refer to the manifold movement associated with the topological matrix. Though it should be clarified that retaining the term ‘autodisclosure’ would refer sooner to an experience of ecological (or topological) awareness than to any particular entity or truth configuration. That an inward passage ‘unfolds’ (*erwest*), of course, sets the motif of unfolding in an extreme tension with that of consummation. Time has been referred to as the *medium* of presence’s passage. Time is not the passage of presence itself, though it seems that the coherence of time (itself delimitation) is what allows for this passage.

Enstasis appears to be Heidegger’s term in the *Anfang* workbooks – though it is used only in passing – for the consummate and ‘inward’ nature of time and, as such, it indicates the possibility of the *ecstasy* with which Heidegger

initially sought to bring *Dasein* outside of both itself, in the sense of the individuated ego or I-think, and the present ‘now’ in time. *Enstasis* is thus related to the preemptive delimitation of/by death that would make *ekstasis* possible. The ecstatic nature of *Dasein*, its ‘being among beings’, could now be viewed as its being-between them, between and out of sync with the temporal progression of a chronological time in which entities in their totality are becoming and passing away. *Dasein*’s ecstatic nature might therefore be understood from or as a configuration of presence and absence, wherein the formal, individual presence of entities is ‘given over’ to the configuration as a finite whole. Various aspects of the chronological congeal or cohere in a sort of *chorological articulation of Nature*. This is the *logos*-monologue. *Enstasis* characterizes the time *between* chronological or striated development. It is in tension with the technical time that is the progression and accumulation of technical knowledge, simultaneously a march forward and a securing of the past (memory).

The use of the word ‘chorology’ here is intended as a clear pun on the Greek terms *khōra* and *khorós*, though its use is not arbitrary. Chorology is generally a geographical term concerned with space and does not link etymologically to the musical term ‘chorus’. Chorology derives from *khōra* (‘space, place, location, region, estate, land, country’), mentioned above as a Platonic term for ‘space’ that Aristotle does *not* identify with *topos*. Chorus derives from *khorós* (‘round dance, dancing-place, choir’). *Khorós* thus relates directly to the ‘round dance’ Heidegger uses to describe the appropriative movement of the topological matrix (*Vereignung*). There is a sense of communiting, figured also in the notion of the thing as a negotiation, evidenced in Heidegger’s relating of this to shared drink and libation. *Khorós* also contains the sense ‘thanking’ that Heidegger elsewhere wishes to associate with ‘thinking’ (via the shared etymology of *denken* and *danken*). While there is no etymological link between *khōra* and *khorós*, Beekes’ *Etymological Dictionary of Greek* does note that *khorós* has been considered as a cognate with *khórtos* (‘enclosure, court, feed-place or pasture’) by way of the Sanskrit *háratí* (‘to bring, carry’; Heidegger’s *Austrag*) and the PIE root *ǵʰer- (“seize, catch”). This suggests, at the least, a potential semantic overlap. Beekes also mentions an uncertain link for *khōra* to the PIE root *ǵʰeh₁- (‘to leave behind’, ‘zurücklassen’) and thus to *Abschied*. The point here is that what Heidegger refers to as a ‘topology’ might be understood from the sense of ‘chorology’ arising from the preceding speculation. *Topos* can be understood from the overlap of *khōra* and *khorós* and perhaps even the ‘substitution’ of the former by the latter.

In terms of what has been said, and in working towards a conclusion here, it is worth examining the link between *enstasis* and *Inständigkeit*. It has been suggested above that the latter term, *Inständigkeit*, indicates a transmutation

of *energeia*, itself the metaphysical term unifying the ontological difference (Section 1.4). In Greek, *enstasis* has a number of meanings.⁹⁸ Most important here, however, is the construction of the word itself. The Greek original is formed of *en* ('in') and *histēmi* ('to stand'). This clearly ties it to Heidegger's use of the German terms *inständig* and *Inständigkeit*, which have nearly the same basic construction and refer to a 'standing in' or 'in-standing'. *Inständigkeit* and its corresponding adjectives are important qualifiers of topological motifs in Heidegger's late thinking. In standard use, *inständig* refers to something like an urgency, *Inständigkeit* to the urgent nature of something. *Inständigkeit* might therefore serve as a qualifier for 'thinking' as an activity that bespeaks the exigency and 'primitivity' of the relation or entanglement of humankind and *physis* (the *Inständigkeit des Daseins*). The motif of utility also returns transmuted in *Inständigkeit*. Yet Duden also defines it as *Beschaffenheit*, constitutedness or conditionedness, being-constituted.⁹⁹ Urgency and consummateness seem linked. Grimm similarly refers to its sense of 'perseverant or persistent' (*beharrlich*), 'standing-in' (*inne stehend*) in the sense of 'consisting in being achieved or accomplished' (*zustande bestehend*). What is exigent in thought is the indivisibility (and invisibility?) of standing-in.

Inständigkeit, constructed in a manner nearly identical to *enstasis*, can now be read as transmuting *energeia* on the basis of 'topological time'. It is essential to note that a term that also seems to indicate or direct thinking is a transmutation of what, for Heidegger, is the highest metaphysical articulation of *physis*. This highest metaphysical articulation of *physis*, *energeia*, has been characterized as a standing-in-itself and having-its-self-within-its-end. Heidegger's attempts to transmute *energeia* and *physis* – which returns to itself in its emergence – treat *Unterschied*, 'difference', in this very sense, namely, as an isolation *in* delimitation, as indivisible and selfsame, as leading thought to *Inständigkeit*. Difference is thought as a departure (*Abschied*) that is at once a passage inward (*Unterschied*). The worlds and their entities are thought only secondarily, if at all, as something possible *with* or *as* difference or *physis*. To the extent that *enstasis* is understood as 'self-completion' – standing-in-itself as the completion of self, delimitation as the *same* – it can be said that *Untergang*, as partial descriptor of the 'movement' of *Unterschied*, indicates a coherence *in* time through which or with which time completes itself as the

⁹⁸ A few can be enumerated to suggest their correspondence with the motifs raised throughout this chapter. *Enstasis* is a beginning, particularly the institution of a law or heir. It is a way of life (*bios*). It is also the interference of an object of vision.

⁹⁹ The word *Beschaffenheit* itself stands in a synonym group with Nature (*Natur*) and *physis* (*Physis*) (DWDS).

playing out of intervention. *Inständigkeit* transmutes *ergeia* as the exigency of delimitation that remains within it. The exigency of thought is linked to consummateness as primitive, as what is not developed from, caused by, or dependent upon something else.

It might be said then that *Dasein*, as the subsequent playing out of delimitation (*Nachspiel*), is simply the possibility that truth, as a configuration of presence and absence, be considered at all (GA 70, 31).¹⁰⁰ *Dasein* is a coherence of topological time. In terms of humankind, its relation to, its taking on of, or its 'being' *Dasein* begins as its 'standing-in' an already consummate 'death'. It is, or would be, through this consummate death that humankind comes to abide by (in) or tarry with Nature's generic delimitation and thus in the intimacy of a coherent time. Perhaps the most radical formulation or possibility of this is to say that the determination of humankind is or can be *resolved* in an ecological awareness that is 'selfsame' with a coherence of time – humankind is repeatedly (*re-* as repetition and/or intensification) 'made available' (*solvō* as a 'loosening' or 'releasing') to delimitation.

Heidegger has therefore moved *Abschied* and the solitude it constitutes into a cluster of terms and motifs, among which the distinctions become difficult to see. These terms include *Abschied* and *Untergang*, concealing, unicity, and all these in relation to *Ereignis* as delimitation. In terms of *Dasein*, humankind, individuation, and death, the suspension of delimitation may be taken as another attempt to develop a non-chronological temporal schema around simultaneity or equal-time. *Abschied* is the 'ground'; Heidegger says, for *Ereignis* having no relation to the coming and going of entities, the processual nature of the world (GA 70, 29). Heidegger's own italics (*Untergang* and *Abschied*) indicate that what is important in these two terms are what they develop of the 'intra' or 'inter' in relation to delimitation itself. Taken together they move towards something like the individuation of the same, or *self*, apart from the language of the metaphysics of the subject – the 'same' of a coherence of enstatic time. Perhaps this is the individuation of the topological or ecological subject understood as the selfsameness of a truth configuration with itself.

Could a 'human subject' be spoken of here? If so, it would be a 'subject' forged of nature's self-intervention, the production of the anonymous within a nature that strives to know itself in its technical capacity and particularity. Sequestration individuates the anonymous *as* anonymous. Nature's anonymity can be considered a by-product or necessary companion of its technical capacity and Heidegger seeks to locate humankind within this anonymous remainder. A humankind subject to delimitation, to the round dance of appropriation,

¹⁰⁰ See the end of the subsection "How Many Beginnings (Preliminaries)".

does not correspond to itself absolutely, nor does a Nature which is ‘complete’ only in finite intervention. The ‘pain’ which Heidegger sometimes associates with difference is the pain of sequestration, the pain of a humankind and Nature that never fully coincide with themselves.¹⁰¹ The closer the question of humankind is drawn to delimitation as such, the more humankind looks like an anomaly of Nature, as if the occurrence of humankind would be nothing more than Nature’s self-intervention.¹⁰² Recall then, what Hölderlin has said about the impossibility of an originary grounds for Nature. The lack of grounds is due to the ‘just and equal division of capacity’. Nature ‘appears’ as =o. Is it the case, then, that each ‘individual’ human is nothing more than the ‘same’ delimitation of Nature?

While what is said here may not capture the entirety of Heidegger’s notion of difference in its final analysis, it nonetheless raises important aspects of it as they relate to the question of *Ereignis* and a topological orientation to thinking. Difference concerns the isolation of delimitation and directs thought toward this intervention, through a long string of qualifiers that have been named (*Abschied*, *Untergang*, *Enstasis*, etc.). The basic path of Heidegger’s analysis can be reiterated as follows: Metaphysical difference, the ontological difference, reveals its constant as the ‘presentedness of empty presentation’, a phrase which ultimately serves as a metonym for *energeia*. An elaboration of the interplay between *Abschied* and *Untergang* serves to articulate the transmutation of *energeia* to *Inständigkeit*. The departure from entities leads into the division, the interruption that is *Ereignis*. The exigency of thought thinks delimitation as indivisible and is ‘manifest’ as ecological awareness. Such thinking is topological and chorological.

3.4 Prolegomatics for (Topological?) Orientation (Practice?)

Heidegger’s attempts to take up a non-metaphysical mode of human practice or thought see him continuing to work ‘in’ the problematic of entanglement, now guided by the question of *topos* as intervention (delimitation) within *physis*. This is to say that a non-metaphysical thinking or orientation would not attempt to *solve* the philosophical entanglements present in humankind’s

¹⁰¹ There is a relation to Hölderlin again to be considered here. Françoise Dasture, “Hölderlin and the Orientalisation of Greece” in *Pli* 10 (2000), p. 164.

¹⁰² Though even here the danger of arrogance lurks. Even this anonymous, ecological incidence now being suggestively associated with humankind tends in the direction of a certain privileging of humankind ‘within’ Nature. For why would humankind alone receive the ‘distinction’ of being an anomaly of Nature?

entanglement in various ‘aspects’ of Nature (*physis-technē*, *physis-logos*, etc.), but rather treat them as what is exigent for thought. Entanglement was briefly raised in Section 3.2 in the etymological ties Heidegger draws upon between *bauen* (‘building’) and *phúō*. Heidegger’s etymological musings on *bauen* in “BWD” contain not the infinitive ‘to be’, but its conjugations, ‘I am’, ‘you are’ (*ich bin, du bist*) (VA 141). For the mortal, this metaphysical sense of ‘existing’ can be transmuted to capacity for (‘it is able’) and that, with humankind, capacity is taken in direct relation to death or nothing, betraying humankind’s position or lack thereof within the topological matrix. Whereas the entanglement of the metaphysical human has played out according to the optic imperative, making the human a creature of revealing and making-intelligible, the building and dwelling of the mortal appears to be determined by concealing or harboring. Such (non)‘being’ of the mortal occurs by way of a ‘familiar experience’ ‘upon the earth’ and passes into a dwelling upon the earth. Like the *Bergen* (harbor-ing) of the earth (absence), dwelling is a ‘sparing’ (or ‘protecting’, ‘caring for’, *schonen*). The building and dwelling of humankind appears to be thought by Heidegger, additionally, in conjunction with the ‘yieldedness’ that lets presence be in its autonomy.

In “BWD” Heidegger characterizes building/dwelling dually with the terms *pflegen* and *errichten* and refers both to their Latin predecessors. *Pflegen* means ‘to care for, cultivate, nurture’. It is qualified by the Latin *colere*, *colō*, which means ‘to till’, ‘to cultivate’, ‘to protect’. Heidegger could refer this cultivation and protecting to the ‘filtering’ of *topos* via *colum* (‘to strain’) and *colon* (‘to purify’). He can also refer it to rather surprising Greek cognates, two of which – *pelō*, *pelomai*¹⁰³ (‘to move, to be in motion’) and *telos* (fulfillment, consummation, end) – together reiterate his identification of end with beginning, as that which sets in motion. At the same time, *bauen* is an *errichten*, an ‘establishing’ or ‘erecting’ of the ‘built thing’ (‘structure’, *Bauten*). The qualification here comes by way of *aedicare*, which means ‘to build, establish, or frame’ (VA 141).

Two things can be noted about the qualification of ‘cultivation’ and ‘nurturing’ with ‘erecting’ and ‘establishing’. The first would be that it appears to account for some technical aspect of building/dwelling. Heidegger does not shy away here from reintroducing senses of constructing, framing, and structuring into

¹⁰³ This comes through the reconstruction of the Indo-European root *k^wel (‘to turn about’) which includes *colō*, *polēmai*, and the Sanskrit *cáraṭi* (‘moves, goes’) and *caraitī* (moves, resides, lingers). The present reconstruction contains *peri-téllomai* (‘I move in circles, cyclically’) as well as the Cymric *pall* (‘to end’). Rix, *Lexikon der Indogermanischen Verben*, 386.

the question of human activity.¹⁰⁴ At the same time, he appears to be speaking of some sort of housing or structure – the essay "BWD" makes references to a contemporaneous 'housing crisis' in West Germany – when he raises the issues of *topos* as a *Bauten* that is 'produced' or 'brought forth'. This reference occurs immediately following the introduction of *peras* as what defines *topos*. It also recalls the self-sufficiency (*Insichstehen*) of *topos* in "Das Ding", though it seems that could also be easily referred to the delimitation, for nothing would stand in itself without being delimited (VA 159). Heidegger's enriched cultivation and establishment are mostly foils to be subsumed in their transformation, though none of the senses given above are necessarily made void. The two transformations of these terms can be viewed as what qualifies them as 'poetic', i.e., concerning the human.

By the end of the essay, Heidegger's language here will have shifted twice and in such a way as to become more 'topologically' indicative, more oriented by delimitation. Cultivation is first transformed into a 'letting occur' (*zulassen*), while *errichten* (establishing) becomes *einrichten* ('to establish; but also 'to adapt') which, while still containing a sense of establishing or arranging, now emphasizes a movement inward, a uniqueness or singular course found in the prefix *ein-*. 'Establishing' is therefore brought into proximity with the sense of 'permissiveness' found in Heidegger's word for 'space', *einräumen* (VA 153). This is immediately followed by a final transformation or qualification that appears to be the definitive characterization of human building/dwelling. 'Letting occur' and 'letting in' become, respectively, the inducting (*Stiften*)¹⁰⁵ and joining (*Flügen*) of spaces (*Räume*). Here the inducting and joining pre-empts the 'poetic' building/dwelling that Heidegger will develop in "DwdM," while 'spaces' must be thought from proximities 'produced' in the topological matrix.

The remainder of this chapter will attempt to sketch the ways and implications of Heidegger's attempts to think a 'yielded' human action. This 'yieldedness' concerns less a mere surrender or relinquishment than it does a certain 'check' on the production of technical knowledge. Thought comports to Nature's self-intervention or disruption, towards what remains out or in

¹⁰⁴ And in doing so perhaps Heidegger prepares or suggests the relationship between technical and non-technical human activity, raised at the end of Chapter 2, as it would be viewed from the topological or chorological perspective.

¹⁰⁵ The verb 'induct' is explicitly chosen here for its links to the induction of Aristotle's *epagōgē* and the transformation it undergoes when Heidegger thinks the 'poetic' comportment of humankind to *topos*. The significance of the word *stiften* in Heidegger concerns its place in the final line of Hölderlin's *Andenken: was bleibt aber, stiftet die Dichter* ('yet what would remain, the poets found').

excess of every moment in which Nature attempts to reintegrate its universal. In this sense, thought harbors or ‘protects’ the ‘real’ – the ‘negotiative’ or chorological *res* – from the infinite repetition of binary formalization. Heidegger’s notions of inducting and joining of spaces will continue to develop the motifs of ‘inwardness’ and ‘immanence’ thought from ‘letting’ and found prominently in his notion of ‘difference’. Any sense of individuation or sequestration that arises from or with this inducting and joining of spaces will have to consider the obliteration of chronological time as a measure of occurrence and the significance of this for what Heidegger means by ‘space’. It will be suggested that the generality expressed in human action is non-knowledge or a pre-emptive renunciation of technical knowledge’s certainty.

Poetic Measure I

Heidegger speaks of the inducting and joining of proximities as a poetic metric or measure-taking. The ‘poetic’ that has guided the above lexical transformations or qualifications serves to qualify ‘measure’ here as well. It distinguishes cultivation and construction from mere toil. Metaphysical man, the ‘employee’ of technic, toils for the abstract. The (poetic) human does not, at least not primarily. That human acting is distinguished as ‘poetic’ Heidegger takes from Hölderlin’s *In lieblicher Bläue* in “DwdM” (VA 193). This qualification *removes human action from the realm of ‘merit’ (voll Verdienst)*. Humankind’s yieldedness (*wohnen lassen*) does not ‘toil’ after gain, but rather offers itself to the transitivity of presence (and absence) borne to humankind by time (VA 183, 188). As will be seen by the end of this section, this means that human activity (and humankind itself) is withdrawn from the realm of ontology and ontological register, so long as ontology indicates the accessible registration of knowledge according to the optic imperative. Thus, apparently against Heidegger, it might be said that as the World is emitted or discharged from *topos* and let go, the human withdraws from the World.

What human activity occurs in relation to or, better said, correspondence to is delimitation/*topos*. The term for *topos* in “DwdM” is dimension. Its basic description echoes that of the generic or ‘universal’ *topos* of Aristotle (*Physics* 212a2of.). It is the span of and between the supreme above and the supreme below. What for Aristotle is the revolving heavens and the center of the universe is for Heidegger the heavens and earth, the ‘extremes’ of presence and absence. The human’s relationship to the dimension comes by way of a reverent gazing (*aufschauen*) (VA 189). Heidegger’s appropriation of this verb from Hölderlin appears to indicate the ‘yielded’ quality of humankind’s comportment towards time and presence as *reverence*. It also appears to indicate the potential conflation of human comportment with the active dimension of *topos*. Like the

thing or bridge, the ‘looking up’ (*aufschauen*) of humankind turns presence and absence toward each other *in time*.¹⁰⁶ In this way the human ‘spans’ or measures-through (*durchmessen*) the dimension.

Heidegger situates a sort of primal measuring in the spanning of the dimension. It is a poetic measure from which all metaphysical forms of measure would spring. Humankind is said to have its own metric, one that is doubtless intrinsic to its ability to die. Humankind, like ‘everything else’, comes and goes according to the time apportioned (*zugemessen*) to it (GA 14, 6-7). The ability to die or enable death has already placed humankind in a distinguished relationship to the emptiness or nothing of *topos*. If humankind ‘dwells’ upon the earth in a certain closeness to concealing, this would be another justification within the Heideggerian context to place the wellspring of metaphysical or technical measure in the same proximity to human action, for it has been seen throughout Heidegger’s work that the technical registering of presence occurs from or upon the abyss, a lack of grounds. Humankind’s potential yieldedness and/or self-withdrawal are thereby a fitting sort of medium for *ur*-measure.

This conjecture is only strengthened by Heidegger’s hyphenated use of measure (*Maß-nahme*). Measure is a ‘measure-taking’ or ‘taking-measure’ (*Maß-nehmen*). It appears that Heidegger wishes to say that poetic measure takes in the dimension. Note that if the hyphenation’s emphasis is on ‘taking’ (*nehmen*), then ‘measure-taking’ might be viewed as a transformation of perception (*vernehmen*). Heidegger does qualify this as a ‘beholding’ (*erblicken*) and assessing (*ermessen*) of the dimension (VA 192). Terms such as these suggest that the dimension itself (*Maß*) is not of humankind’s making, but of the intervention of *Ereignis*. The *Maß* or measure thus appears to be the indivisible whole begotten by *Ereignis*, the ‘lightning strike’ to which ‘beholding’ would correspond. It is nevertheless particularly suited to the question of humankind as the =o. This would equate the primal condition of human action with the taking-on or taking-in (or entering) of happenstance (*Ereignete*), itself the indivisible whole associated with delimitation.

It is perhaps only in the ‘duct’ of inducting that the taking-in of the dimension would say anything about humankind’s prospective inducting and joining. The verb *dichten* – the activity of poeticizing – may have something to say to this, if it is understood outside of what might be the most immediately recognizable sense of what poetry is. The verb *dichten* also refers to sealant and sealing. A *Dichtung* is a device for sealing off a junction such as a gasket. *Dichten* therefore means to seal something off as much as it means to make opaque.

¹⁰⁶ Commenting on the *unter* of *Untergang*, Heidegger remarks that it be taken as ‘hinauf’ (up) into the harboring (*Bergung*) (GA 70, 84).

The notion of inducting and joining as making-opaque, at least in part, would appear to correspond to the ‘immanent course’ of difference, the sequestration (individuation) occurring with division/intervention. Sealing something off – a hermetic activity that calls for a naturalized hermeneutics – draws it away from the standard measure produced by technic. *Dichten* might also link the ‘counter-twisting’ (*Verwindung*) considered at the end of Chapter 2 to the disruption of the universal considered in the preceding discussion of difference. Sealing or making-opaque would then be another way of speaking of the disruption of technic’s universal motion. In continual disruption, in ‘constantly’ delimiting, it prevents the universal or absolute from ever materializing. It is true that the two senses of *dichten* do not correspond etymologically and that what is presented here is a false or folk-etymology.¹⁰⁷ Yet Heidegger is not averse to using figural language and etymologies, and shuns false etymologies only when it suits him. In this case it seems plausible to think Heidegger entertained such a ‘coincidence’ in language.

This does not, however, yet provide an answer to the question of ‘what’ is joined in poetic measuring and ‘in what way’.¹⁰⁸ There is not necessarily a definitive answer to be found in Heidegger’s text. One possibility has been problematized in the previous section’s discussion of *Untergang*. In joining, humankind joins one immanent course to another, negotiating this jointure in a neighborliness befitting the establishment of a society of *Dichter*. This joining occurs in the way of the You-I form of a poem’s intelligibility, a form which bespeaks ‘uniqueness’ (the uniqueness each time of the You-I) that is not ‘one’s own’, but rather requires and *is* both ‘positions’. The sole example DWDS gives for the figurative use of *dichten* is drawn from Lion Feuchtwanger’s *Narrenweisheit*: “[...] the silent understanding between them ‘thickened’ (*dichtete sich*).” This is taken to mean ‘became more narrow or tight, intimate’.¹⁰⁹ It is the silent agreement ‘become poem’.¹¹⁰ *Dichtungen*, underway, would have to speak for themselves in such joining negotiations, since the human individual, if it is possible to speak of such a thing here, bereft of a recognizable register, would remain withdrawn in silence.

¹⁰⁷ *Dichten* in the sense of poetic composition traces back to the Latin *dictare*, while *dichten* in the sense of ‘sealing’ traces back to the Proto-Germanic root *þinhtaz (‘tight’).

¹⁰⁸ The reference here is to Heidegger’s question in the addendum to “Der Ursprung des Kunstwerkes” regarding the human relationship to *thesis*. He speaks there of an undeterminable but determinable question concerning ‘who’ does the setting and ‘in what way’ (GA 5, 74). See below.

¹⁰⁹ <https://www.dwds.de/wb/dichten> [11 November 2019].

¹¹⁰ The narrowing here speaks also to the figures of rivers considered in the previous section.

But perhaps asking ‘what’ is joined is the wrong question. *Dichten* (‘thickening’, ‘becoming dense’), taken in the relation to the *Gedicht* (the collection or consummation of this) could only refer to an immanent path that receives. Nothing is ‘joined’ per se, but rather in yielding (*sich fügen*) to delimitation, it is possible that presence too belongs continuously to this immanent path (*Untergang*). The constancy of presence belongs to or ‘relies upon’ Nature as infinite disruption. This interpretation could refer to the speculative translation of *stiften* with induct as a transmuted sense of Aristotle’s *epagōgē*. Recall that Aristotle’s term refers to how *physis* is known or knows itself. Nature knows itself in the intimacy of its disruption. In this case it might be said that *stiften*, as induction, concerns a writing or legibility that knowingly abstains from the technical dimension of certainty, taking up instead the general structure of anonymous complexity found in sequestration. The degree to which consummation is implied in the figure of the ‘dimension’ must also be recognized here. The ‘sealing’ of human activity could refer to another possible sense of the inward course (*Untergang*), namely that the course moves inward from the point of consummation. Human activity would then be a sort of consolidation of *physis*’s self-intervention after the fact. Either interpretative direction would have to take up the transmutation of ‘space’ as proximity. What occurs as space is proximity. Perhaps poetic measure taking is not really a joining, but rather a proximating.

Proximity and Knowing

“The coolness of last autumn is still present to me”

– The Sage (GA 77, 4)

The Bremen lectures, “Das Ding”, “BWD”, among other essays of the 1940s and 1950s, all recast the problem of technical mediation as the immediacy of technic which has ‘destroyed’ any sense of ‘remoteness’ (*Ferne*) and proximity (*Nähe*) – proximity being the determining motif here – in the measuring of time and space. In attempting to refigure the orientation of thought and restore some sense of remoteness and proximity, Heidegger wants to suggest that human activity, its metric, is offered to the intervention of *Ereignis*. The transmutation of ‘space’ in his work is directly associated with the production of happenstance (*Vereignung*) which occurs according to or along with this intervention. Space becomes proximity or what is proximate (*Nähe*). The term *Nähe* marks one of the strangest of motifs running through Heidegger’s late writings. It is at once a transformed ‘epistemological’ concept (it concerns what is or can be ‘known’ or thought) and a notion of ‘physical’ space.

Heidegger's attempts to restore 'nearness' – the intimacy or immanence of the proximal – to thinking always concern topological motifs. The active dimension of the thing, found in its emptiness or capacity for death, is called a 'making near', 'nearing', or 'proximating' ('approximating', *nähern*). In the discussion of space and time in "Das Wesen der Sprache", too, the 'activity' of the topological matrix is at work. The mirroring language of the thing is spoken of as an 'over and against one another' (*gegen-einander-über*) in which 'each' conceals itself in being 'for' the other (GA 12, 200f.). In this context, time is the medium of appearance (*zeitigen*), while space is spoken of as the letting in of, or according to, delimitation (*einräumen*). The elements of the matrix, borne by time-space, do not stand on their own, but rather follow from or belong to *Ereignis*'s delimiting (GA 12, 199).

In referring space to the active topological dimension developed throughout his later work, Heidegger ties space as proximity to the 'production' of something unique and proper to itself. This makes *nähern* or proximating a metonym for the language of *Ereignis* (*Vereignung*, *Enteignung*). It would appear that the classical, measurable understanding of space has given way almost entirely to an unfolding or production of proximities as configurations of presence and absence. The proximate would be a configuration of partial presence and absence according to or borne out by time. This is again a motif in Heidegger's later thought with strong affinities to what has been developed as *Gestell*, but now qualified in some way by time. It appears that human thought is or should no longer be concerned with or directed at formal presence, but, if anything, with the transit (the passage) of such proximities. Heidegger refers the relation of time as 'letting appear' and space as 'letting in' to 'vicinity' or 'neighborliness' (*Nachbarschaft*). The human itself is the 'neighbor', the one that builds/dwells *in* nearness or proximity (the *Nachgebauer*) (VA 140). The proximate becomes an epistemological issue insofar as it is 'what approaches' according to delimitation, as it refers to some intelligible realm of what is immanent according to delimitation.

In an experimental text first composed in 1944/45 – titled "Αγχίβασιν"¹¹¹ and later published in abbreviated form as *Zur Erörterung der Gelassenheit* –, Heidegger stages a conversation between three people (a scholar, physicist, and 'sage'). The conversation is conceived around epistemological concerns taken from a Kantian framework¹¹² and evolves into (or is resolved in) a discussion of an obscure Heraclitus fragment (122). *Topos* is discussed in this

¹¹¹ The full title reads "Αγχίβασιν: Ein Gespräch selbdritt auf einem Feldweg zwischen einem Forscher, einem Gelehrten und einem Weisen".

¹¹² It is a matter of what 'escapes' the Kantian notions of *Anschauung* and *Denken*.

text as ‘region’ (*Gegend*) with Heidegger adapting the term *Gegnet* (sic) to perform the role of *Ereignis*’s intervention. This conversation also contains a discussion of the thing as jug nearly identical to that in “Das Ding”. The text eventually develops the question of thought as yieldedness (*Gelassenheit* and Non-Will, *Nicht-Wollen*) and ends upon the one word fragment: “Αγχιβασιη (ankhibasiē)”. The scholar first translates the term as ‘approach’ or ‘attack’ (*Herangehen*). Diels-Kranz offers the translation *Annäherung*, which can be taken as ‘approach’ or ‘coming near’. *Annäherung* can also be taken in relation to the ‘appropriative’ lexicon of *Ereignis*. When *Annäherung* is understood as ‘coming into agreement’, this can be referred to Heidegger’s descriptions of the mirroring or mixing of a topological matrix. The word itself – which appears to be a neologism of Heraclitus’s making – breaks down to *ankhi* (‘near’ in time and space, but also in the sense of resemblance) and *baínō* (‘to go, to step’). *Ankhi* derives from *ankhō* (‘to compress, press tight’), thereby linking it to *topos* and *dichten*. The translation settled upon by Heidegger’s three characters is ‘to enter or go into proximity’ (*In-die-Nähe-gehen*) (GA 77 155-157).

What could entering or going into proximity mean? Here again the questions of an internal course, an immanence or immanent relation to scissioning, are raised in relation to delimitation. Is proximity something ‘produced’ or begotten within the delimitation of *topos*, or does ‘entering’ this mean the same as humankind’s self-concealing in giving itself to proximity as ‘happenstance’ and ‘gift’? If proximity were what is produced, *das Ereignete*, then Heidegger’s transmuted sense of space would be directly allied to, perhaps interchangeable with, a discharged world. The discussion ends in a series of rather cryptic one-liners from its participants. The penultimate line refers to the arrival of transitive presence/absence as ‘where’ (“dorthin” – Heidegger’s italics) the active dimension of humankind (its ‘essence’) remains ‘appropriated’ (“vereignet” – Heidegger’s italics) (GA 77, 157). It is therefore unlikely that Heidegger is thinking proximity as a metonym or synonym for world, for the happenstance produced by delimitation/in the matrix. Proximity is rather allied to the movement of this production and thereby the moment of delimitation itself. *Nähe* is a nexus for the various terms that describe the movement of the topological matrix in relation to presence – *Vereignung*, *einräumen*, *nähren*. Proximity is the link between a world as discharged from the matrix and the World’s limit.

Proximity conceals itself, Heidegger says. Its modality is that of *remaining* what is *next* (*am nächsten*). In this way, it is always what is near (VA 170). The most obvious sense of proximity is that it is the opposite of exactness. As the matrix (or delimitation) ‘produces’ a unique world that is each time discharged, the exactness of knowable entities is ‘checked’ by the *expropriative dimension* of this production. The strangeness of Heidegger’s transmuted

sense of space will be further considered over the next two subsections, which will continue to explore its relation to both humankind and what is ‘produced’ by delimitation.

Topos as Four Dimensional Time

Heidegger’s 1962 essay “Zeit und Sein” develops his notion of *topos* as four-dimensional time, namely as the fourth, consummating dimension of time, which he also names proximity (GA 14, 20). The essay and accompanying seminar appear to have been Heidegger’s attempt to account for the central themes of his late work by referring them back to his initial questioning: the question of Being raised in terms of Time. In “Zeit und Sein” this becomes a matter of the ‘giving’ of presence and time as thought or experienced from *Ereignis*. What appears as a purely reciprocal relation between presence and time in their givenness – and Heidegger himself seems to fall prey to this ‘appearance’ at times – unfolds in such a manner that time determines presence *always*, whereas presence is determinative (and/or determined) only for *a* time.¹¹³

The questions of presence and time are explicitly addressed to humankind throughout the essay. *Uns* (‘us’) is used in the dative throughout. Humankind is the constant ‘object’ or recipient of time’s sending of presence. This is referred to as a sort of transitive endurance or enduring transit (*An-wählen*). Humankind is immanent to (*innestehend*) the transit of presence (*in Angang von Anwesenheit*) (GA 14, 28). This role of receiver, which is not necessarily a determination (in the sense of definitional essence), accentuates the potential conflation of humankind with *topos* itself – both appear to ‘receive’ presence in some way. Thus at the center of the essay Heidegger is able to pose the qualified question: “Who are we? We remain cautious in our answer.” This and the remaining vignettes of this section will, with caution, explore this question and conflation.

In the passages concerning the giving of presence, there appears to be a definitive rethinking of what is meant by *Seinsgeschichte* (‘history, occurrence, or sending of being/presence’). The giving of presence is thought from the intervention of *Ereignis* as it delimits the ‘space’ that would ‘receive’ presence. The word giving here means as much as ‘sending’ (*schicken*). In this sending the ‘it’ (*es*) that sends ‘holds to itself’ (*an sich halten*) together with the sending,

¹¹³ In fact, in the accompanying seminar, Heidegger refers to the figures of the ‘gift’ and ‘reaching’ as occurrences or processes of time (*Vorgänge der Zeit*) (GA 14, 60).

distinguishing both the *it* and its sending from what is sent. This ‘holding to itself’ is referred to the Greek *epochē* (‘check, cessation’). The *epochē* is a fundamental trait of *Ereignis* wherein it makes possible the perception or reception of the gift (of presence), i.e., allows humankind to receive the dimension (*Mafß*) as delimited (GA 14, 13). This can be nothing more than the withdrawal of *Ereignis*, its being nothing present nor absent, in its determining or delimiting intervention. The Greek sense of *epochē* as a check or cessation would agree with previous considerations of delimitation here, and particularly the =o.¹¹⁴

It should be noted that Heidegger’s use of *epochē* corresponds more or less directly to the construction of ‘es gibt’. *Epochē* is constructed from *epi* (‘on, upon’) and *ekhō* (‘to have or hold’). In the seminar protocol Heidegger draws upon the French phrase *il y a* (‘there is’) which – *y* is ‘there’ and *a* is *avoir* (‘to have’) – can be taken literally as ‘to have there’ or ‘it has there’. Heidegger compares this with the south German colloquialism ‘it has’ (*es hat*), which appears to mean as much as ‘there is (there/here)’ (GA 14, 49).¹¹⁵ Heidegger’s use of *es gibt* – if there were a desire to remove the language of giving – might be generally translated as *it delimits*. This is to repeat that the sending of presence is ‘set in motion’ by delimitation. ‘Having’ concerns something given in the withdrawal belonging to the act of giving, the withdrawal marking the limit or delimiting point of the given. It also concerns the ‘having of itself’ of delimitation, which occurs without being known ‘in itself’. Heidegger may also find this phrase useful insofar as it speaks impersonally or without subject, allowing the potential conflation of *topos* and humankind to remain suspended. All of this, it would seem, is further evidence against the reconstruction of ‘given presence’ (*ideas*) in terms of the figures of occidental history. The use of *epochē* here does not seem to correspond to the relatively large configuration that would constitute a paradigmatic interpretation of presence.

Yet, despite the initial assertion that an epoch is not an era of (metaphysical) occurrence or history, Heidegger nevertheless relapses into a discussion of the history of being as a quasi-historiography. He speaks of his favorite philosophers and their central concepts, each concept being the ‘word’ of and ‘answer’ to being (delimited presence). He does all this accompanied by the contradictory claim that their sequence or consequence (*Folge*) is neither a coincidence (*zufällig*) – allowing him to maintain his defense of the primacy of the occidental canon –, nor does it allow itself to be determined or assessed

¹¹⁴ These issues were raised in the subsection on Aristotle in Section 3.2.

¹¹⁵ Heidegger’s examples of this, which evoke foraging, read: ‘es hat da Erdbeeren, es hat dort Pilzen’.

(*errechnen*) as necessary (GA 14, 13). To the extent that Part I of this essay attempted to render Heidegger's appeals to the enchanted history of great philosophical ears inoperative, the former aspect will be ignored. In terms of what is relevant, Heidegger wishes to say above all else that thinking remains bound to the historical iterations of the canon. The present essay accepts that necessity in its entirety. An understanding of history through a sequence of paradigm shifts and what remains out has precedent. But rather than repeat (and defend) this, it seems more useful (at least more novel) to think the presence of history in a manner unprecedented.

Time is the medium through which presence is structured or articulated. The sending of presence is referred to the 'reaching' of time. This appears to subordinate presence to time insofar as presence is sent (things appear intelligibly) *via* the reaching of time. Presence is constantly arriving in the reaching of time. Heidegger describes this by way of a three-fold reaching or interplay of time's three dimensions in a manner quite similar to the above discussion taken from "Das Wesen der Sprache". He refers to the 'interplay' or 'playful reaching'¹¹⁶ of the three dimensions of time as a 'reaching (toward) one another' (*Einander-sich-reichen*, also *zureichen*) (GA 14, 18). The reaching or interplay of the three dimensions is grounds for *Geschichtlichkeit* ('historicity'), which for Heidegger names the transmuted sense of 'temporality': *Zeitlichkeit* becomes *Geschichtlichkeit* (GA 69, 95). Temporality is therefore understood as the consistency of the sending of presence in time's reaching. It is tempered, recall, by finitude understood as *Anfänglichkeit*, which has been referred to delimitation. The question of 'historicity' considers the articulation of presence and absence viewed from the perspective of presence's arrival. The reaching of time is left out of this arrival of presence, that is, it remains with itself. The configuring of presence occurs on the basis of structural absence, where that absence is always the 'not yet' of arrival.

The structural role of absence, the 'not yet' of arrival, is not simply a 'not yet' of the future. This 'not yet' is at once bound to the 'no longer' of what has passed. The 'no longer' and 'not yet' arrive (together?) immediately in delimitation or as delimited. Heidegger no longer uses the word *Gewesenheit* ('pastness'), but *Gewesen*, and not as a substantive from the participial adjective (*das Gewesene*) (GA 14, 17). What is the meaning or intention of this lexical shift? Grimm defines the verb *gewesen* – which does not exist in modern

¹¹⁶ Recall the 'mirror play' of the *topos* as thing.

High German – as an intensified form of *wesen*. In this case *Gewesen* might seem like an intensification of the modal structuring of presence and absence, now understood without the binary movement of *Gestell*, but discussed simply as the articulation of truth (presence-absence/revealing-concealing). While there is little in the text that would lead to the conclusion that Heidegger is again toying with the possibilities he finds in the collective prefix *ge-*, the possibility is worth considering. The intensification of simple ‘occurrence’ and the temporal notion of the ‘past’ would suggest something like a storehouse of the past, a historical reserve that is ‘active’. This might again just as well be viewed from the late Heidegger’s linking of concealing and excess or overabundance. Such richness or reserve (not unlike *Bestand*) can now be understood as made possible by Nature’s constant disruption of its own universalization. It is what is constantly in excess of any flawed metaphysical formalization. Perhaps this is why Heidegger speaks of an *an-fangendes Reichen*, a reaching (and richness) that ‘captures’, playing the reaching of time close to the richness of historical reserve.¹¹⁷ If any of this were the case, it could be suggested that the immediate arrival of presence comes as an altered (not-yet) form of the past. *The past arrives from the future* according to the intervening delimitation of *Ereignis*.

The possibility of this arrival is the unity of time’s reaching. Heidegger calls this four-dimensional time or distinct time (*eigentliche Zeit*), but also refers to it as the dimension or span (*Durchmessung*) (GA 14, 19). Distinct time appears to be something like a unique slice of the full extent of all three ‘dimensions’ of time. Its unity, Heidegger states, rests in the interplay or passage, the intermingling of what is traditionally taken as past, present, and future. The so-called fourth dimension of time is the ‘all determining reaching/richness’ (*das alles bestimmende Reichen*), which can be nothing other than the delimitation that allows some variation of ‘not-yet’ and ‘no-longer’ to cohere. Four-dimensional or distinct time can never be ‘all of time’ or ‘eternity’ occurring simultaneously. Drawing upon the insistence here that *eigen*, *eignen*, *eigentlich* refer not to ‘properness’ but distinction by way of delimitation, distinct time appears to suggest instead something like an individuation of ‘eternity’, the individuation of the constancy of presence and time at and as interstice. The constant emergence of distinct time as a cross-section of infinity fulfills a similar if not the same role as the disruption of Nature. Distinct time ‘assures’ that time is not universalized, which is to say, exhausted. The unity of four-dimensional time, then, is a consummate time or constant consummation of time: time’s stillness

¹¹⁷ This finite (*an-fangend*) qualification of reaching/richness, it should be noted, also marks the dimension of utility in this essay, as Heidegger adds a footnote to *an-fangende* that simply reads “*Brauchen*”.

as the delimitation that allows for the flow of presence or emergence into the ‘space’ carved out by concealing.

It is in this sense that ‘distinct time’ might also be referred to as ‘true time’. Insofar as it is experienced only as it is delimited, it is a configuration of revealing and concealing. Consummate, resting time is the ‘proximal’ (*Nahheit*), another term Heidegger uses to designate the ‘complete’ nature of delimitation (GA 14, 20).¹¹⁸ The proximal is the unity of truth according to delimitation. When viewed from the perspective of a progressive or chronological time, particularly in the sense of a continuing aggregation or accumulation of time ('history is complete up to this point'), the proximal is a partiality. This is in fact the case when viewed from any notion of time's totalization. For truth, *aletheia*, is by its very name ‘incomplete’. It is revealing conditioned by concealing, presence conditioned by absence: finite. Viewed from the perspective of delimitation plain and simple, however, ‘true time’ is complete. It is a completion of *physis*'s self-intervention. Distal time, then, would be what remains out, what is concealed in delimitation, or what of the abundance of history's storehouse does not arrive.¹¹⁹ But, for Heidegger, what is distance in time and history is not separated by the years of lives of humans. Distance, like concealing, is the medium of thought. Time is the medium of presence and concealing is the medium of thought.

It is on this basis that Heidegger speaks here and elsewhere of the leeway of time (*Zeit-Spiel-Raum*). The self-intervention of *physis* is thought as the basis for something like a constant rearrangement of ‘history’ in the name of a world’s passage. The arrangement of time’s ‘arrival’ does not seem subject to any particularly strict logic, chronological or otherwise. No arrangement of time can be assessed as necessary, that is, as *the* singular necessary arrangement; there is always room for contingency. The same motif was discussed earlier as the unique range and co-incident construction of *topos*. Time coheres as *enstasis*, as complete in itself, each time. Heidegger thus flirts with a rather radical sense of individuation, an individuation that *in each case departs from the technical trajectory of history*.¹²⁰ As stated above, there is no sequence to

¹¹⁸ The word ‘form’ here is avoided at all costs. Given Heidegger’s Aristotelianism, it may be accurate to say something like the highest form of time is rest. However, Heidegger is working with this figure of rest not in relation to ‘form’ (*eidos, morphē*) but *topos*, which is free of form, content, and cause.

¹¹⁹ Drawing ‘distal’ from the *Ferne* (‘remoteness’) Heidegger ties to proximity.

¹²⁰ The connection between technical and chronological time is not altogether clear. The motif of time was mostly absent from the discussions of *Gestell* in Chapter 2. This is because the focus with any analysis of *Gestell* should be structural, namely on *Gestell*'s recursive structure, and not temporal. It could be suggested that the ordering of any

‘true’, *enstatic* time, nothing arises from nothing. If there is a ‘logic’ to this, it might be considered as ‘chorological’: it is the repeated congealing or cohering of finitude, a communal or shared finitude, that disrupts the spending-away of a time that passes.

In an attempt to further consider the possibility of thought opened by Heidegger’s understanding of ‘time’ here, an example can be drawn from the poetry of Charles Olson. The following lines are taken from Olson’s *Maximus Poems*, a poem entitled “Maximus to Gloucester, Letter 27 [withheld]”:

“There is no strict personal order/for my inheritance./No Greek will be able/to discriminate my body./[the human]¹²¹ /is a complex of occasions/themselves a geometry/of a spatial nature.”¹²²

The poem itself begins with a recounting of a childhood memory which Olson has come back to as “the geography of it all”. Olson’s polemic with the Greeks (“this, Greeks, is the stopping of the battle” and “No Greek will be able/to discriminate my body”) appears to be in reference to the logical (*logos*) discrimination that would determine the “order” of his “inheritance” of the past. The past is not held apart on a linear scale, nor is it an individual relationship to the past or to ‘history’ determined in advance. “I come back to the geography of it all” suggests a real, ‘physical’ accessibility of the ‘past’.

Though Olson begins his polemic with the Greeks by insisting upon the instantiation of the *epoché* (“the stopping of the battle”) that delimits his “inheritance” of prior cessations (“the imposing/of all those antecedent precessions, the precessions”), his account of what appears to be a personal becoming may be too vitalist for a Heideggerian register. Despite the many references to being-underway, to movement, and ‘unfolding’, Heidegger’s philosophy is, in the last analysis, not a philosophy of process and/or becoming.¹²³ Olson’s work can nevertheless be brought to converge with a Heideggerian

chronology occurs on the basis of the metaphysics’ binary reproduction. In any case, it should be clear that part of what is occurring here is the reinstatement of some notion of ‘time’ into the movement Heidegger associates with *Gestell*.

¹²¹ The substituted line here reads ‘An American/is a complex of occasions’, a sort of Heideggerian folly though perhaps of a less malicious nature. Olson’s politics, in all its potential flaws, is not a matter that can be taken up here. As this essay concerns the possibility of thinking the generic human, the alteration to Olson’s line seems permissible.

¹²² Charles Olson, *The Maximus Poems*, ed. George Butterick (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983). pp. 184–185.

¹²³ Olson was a known reader and admirer of Whitehead.

register. It exemplifies a poetic project that, like that of Hölderlin,¹²⁴ is concerned with a more 'free' understanding of the site of history, its continual (re) arrival, potentially as 'altered', and its immediacy. Olson is even subject to the same grave mistake as Hölderlin, which is the attempt to redefine a 'historical configuration' in relation to a pre-determined, technical definition. In both cases, this signifies the trap of nations or a people, and thus a loss of the anonymity of the =o. Olson, for example, is interested in understanding 'American' as the site of a convergence of indigenous languages with the language of ancient Sumer, whereas Heidegger is concerned with a German inheritance of classical Greek. None of this intends to make light of critical and/or materialist accounts of history that seek the liberation of history (Benjamin) through the proliferation and fragmentation of history, but rather to reinforce the critical immediacy and urgency of the past as it continually arrives. The lack of necessity to the types of trajectories constructed by Olson or Heidegger has been a motif – a critique of Heidegger – running throughout this essay. What is announced with the delimitation of distinct time is something like a call to consider all possible configurations that arrive to meet, to 'check', the risk (and impossibility) of time's expenditure.

Olson's use of or references to 'geography' and '(spatial) geometry' – matters that lie at the heart of his work – would seem incompatible with the Heidegger that would view them as concerned with local sciences. Translating these terms back into a Heideggerian register, however, would view them as *the writing and metric of the earth as bearer of absence*, and thereby as having the utmost relevance to Heidegger's 'poetic dwelling'. It is worth noting that it is geography that 'leans upon' Olson as Polis – the 'site' or nonsite of negotiation, of discussion or debate, of communication –, suggesting something akin to the conflated relationship between humankind and *topos*, at the very least the centering of an interaction or interrelation. Given that Olson is after the question of a 'spatialized' human, there is an entire body of work that might be brought into dialogue here. An example of this will be seen below in the reference to Gerard Granel. This might bear further relevance for developing Heidegger's late lexicon in the direction of a geosophical lexicon, where 'geo-' pertains to the unknowable and concealing dimension of thought.

It is at such points, where Heidegger's thought reaches its most novel, that the true extent of his engagement with language is revealed. At stake is the manner in which language concerns a relation to Nature, a continued

¹²⁴ Hölderlin who found ancient Greece in France and whose eyes were often caught looking outside of the Occidental realm, his 'east' perhaps lying in central Asia or northern India, such that his Greek inflected Danube flowed from the east.

consideration of the entanglement marked out in first philosophy by *physis* and *logos*. The search for a future use of and/or comportment to language risks the dismissal of thought as fiction to the extent that it draws upon a notion and experience of concealing entirely out of reach for the technical registration that persists at the forefront (and before) nearly all occidental thinking. An experience of time’s simultaneity appears so untenable as to be fiction, unreal. Heidegger views his attempts at this as a continuation of the project begun by Hölderlin: to prepare the language of a new millennium. It is well known that Hölderlin’s ‘engagements’ with classical Greece in search of a ‘free use of what is distinct’, through engaging the ‘foreign’, blurred the sense of ‘historical’ separation between the Hölderlin of the 18th and 19th centuries and his classical progenitors. While Hölderlin, unlike his peers, viewed Greece as something alien to the Germans’ rational worldview, he nonetheless viewed his engagement with Greece as something immediate. Indeed, he truly believed he had experienced the presence of that Greece in France, writing to friends that he had encountered their ‘athletic form’ in the rural workers of southern France. What was alien about Hölderlin’s highly Orientalized¹²⁵ progenitors did not lie in time or history, but rather in a relationship to Nature. Greek exoticism lied in an intimate relation to Nature that was not immediately appropriable by the ‘sober’, rational form of the German moderns. The distance, therefore, was in comportment.

Hölderlin’s image of Greece appears to have eventually opened upon the entirety of the Indo-European, which is no race or nation, but rather a hypothetical language – with a hypothetical, ‘unreal’ structure behind it (Proto-Indo-European)¹²⁶ – which had given rise to both classical Greek and German. As Hölderlin’s engagement with the “Greeks” brought him closer to this intimacy of Nature, he must have recognized that such comportment cannot be contained in itself. It is not something that belongs to humankind alone, let alone nations of men. Recall that humankind never fully coincides with itself. In the same way, Greece cannot coincide with itself completely. David Rattray suggests that Hölderlin’s Indo-Europeans represent, above all else, the instantiation of a 4000-year long history of language, which must be reckoned with before something otherwise can be experienced.¹²⁷ The

¹²⁵ See Françoise Dastur for a good condensation of the literature on this point: Dastur, “Hölderlin and the Orientalisation of Greece”, in *Pli*, 10 (2000), 156–173.

¹²⁶ The most basic, dictionary definition of Proto-Indo-European is “the unrecorded language from which all Indo-European languages are hypothesized to derive” (OED).

¹²⁷ See Rattray’s translations of and commentary upon Hölderlin’s Pindar Fragments. For Rattray, the Indo-Europeans are captured in the figure of the centaur, specifically as it appears in Pindar. In Hölderlin’s poetry, such figuring is limited to actual references to

Indo-Europeans, a formless ancestor, might be taken to represent an excessive outside to the canonic history that leads ‘rational, Platonic Greece’ to the post- or neo-Kantian Germany of Heidegger’s philosophical education.

Heidegger saw his thinking, following Hölderlin, at the edge of this Indo-European grammar. Yet this ‘foreign outside’ is nothing at all ‘external’. For Hölderlin, according to Françoise Dastur, it is what is “more original, more free, more foreign, non-classical, non-conventional, *immediate, dionysiac*” as a more simple, intimate relation to Nature.¹²⁸ The excessive outside of the Indo-European, and so of PIE, is immanent to the entire trajectory of occidental and/or technical Reason. For Heidegger, then, the ‘edge of Indo-European grammar’ would be an intimacy with Nature as it differentiates itself in sequestration, a near-identification with the unfolding of this sequestration, in which neither humanity nor Nature nor history coincide with themselves completely. It must be said, however, that for both Hölderlin and Heidegger ‘more original’ could only mean ‘being neither origin nor with origin’, since presence, the basic ‘unit’ of the intelligibility and knowability of all possible worlds, has no origin and is itself no origin to something else, just as the Indo-European is itself without ‘real’ origin.

Perhaps Heidegger did not realize the breadth of what he had ‘inherited’. There could be no strict order of inheritance as Heidegger seems to have hoped for. If, as Philipe Lacoue-Labarthe suggests, “*Greece*, as such, *Greece itself*, does not exist” and that Hölderlin’s relationship to ‘Greece’ recognizes this, then there can also be no Germany as such or in itself and no German language as such.¹²⁹ When Heidegger makes his alleged turn towards the pre-eidetic, pre-Socratic aspect of Greece in seeking a new intimacy between thought and Nature, he has to reckon with the anonymity of Nature’s immanent division as it is mirrored in the Indo-European languages that extend far beyond a non-unified Greece. When Heidegger’s thinking is unable to cope with this anonymity, he retreats into the familiar, interpreting the ‘distinct’ as the proper and as the language of *a* people and nation (of which there has never been any such thing *in reality*). Where a ‘free use of the foreign’ seems unattainable, so too does a ‘new’ use of Occidental grammars.

India, found in poems like “Dichtberuf” and “Andenken”. David Rattray, *How I Became One of the Invisible* (Cambridge: Semiotexte/MIT, 2019), pp. 271-287.

¹²⁸ Dastur, “Hölderlin and the Orientalisation” 171.

¹²⁹ Philip Lacoue-Labarthe, “Hölderlin and the Greeks” in *Typography: Mimesis Philosophy Politics*, ed. Christopher Fynsk (Cambridge: Harvard, 1989), p. 243. See also Dastur, “Hölderlin and the Orientalisation”, p. 173.

To what extent is 'poetic comportment' concerned with the joining of happenstance, the motifs surrounding *Untergang* and *stiften*? Heidegger's understanding of the manifold reaching of time that has no law other than the generic proto-law of delimitation opens a very different understanding of the site of history. History's *real* arrival is neither of a necessary order, nor is it necessarily a coincidence. The possibilities raised above do not constitute an *ontological* claim about 'what is real', but rather indicate what is exigent *in thought* in terms of the 'whats' and 'hows' of the transitivity that approaches and engenders it. The issue is 'uncanny', as Heidegger would have it, and far more uncanny than the account of 'historical presence' given directly in his work. The joining of happenstance might be taken up as something like the basis for thinking the transindividuation of a *Dasein* that is not only no longer an individual subject or *cogito*, but also nothing like the national (a German *Dasein*) – to the extent that 'national' is understood from the occidental construction of nation states, but also in terms of the *mythos* that accompanies such modern constructions. The *leeway* he allows time is the leeway he allows himself in his own mythological constructivism.

The joining of happenstance would be the playing out of human 'incestuousness' on a generic scale.¹³⁰ It is perhaps the point from which to consider the unfolding of a chorology within which humankind is "song". The consequence or sequence of epochs, of checks or cessations of presence *in time*, are not, as Heidegger wrote perhaps biting his tongue, necessary. Only delimitation is necessary. As such, perhaps it is not orderable in hindsight as chance. And with the insistence upon this interpretative direction, Heidegger's 'few' are dissolved in the generic quality of *Ereignis*' finite intervention. For it is not the 'few' who are entrusted to poetic inducting and joining, but the human (*der Mensch*). The only 'few' that would remain for Heidegger are those 'few' who have had the patience to initiate themselves into the dense idiosyncrasies of his language, as if it were the only map.

In Death, the Astral Human

"It is told how Diogenes once threw a plucked rooster through the window of Plato's school and leaned in to say, 'Here, here's Plato's human being for you.' Space revises time-man with some of the same shock."¹³¹

¹³⁰ And if the generic portioning of Nature is as Hölderlin suggests, these ventures into Proto-Indo-European would have to be expanded to the other hypothetical language structures that populate the relation of humankind to Nature.

¹³¹ The citation is taken from an essay sent by Charles Olson to Frances Boldereff. Charles Olson and Frances Boldereff, *A Modern Correspondence*, ed. Ralph Maud and Sharon Thesen (Hanover: Wesleyan University Press, 1999), p. 256.

Topos is a pre-spatial locality thought by, of, or as something like a base delimitation. The threefold reaching of time is the proximating or approximating of proximity (*nähernde Nähe*). It is not a ‘where’, but rather what makes any ‘where’ possible (GA 14, 21). It is the *poú*, the anywhere-somewhere (indefinite) that is not itself located or locatable (GA 9, 248). The *poú* Heidegger uses to define *topos* in “AΦ (1939)” speaks not only of the possibility of something like a ‘localization’ ('somewhere not far off') – here attributed to *Ereignis* –, but also serves to qualify incertitude ('anyways, perhaps, possibly, I suppose'). Heidegger’s topological orientation intentionally refers to the necessary possibility of delimitation (as determining?) without precision. He appears to be constantly working at the point where experience is necessarily viewed as partial, as belonging to an interruption. This has been considered primarily by way of Heidegger’s remarks concerning the delimitation of the constancy of presence and time. The where-possibility of history has also been complicated. Yet nothing has been said of how the spatialization of *topos* and the human that ‘takes it on’ ‘would’ or ‘could’ occur. Thought from delimitation itself as what is let-in, the *leeway* of time, it becomes a question of whether or not space is anything more than ‘partially received presence’, proximity or proximating being the very figuring of presence.

Heidegger’s understanding of space follows from delimitation. Space is ‘set free’ in order to ‘let in’ by way of the limit (*peras*) (VA 149). Space might be referred to as the leeway of delimitation. Heidegger’s claim is that all metaphysical and mathematical understandings of space follow from this generalized understanding of space. If proximity is thought as something ‘active’ (*nähernd*), then ‘space’ is, in some sense, what is proximated or approximated. In this way space would seem inseparable from received presence. Heidegger offers very little on how, if at all, an approximated leeway would relate to or ground humankind’s immediate experience of our commonplace (metaphysical) understanding of space. In “BWD” he offers only two rather mysterious accounts of the spatialization of *topos*.

The second example takes up commonly understood space as that through which humans move. Heidegger refers to the room in which he is lecturing. “If I go to the hall’s exit, I am already there and could not go there (to the door), if I were not such that I am already there. I am never here only as this encapsulated body, but rather I am there, i.e., already standing through (*durchstehend*) it and can only move through it for this reason” (VA 152). Note again that the motif of consummation and of an indefinite whole is tied to delimitation and possibility (‘only [...] for this reason’). The ‘standing-through’ (*durchstehen*) of humankind’s ‘existence’ appears to correspond to the ‘spanning’ (*durchmessen*) of the fourth dimension of time or *topos*. The human’s peculiar relationship to *topos*, their mutual emptiness, takes on seemingly ‘physical’ implications here.

The human moves through ‘physical’ space only insofar as it already ‘spans’ it – as if it moved through its own emptiness. A weak and by now dated analogy would be to refer to the 1st person perspective genre of video games wherein the ‘view’ is always the entirety of space ‘in front of’ or ‘before’ and generates anew (or regenerates) along forward movement towards a curved horizon. Early virtual reality might provide a similar reference as an embodied experience limited by the horizon of the technologically-produced environment.

Gerard Granel has taken up this Heideggerian (and more broadly phenomenological) perspective and further complicated it in his 1999 essay exploring the ‘body’, “Far From the Substance”.¹³² The register of the entire essay is undeniably Heideggerian and explores the question of the body from the perspective of humankind’s ‘ontological emptying out (*kenosis*)’. The paragraph in question follows from the statement, “Space ‘itself’ means nothing,” and begins by referring to the ‘all-form’ (*forme-tout*) which is always by way of delimitation (Granel’s words are ‘border’ and ‘cerne’). Humankind *dis-cerns* and always on the basis of delimitation, which is not the delimitation of an individual phenomenon, its form, unless that phenomenon be named *topos*. The following citation concerns delimitation and the infinite and is in this way relevant to the consideration of *topos* as interstice and what that concerns ‘spatially’:

Do we ever worry about knowing whether, perchance, that little we do see – a few houses, a swath of sky, streets, or rather segments of streets – would not stop at the edge some great nothing; at the edge of the grand canyon of Nothingness? One might say that, even if we are assured about our good old Earth, whose rotund existence is doubtless complete, by contrast the astronomic distances that separate heavenly bodies from our galaxy, and then the galaxies themselves (which, moreover, are speeding away from each other), are sufficient to awaken in us the terror of infinity. [...] ‘What is man in the Infinite?’ etc. Yet Pascal’s text is but the rhetoric of an apologetic desire, without the slightest phenomenological foundation. When I raise my eyes toward the night sky, I no doubt have the sentiment that the stars are ‘far off’, but even there it is not a matter of great numbers, and nothing comes to tear apart the familiar proximity of my ‘stay’ (*la proximité familière du séjour*).¹³³ I marvel confusedly about that, as Kant said without saying it: ‘The starry sky *over my head* – the precise correspondent, or perhaps simply the other side, of the ‘moral law *in me*’. [...] *There* we live; *there* we are, and that is why we have a gaze both universal and open upon the unreal ‘how’ of all that is real.¹³⁴

¹³² Gerard Granel, “Far From the Substance: Whither and to What Point?”, p. 4 [http://www.gerardgranel.com/txt_pdf/Tren-far_from_substance.pdf].

¹³³ The translator, Bettina Bergo, writes ‘familiar proximity of my living room’. Granel’s use of *séjour*, however, would appear to translate Heidegger’s use of *Aufenthalt* (‘stay or sojourn’), remarking the ‘rest’ from which the ‘distance’ of the stars is neither removed nor remote.

¹³⁴ Granel, “Far From the Substance”, 4 (translation altered).

The passage draws out the tension between a seemingly infinite measure (far off galaxies that are speeding away from each other) and the immanence of everything that concerns *physis* (the familiar proximity of my 'stay'). That the 'stay' of human thought is not 'torn away' by the encounter or experience of such a measure ('infinity') is apparently thanks to an inverse relation between the unspeakable distances *in the universe* ('the starry sky over my head') and thought ('the moral law in me') according to a Nature (*physis*) that continuously intervenes in itself. Put otherwise, the self-intervention of Nature begets an inverse relation between technical intelligibility (the infinite) and its localization *as* thought. Perhaps this can also be considered in light of the *Kon-stellation* where *Ereignis* and *Gestell* 'meet'.

By Granel's account, the stars do not draw him out of the 'place' he already is (which he will eventually call his 'body'), for they belong to it as much as would the couch in his living room. The stars appear to reside 'within' the delimitation that has given rise to them and to the gaze upon the universe that opens upon this. For Granel's account, more than Heidegger's evocation of the lecture hall, there is something of a physical correlate. The moment that light reaches the eyes – and generically speaking, this moment occurs constantly – 'physical space' has been 'joined', though not necessarily technically configured. The proximity that is experienced is as 'real' as anything else. For Heidegger, in fact, the stars, the astral distances of the 'universe' are proximate rather than remote. Remoteness is mutually entrusted self-concealing, the self-concealing *in* proximity. In the 'reality' of the proximity of the astral distances, the immanence shared with humankind 'there', there is the hint of *Ereignis*, Granel's 'unreal how of all that is real'.

Heidegger's first example for the spatialization of *topos* concerns a transitivity of thought itself which at first appears spatial, but may also raise questions of time and temporality. Heidegger asks his audience to think *to* the well-known bridge in the city of Heidelberg and tells them that, in doing so, they are more 'there' than one who crosses the bridge in their daily comings and goings. Such thinking into remoteness (*Hindenken*) is not the representation of something as a substitute – the technical presentation of a lack – in the 'interior' of consciousness. It is rather the case, for Heidegger, that thinking in remoteness belongs to a certain transitivity of thought whereby thought is *there* in the remote. This could be considered as the 'tarrying' (*verweilen*) of what is admitted and referred to the constant arrival of the past. Heidegger immediately adds that 'spaces' are already admitted (*eingeräumt*) in the 'stay' (*Aufenthalt*, *séjour*) of mortals (VA 151).

There is, however, another aspect to be considered here. Heidegger states that thinking 'in itself' (*in sich* – italicized in the printed lecture) stands through remoteness. It has just been noted that remoteness concerns self-concealing within proximity. It can be said again, then, that concealing and/or absence is the medium of thought. *Concealing carries thought beyond the measurables of metaphysics*: the corporeal, the distance to the stars, the past presence of the bridge or the distance to it, the history, cultural, biological, geological, and futural that confronts the human incessantly. These measurables also include the 'time' it takes to 'get there', which appears to no longer correspond to the movement of bodies or particles in space. Concealing becomes the medium whereby traditionally 'physical' distances are traversed in a complete transmutation of the physical that Heidegger roots in his understanding of *physis* and *Ereignis* as self-intervention and delimitation. Concealing is the medium of thought and the basis of poetic action. It is the leeway of the delimited *topos* and its delimiting.

Like the stars, the bridge is also 'within' delimitation. The seeming transit of thought is thanks to the delimitation that allows the bridge 'into' thought. The same might be said for the sense of the historical raised in the references to Olson. Temporality and historicity (*Geschichtlichkeit*) concern the occurrence of time's coherence and individual unfolding once delimited. Time and space are 'experienced' by way of the occurrence of delimitation in relation to concealing. This allows *topos* to appear disturbingly 'pervasive' in both time (history) and space such that it appears nearer to fiction than the vehicle of thought itself. Delimitation's production of proximity makes sense of *topos* (in topology) like the *pou* 'wherein' humankind would rediscover itself in absence. The joining of spaces – which can appear as a needless complication or misstep in Heidegger's use of the terms *Untergang* and *stiften* – may very well be intended as the 'inward course' which occurs where *einräumen* ('admitting') and *Untergang* ('inter-course') meet. It is the afferent movement of thought. What first appears as something ecstatic, even to Heidegger – movement beyond the body, through time or history – is essentially an *enstatic* movement, as is any movement that adheres to delimitation. The possibilities opened concerning how humankind would be rethought as 'mortal' or '*Dasein*', raised in the last two subsections, are among the strangest or most uncanny to be found in Heidegger's thinking, though he does little to pursue them further.

Poetic Measure II

No world is the measure of humankind, neither the simulated World nor any world of the topological matrix. Presence arrives continuously in the topological matrix, 'where' it is mixed and discharged as worlds. Humankind appears to be 'in' this matrix in a particular way. Something of humankind belongs to

world according to the language of its mixing. The mixture is a *Vereignung*, a manifold expropriation that begets something unique. The measure of humankind itself, however, would appear to correspond to the measure of *topos* by way of their 'shared' emptiness. What gives measure to *topos* appears to be delimitation plain and simple. The term for this in "DwdM" is 'godhead' (*Gottheit*).

Humankind measures itself against the godhead (VA 191). The figures here – humankind and god – would appear to be opposites. Humankind is the finite, god the infinite. It is therefore not surprising that this 'measuring against' might be taken to imply that the finite human or *Dasein* provides measure to the infinite godhead who/that knows no measure in itself. That humankind has its 'own metric' would make it particularly suited to offering a metric to that which is entirely without measure. This appears even more plausible given that Heidegger considers the relationship between humankind and *Ereignis* through the motif of 'utility' or 'need and use' (*Brauch, brauchen*).

While something akin to humankind or *topos* appears involved in providing a certain measure to the arrival of presence, this arrival does not in turn provide measure to humankind. Humankind is not determined as a discharged world, nor does it find its measure therein. World 'steals' something of humankind's essence by its very nature in the mirror-image or 'clone' that it 'appropriates' in its instant rise and fall. If the figure of the godhead employed in "DwdM" is to be taken as *Ereignis*, it must be acknowledged that *Ereignis* is also finite and is perhaps the figure of finitude in Heidegger's work ('Nature' is finite).

If there is an 'infinite' or 'infinity' in Heidegger, it would have to be considered from or as presence. Presence is what arrives incessantly, without limit. It is the technical intelligibility of Granel's stars and the Heidelberg Bridge. Its arrival is what images time as the passage of time. Were humankind to take presence as its measure, it would again find itself in the metaphysical impasse considered in the previous two chapters. But the arrival of presence is already conditioned by the delimitation that makes this arrival possible, by the intervention of *Ereignis*. Otherwise, the measure given by humankind would be little different from the attempt to determine the entirety of presence *qua* totality (*das Seiende im Ganzen als ein solches*). That would result in an inverse relation between the conditioned or conditioning (humankind, *noein*) and the unconditioned (presence) where human finitude would be 'sublated' in the absolute account of presence's arrival. Such a notion has been considered hitherto as the identification of humankind with the movement formalizing presence. But humankind does not measure itself *against* the constant arrival of presence. It measures *up to* (*durchstehen, durchmessen*) this arrival *as delimited* or

qua delimitation. It measures itself *against* the delimitation of presence, the ‘how’ of its arrival in a given instantiation. If there is another inverse relation formulated here, it is finite on ‘both sides’.

Central to Heidegger’s formulation is the ‘unknowability’ of the godhead. The godhead ‘appears’ as unknown and remains as such. The measure of *topos* is (*besteht*) in the following way: like the god that remains unknown is manifest as unknown by way of the heavens (VA 191). The godhead is ‘known’ only secondarily by way of the suspension that allows (‘gives’) the arrival of presence in any given instantiation. Taken in relation to Hölderlin’s “Die Bedeutung der Tragödien” this might be viewed as the appearance of Nature in its weakness. When time is viewed as a succession of nows – each now being a topological instantiation of (the constant arrival of) presence discharged as world – thought catches sight of the suspension *as* finite. Recognition of the suspension comes by way of time or heaven as the medium of intelligibility or of formal presence. *This is the meaning of posing the question of being (presence) in relation to time.* This is to say that Heidegger’s attempts to pose the question of presence in relation to time leads him to *Ereignis*.

The godhead is the ‘how’ that withdraws and thus cannot be known ‘in itself’. Heidegger points out that this ‘how’ is itself finite in a footnote added to the seminar protocol for “Zeit und Sein”. The note is appended to Heidegger’s assertion that *Ereignis* – the ‘how’ or ‘sender’ – is ‘ahistorical’ (*ungeschichtlich*). Better said, it is without skill or fate (*geschicklos*). To the qualification ‘*geschicklos*’ Heidegger adds: “but finite ... dependent upon ... located in ... *Brauch*” (GA 14, 50). Unlike the auto-technical production of knowledge, *Ereignis*, the godhead, does not bring itself to appear or to presence.

This would appear to be a definitive statement that *Ereignis* does not include or is in some way removed from the technical qualities that would beget a legible history. If Heidegger can only speak of *Ereignis* by way of its relation to humankind – *Brauch* as an inverse relation of (double) finitude – it is perhaps because humankind stands in a relation to infinite presence which delimitation itself does not. The Being or presence prominent in Nature’s inherent technical dimension does not bring *Ereignis* or delimitation to appear. Finitude cannot be mirrored in infinitude, but only in another instance of finitude. As far as language is concerned, *Ereignis* is reliant upon this relation; only there is it up for discussion (GA 14, 50). Again death provides the unique quality of humankind, which nearly conflates it with Heidegger’s central notions of *topos* and *Ereignis*.

The initial answer to the epistemological question concerning *physis* in Heidegger's reading of Aristotle was 'one cannot know'. If *Ereignis* at all concerns a rethinking of metaphysical *physis*, Heidegger has thus returned *physis* to its place 'beyond' or 'before' metaphysical knowledge.¹³⁵ Like *physis*, *Ereignis* constitutes a limit for knowledge and is not an object of (technical) knowledge. In this way it delimits what can be experienced in a given instance. As has been suggested, world, as what is discharged from the topological matrix, becomes something like an object of knowledge (entity) and perhaps the basis for technical intervention. There is, however, an important distinction between what has been said in the previous chapter and the transformation undergone here. 'Knowing' (experiencing?) in the non-metaphysical sense, insofar as it is first made possible by the finite intervention of *Ereignis*, cannot 'reach' the totality of what exists as such and does not reach for it. It cannot because it is constantly interrupted by the generality of delimitation that precludes the possibility of any formal unity. Perhaps, then, it is better to say that there is no totality of what exists as such, never has been, and never will be. 'Knowing' remains with delimitation; it is *inständig*. It is *insight* or *inquiry* (*gnosis*).

It is on this point that the finitude of *Ereignis* was of particular importance to Heidegger in distinguishing his thought from Hegel's philosophy, which seems to have been of particular (personal) interest to Heidegger in the seminar protocol to "Zeit und Sein". The distinction is a matter of 'knowing' and 'history'. Much hinges on what has already been alluded to in previous chapters: in Hegel, being and thinking are "really" equated (GA 14, 59). On Heidegger's account, this real equation turns humankind into the 'site' of the absolute's coming to itself. In providing for this site – also with reference to the apparent 'emptiness' of humankind – the finitude of humankind is 'sublated'. As the site of 'knowing', its finitude is 'resolved' in the movement of or toward the absolute. For Heidegger, however, the same of being (presence, *einai*) and thinking (metaphysical, as *noein*) lies in the shared technical potential of both, as discussed in Part I. If the terms 'humankind' (mortal thinking) and *Ereignis*¹³⁶ were substituted for 'thinking' and 'being', transforming the metaphysical relation of being and thinking, the movement of the absolute or unconditional would be viewed as transient rather than reflexive. This is to say that, for Heidegger, the absolute is the arrival of presence that moves 'through'

¹³⁵ Perhaps it is a matter of a 'removed encompassing'. Metaphysical knowledge corresponds to the technical movement that is also 'immanent to' *physis*.

¹³⁶ Heidegger is clear that *Ereignis* is not 'another', epochal name for Being, but rather names something fundamentally different. It can nonetheless be proposed that there is a meaningful correlation between the metaphysical pairing of 'human and being' and the non-metaphysical 'human and *Ereignis*'.

humankind or *topos* ‘according to’ *Ereignis*. It cannot be said definitively that the absolute inheres in humankind and/or *Ereignis*. The topological rendering of this relation – ‘use’ – appears to provide ‘site’ for the inverse relation of the unconditional possibility to determine (to ‘place’) and the absolutely undetermined (presence), though only as site of passage. Because of their ‘finitude’, both humankind and *Ereignis* err on the side of ‘determination’. But this is the case only insofar as *Ereignis* withdraws into itself or expropriates itself – it is the unknowable fact of determination – and humankind mirrors the presence/absence it receives according to ‘time’.

To say that ‘*Ereignis* determines’ is not to respond to a ‘knowable’ question of how. It is only a secondary recognition derived from happenstance or world as what is determined (and which is determined as ‘partial’ with regard to its ‘content’). To say that humankind determines is to say that humankind mirrors a configuration of presence without ‘effecting’ the unknown or absent dimension that belongs to the structure of knowledge. This seems to suggest that humankind does not seek something ‘more’ from happenstance. The ‘part’ of humankind appropriated (*vereignet*) in the discharged, determined world is not a determination of or for humankind, but more akin to a trace of human finitude, its partial or cloned appearance in a world. This finitude does not essentially belong to being, which arrives infinitely, but is rather a mark of humankind’s belonging to worlds. The relation of humankind and *Ereignis* marks itself out in the finite instantiations Heidegger calls *Seinsgeschichte* – a movement ‘known’ by way of the history of metaphysics. The movement of presence (being) itself is autonomous. It is auto-techno-logical.¹³⁷

For Heidegger, the ‘real’ equation of being and thinking essentially means that Hegel’s philosophy cannot account for ‘how’ being (presence) is determined in truth, i.e., as a configuration of presence and absence. It is important that Heidegger emphasizes this as the ‘question’ (*Seinsfrage*) that Hegel’s philosophy cannot come upon or ask.¹³⁸ *Ereignis*, which ‘holds place’ for the ‘wherfrom’ or ‘how’ of presence’s formal instantiation, remains *in question* and therefore undetermined. In constantly characterizing *Ereignis* as ‘holding

¹³⁷ Heidegger’s development of *Gestell* might be read, in this way, also as an interpretation of Hegelian philosophy. Heidegger remarks that, much like his own analysis of metaphysics, Hegel’s mature philosophy begins with work on ‘originary dualisms’ in *Phenomenology of Spirit* that are ‘later harmonized’ in the *Logic* (GA 14, 58).

¹³⁸ Heidegger writes: “For Hegel’s philosophy, the ‘wherfrom’ from which Being determines itself in truth (*von woher sich ... das Sein in seiner Wahrheit bestimmt*) cannot come into question. This is precisely because for Hegel being and thinking are really (*wirklich*) equated. Hegel thus does not come upon the *question* of being and cannot do so.” (GA 14, 59 – original modified for clarity).

to itself', Heidegger wishes to emphasize that *Ereignis* is not and cannot be an object of knowledge. It might thereby be said that, if presence and thought (here presumably still from *noein*) 'share' the unconditional technical *logos*, then humankind (the mortal, not determined by *noein*) and *Ereignis* 'share' finitude in the primary sense of being undetermined and ultimately unknown. Heidegger states that the question of humankind and its role in the production of knowledge is 'decidable', though his thinking never actually decides.

This is a striking reminder of the irresolvable 'problem' of humankind's entanglement in *physis*. The *Kunstwerk* essay, the notorious site of Heidegger's remark on this decidability, shows this again in his footnotes. There he states that the discharge of world is what binds finitude to presence. World is said to hold humankind as appropriated by or in structured presence (GA 5, 30–31). This being-drawn-out-and-into presence (*Vereignung*) and held there receives two different appendages. In 1957 it is *Ereignis*. In 1960 it is *Da-sein*. The indecision or about-face seen in these two footnotes nearly mirrors that of Heidegger's remarks in the essay's Addendum, written in 1956:

The relation of Being and the essence of the human conceals itself in the title 'Setting-into-work-of-Truth' – wherein it remains undetermined yet determinable who or what does the setting and in what way. This relation is not adequately thought in this essay (*Kunstwerkes*). It is a pressing difficulty that has been clear to me since *Sein und Zeit* and which has been brought to language in various ways since (GA 5, 74).

A similar instance of this can be seen in Heidegger's 1955 contribution to a *Festschrift* for Ernst Jünger, titled "Zur Seinsfrage". Heidegger transforms Jünger's question about the line crossed in 'overcoming' nihilism – nihilism, which Heidegger reads as a synonym for metaphysical thinking – into a question concerning the 'place of the nothing' (*Ort des Nichts*). This 'place of the nothing' is graphically indicated by a crossed-out or crossed-through depiction of the word *Sein*, which Heidegger immediately qualifies as indicating the topological matrix or place of a 'crossing through' (*die vier Gegenden des Gevierts und deren Versammlung im Ort der Durchkreuzung*). The human does not simply stand in this 'critical zone of the line', but is rather 'the same' (*Er ist selbst*), although the human is not this 'zone' in itself or completely (*aber nicht er für sich und vollends durch sich allein*). Rather the human, its thinking, belongs together (*mit zu dem*) with the 'behest' of delimitation (*anfängliches Geheiß*), which invalidates or 'strikes through' presence (*Durchstreichung des Seins*). Once again humankind is drawn toward the motifs of invalidation, interruption, suspension, withdrawal, and sequestration that indicate *Ereignis*. This '*mit zu dem*' is the binding of human finitude to the discharge of the matrix

through which human thinking belongs to *Ereignis* (delimitation). This ‘behest’, which Heidegger names *Ereignis*, is the interruption, the ‘invalidation’, of the movement of the technical *logos*, the Being of beings, with which humankind both ‘identifies’ and is not ‘alone’ (GA 9, 410–413). This is perhaps the closest Heidegger ever comes to ‘deciding’. While the Addendum to “Der Ursprung des Kunstwerkes” suggests that the question of who or what does the setting-into-work-of-truth is ‘decidable’, his work seems to never actually decide. The footnotes of the following three years to the *Kunstwerk* essay attribute this ‘setting-into-work’ first to *Ereignis* and then to *Da-sein*. The following subsection will suggest that this attribution of *Da-sein* does not determine humankind as anything more than the passage of an ecological awareness or coherent time. This is perhaps what it means to say that humankind is the ‘placeholder of the nothing’, what is entirely ‘other than entities’ (*das ganz Andere zum Seienden*), as the ‘memory’ of invalidated technic (GA 9, 411, 419).¹³⁹

The ‘real’ equation of being and thinking in Hegel also leads to significantly different views, on Heidegger’s account, concerning a possible ‘end’ to history. As with most references to Heidegger’s understanding of other philosophers, the question of the ‘end of history’ cannot be treated on its own (Hegelian) terms here. Instead, this essay can only recount what Heidegger says about *Seinsgeschichte*, the history of being, and *Ereignis* in distinction to Hegel. The consummation of metaphysics as *Gestell* and the (inseparable) recognition of *Ereignis* do not constitute an eschatology or eschatological assertion in the commonly held meaning, not even in the sense of something to be ‘anticipated’ in or by thought, since it is to be considered from its consummateness, an ‘always already’. Heidegger attributes the character of inexhaustibility to ‘possibilities of revealing’ (*Entbergungsmöglichkeiten*) (GA 14, 59). It is an open question whether or not this is simply a matter of human thought’s finitude – that there will always be revelations that remain inaccessible to thought¹⁴⁰ or that thought is fundamentally incapable of accounting for all possibilities of revealing ‘at once’ – or of the ‘infinite’ nature of presence’s constant topological

¹³⁹ Heidegger writes that human thinking serves as the ‘memory’ (*Gedächtnis*) of ‘crossed-through’ Being. This memory, which can also be called the memory of invalidated technic, would seem to be something other than the technical memory or technical reserve of presence that was also discussed in the Interlude in relation to Stiegler’s ‘tertiary retention’.

¹⁴⁰ While Heidegger may eschew certain references, such matters can of course be taken up from the finitude of the human body as a site of presence’s arrival and ordering. The previous chapters touched upon this issue as concerns the technological extension of the body’s perception by way of the measuring apparatuses of physics, which force the ‘invisible’ into appearance. It is ‘true’ (widely held) that our bodies are only equipped to experience ‘space’ in three dimensions, a certain color spectrum, etc.

mixing (world as also finite). It could be as simple as saying that intervention begets new possibilities of revealing which remain inexhaustible on account of the reserve produced by partiality. What is fundamental is that the ‘eschaton’ is thought from the intervention or *Ereignis* or delimitation as such, rather than from the fulfillment or cessation of a historical movement. The movement of history thereby concerns the extremity of a limit (*eskhatos*) that permits presence to come to some degree of coherence.

Heidegger’s attempts to distinguish himself from Hegel thus look very much like his other attempts to distinguish a non-metaphysical comportment from a metaphysical one. The ‘real’ equation of ‘being’ and ‘thinking’ in Heidegger’s Hegel is already there with Parmenides, and this Hegel seems to be the thinker *par excellence* of *Gestell*’s recursive movement. If the distinction here hinges on the ‘remaining in question’ of *Ereignis*, then the human, who measures itself against the godhead, must also remain in question. It would also seem that the setting-into-work-of-truth remains more closely tied to what is named in *Ereignis* – namely, the finite self-intervening of *physis* – than to any determination of humankind. The final subsection of this essay will attempt to consider again just what it means for Heidegger to understand *Da-sein* from this point, its near conflation-point with *Ereignis*. It will do so by finally considering a possible transmutation of the metaphysical *eidos* in his discussion of the *Ein-bildung* in “DwdM”.

A Place Only for the Foreign

Earlier in this Section (*Poetic Measure I*) it was noted that humankind is withdrawn from the realm of ontology and ontological measure, so long as ontology is a term indicating the accessible registration of knowledge according to the optic imperative. The previous subsection considered this in terms of the ‘double finitude’ or ‘double unknowability’ found in the relationship between humankind and *Ereignis*. Humankind measures itself, gauges itself, with or against the godhead. Heidegger calls this self-measuring a *vermessen*. In *vermessen* the human simultaneously measures the entire dimension by spanning it (VA 189). In measuring itself with the godhead (*sich messen mit*) it ‘measures’ (*ver-mißt*) its dwelling or action. The choice of the term *vermessen* for the specific measuring of human action corresponds to at least three important, previously-discussed terms beginning the prefix *ver-* and occasionally written with hyphenation: *vereignen* (‘appropriation’), *Verhältnis* (‘relation’), *Versammlung* (‘gathering’). The term *Verwindung* might also be included here.

The prefix *ver-* can simply indicate an intensification of a verb. This is generally the case with *vermessen*, which means to measure something ‘completely

and fully’. It is a thorough measure. An earlier discussion of the term *Verhältnis* touched upon the prefix’s sense of ‘movement away from’. There it was a matter of a suspended relational structure that is discharged from the topological matrix as world. In the formation of world or happenstance, the sense of ‘movement away from’ passes into both the sense of the English mis- (‘in error’) and ‘change of state’. This is the *Vereignung* that names the production of world in the topological matrix – a movement out or away from the matrix that has ‘changed’ the elements as they ‘entered’ or were delimited. It is a misappropriation, or better, a failed appropriation to the extent that it does not appropriate the elements in themselves but only some ‘aspect’ of them ‘mirrored’ in the matrix. World is not an accurate representation or presentation of its elements. It is a ‘change of state’ to the extent that the world is always something unique and autonomous (*Eignung*) from its elements.

It is important to remark a sort of opposition created by Heidegger’s use of two terms that could both be translated as ‘appropriation’, *Vereignung* and *Ereignis*. Their opposition is a matter of directedness towards vs. away from, or, perhaps better, a matter of formation vs. transformation or disformation. *Ereignis* indicates delimitation, the intervening act of an interstice that ‘allows’ a manifold (manifold presence, absence, time, and act) to figure in a coherent relational structure called world. *Vereignung*, on the other hand, indicates alienation of the elements of the manifold from themselves in the creation of something unique and the movement of this unique figure away from the initial ‘site’ of its ‘gathering’.

Both *Verhältnis* and *Vereignung* stand in relation to, are perhaps subordinate to, *Versammlung* (‘gathering’) insofar as *Versammlung* translates the activity of the *logos*. The sense of ‘err’ found in *ver-* can also be applied here to *Versammlung* in order to help to distinguish it from the technical *logos*. The placing of the technical *logos* draws upon its own antecedent position in order to place absolutely or universally and in this way may seem close to the common understanding of unification, wholeness, oneness.¹⁴¹ *Versammlung*, on the other hand, may indicate a rather ‘botched’ gathering that is nevertheless the movement of the all-unifying, the one. David Farrell Krell has stumbled upon this in an early translation of Heidegger’s “Logos” by Jacques Lacan in the 1st volume of his journal *La Psychanalyse* (1956). Lacan translates the verb *versammeln* with the French *répartir* (‘to distribute, apportion, allot, divide’).

¹⁴¹ Though it has been seen that such ‘universal or absolute placing’ is actually only ever partial and is therefore ultimately subject, in its own way, to what is discussed here.

Heidegger is therefore understood to say that ‘the one unifies in that (or while) it shares out or divides’.¹⁴²

For Krell, Lacan’s translation is subversive, reading through and against Heidegger’s apparent ‘aversion’ to dispersion. Yet such a translation is quite in line with the interpretative framework being developed in this essay, bringing the non-metaphysical *logos* in line with the intervening delimitation of *Ereignis*. By Lacan’s account, the one distributes in its entirety. Gathering as allotment and division is only a botched gathering when thought clings to metaphysical notions of oneness and unity. *The grounds of unity have been ‘replaced’ with the generality of that unity’s interruption, the indivisibility of interruption or delimitation.* Such a non-metaphysical account of the *logos* would appear to fulfill the Hölderlinian promise of a ‘just and equal division of capacity’. Lacan’s translation appears to recognize this when he translates the *austragend* in Heidegger’s ‘the one is bearing (*austragend*)’ with particular attention to *austragen*’s sense of delivery. The one pays back (*rétribuant*), or, like the Latin wishes to say (*retribut-*), the one continues to assign.¹⁴³ Lacan’s translations do not bring Heidegger closer to Heraclitus’s *diapheromenon* because this word names a constant differentiation, but rather because *diapheromenon* is the between that ‘carries together’, that carries the all ‘as one’ ‘in different ways’.

With all three terms – *Verhältnis*, *Vereignung*, *Versammlung* – the sense of ‘erring’ is determined in relation to the intervention of *Ereignis*. The intervention named in *Ereignis* ‘guarantees’ partiality, misappropriation, alienation of the elements from themselves. The ‘check’ of *Ereignis* on the production of knowledge is thus also the measure (the ‘standard’) by which human action might itself *avoid* erring, or, perhaps better put, it is the ‘check’ that outstrips the possibility of human error in advance. The supple nature of a world produced in the topological matrix remains exposed to the ‘wrong’ human comportment. A footnote to the term *Enteignis* – a term that indicates the inherent unknowability of *Ereignis*, its finitude – states as much: appropriation (topological mixing, *Vereignung*) remains exposed to the danger that humankind not suffice (*genügen*) (GA 14, 28). *Ereignis* is therefore, at the same time, something of a structural safeguard against the possibility or probability of failure in human action and something that would allow for such erring or failure, i.e., *it is not affected by it*.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴² David Farrell Krell, “Is there a Heidegger or a Lacan Beyond all Gathering?” in *Heidegger and Language*, ed. Jeffrey Powell (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013), p. 217.

¹⁴³ David Farrell Krell, “Is there a Heidegger or a Lacan”, pp. 217–220.

¹⁴⁴ It should be acknowledged that, in addition to the above reference Krell article, Peter Trawny has written an entire book on the subject of ‘erring’ in Heidegger’s philosophy.

In what way would human action not suffice the appropriative movement of the topological matrix? The most obvious answer would be that it does not measure itself against the unknowability of *Ereignis*/the godhead. *Vermessen* also refers to presumptuousness (*Vermessenheit*). At the end of “Logos”, Heidegger quotes Heraclitus fragment B43: “Presumptuousness is to be extinguished before conflagration” (VA 218). In the context of the present essay, presumptuousness might be referred to the antecedence that perpetuates the movement of metaphysical knowledge production.¹⁴⁵ Most importantly, then, the ‘check’ of *Ereignis* assures that humankind cannot ‘actually’ aid the movement of the universal in becoming universal. The human cannot bring the universal about. It might even be said that the presumptuousness of human thought in identifying with the technical production of knowledge is what has caused the ‘failed’ attempts to characterize being, which have in turn created the image of a so-called epochal structure to the ‘history’ of metaphysics. The poet William Carlos Williams has cast this quite brutally when he stated: “Time does not move. Only ignorance and stupidity move. Intelligence (force, power) stands still with time and forces change about itself – sifting the world for permanence, in the drift of nonentity.”¹⁴⁶

To avoid hubris, that is, to avoid a presumptuous approach toward the elements of the matrix or technical prefiguration, humankind measures itself against the ‘check’ (epoch) inherent to *Ereignis*. Humankind, like *Ereignis*, errs on the side of determination while itself remaining unknown or undetermined.¹⁴⁷ Heidegger constructs this direct correspondence between humankind and *Ereignis* as the indeterminate-determining in order to ‘entrust’ human action not with the task of determining, but rather with that of safeguarding the determination (delimitation) of *Ereignis* from obstruction, which includes protecting it from its own (human) intervention.

In remaining undetermined, the human does not lay claim to the other elements of the matrix. Presence arriving in the topological matrix is entrusted to humankind. In “DwdM”, Heidegger writes that the view of the heavens is foreign to both the godhead and to humankind. This view is entrusted to humankind,

Trawny's reflections are not considered here. Peter Trawny, *Irrnisfuge: Heideggers Anarchie* (Berlin: Matthes & Seitz, 2014).

¹⁴⁵ *Vermessenheit* translates *húbris* ('hubris') in Heraclitus. It means, like the English, pride and presumptuousness, originally an arrogant and presumptuous attitude towards the gods. It also indicates wantonness or the wanton violence of an action. In the context of Heidegger's thinking, this is equivalent to the wanton violence that wishes to mimic the violence of *physis* in defying the gods, i.e., the ‘givenness’ of delimitation or what is delimited. Metaphysical thinking is, of course, a kind of Prometheanism for Heidegger.

¹⁴⁶ William Carlos Williams, *Spring and All* (New York: New Directions, 2011), p. 69.

¹⁴⁷ *Vermessen* in the reflexive generally refers to erring in measure. Think also of the reflective nature of the matrix's elements in their ‘mirror play’.

where ‘to entrust’ (*anvertrauen*) means ‘to need and use’ (*brauchen*) (VA 194 and GA 12, 33fn.). And perhaps it is important to highlight that such ‘need and use’ is custom, the habitual. It is to accustom or inure (*cōsuēscō*) as is necessary (*chrē*). Put otherwise, it is the requirement (or ‘call’) that humankind and human action ‘adapt’ accordingly with *Ereignis*. *Human thinking must ‘keep up’ with the spontaneity and ‘quickness’ (Jähe) of the delimitation that outstrips its hubris.* This is another way of speaking of the exigency of *Inständigkeit* and the selfsameness of *Dasein* with coherent time. The thought of practice in Heidegger can only begin from this point. Human action corresponds to the delimiting of *Ereignis* by ‘letting’ the time-conditioned configuration of presence determined by this delimiting ‘appear’ and depart. Entrusting intersects with being-sequestered (*Abgeschiedenheit*). To be entrusted is to give oneself up to the safekeeping (*sequestrō*) that follows (**sek^w*-) *Ereignis*.

It could be said that Heidegger is rethinking humankind’s ‘position’ as conduit. In the metaphysical paradigm, humankind, in the highest form of danger, is the clone of itself as a conduit for the technical *logos*, a worker on the assembly line of metaphysical knowledge. Rather than take the place of or be replaced by a technical *logos*, it is a matter of removing itself from the equation. It is something like humankind’s speaking in the ‘middle voice’. In “Logos” Heidegger highlights the middle-voiced inflection of *legein* – *legesthai*, translated by Heidegger as ‘to lay oneself down in the gathering of rest’ – as speaking to the *logos* and humankind’s relation to it (VA 200). It is this middle-voiced speaking that fulfills the task entrusted to humankind: *to extinguish presumption and speak only from the delimitation of Ereignis*. Such speech is a ‘laying the same’ or *homolegein*.

In “Zeit und Sein”, this matter is discussed in the context of the *es gibt*, which names the givenness of presence in the delimiting of *Ereignis*. Whereas the commonplace understanding of *es gibt* names something ‘given’ as available or at hand, ‘poetic language’ speaks of what is given as unavailable (*ein Unverfügbares*). The transitive presence (*das Angehende*) that ‘enters’ the topological matrix is unavailable to humankind in a way that is uncanny (*ein Unheimliches*). Heidegger’s final qualification is to call transitive presence ‘the daimonic’ (*das Dämonische*) (GA 14, 49). Note first that the unavailability of presence takes the same name that has characterized the autonomous technical movement of *physis* in Heidegger’s *Antigone* interpretation (*deinon, Unheimliches*). The ‘divine’ quality of presence is now spoken of as daimonic, as inspired, inspirited, godly. It is the transition and transformation of what is neither humankind nor the godhead itself, where ‘light and dark meet’. This transition and transformation is the (constant?) divisioning of presence, its apportioning or dividing in correspondence to the interstice cut

out by *Ereignis*. *Daimon* derives from *daiomai* (‘to divide’) which comes from the Indo-European roots **deh2-*’ and **deh2-i-* (‘cut off’, ‘divide’). The daimonic aspect of *topos* is essentially the autonomous transit and transformation of being that ‘fills’ *topos* in a given instance. The daimon is the substantiation, the giving of ‘substance’, to the ‘cut’ of the interstice.

Heidegger therefore understands human action, in its most primal, as letting itself appear as apportioned presence – human action as the embedding-in-itself that is an instance of ecological awareness. This leads Heidegger to speak of a transmuted sense of the *eidos*, namely, a sense of image not dominated by the optic imperative or Platonic *idea*. *Dichten* or dwelling forms into an image. Heidegger defines *Bild* (image) here as ‘to let see’ (*sehen lassen*) and opposes it to likenesses (*Abbilder*) and emulations (*Nachbilder*), which are mutations of images. *The poetic image images (einbildet) the foreign as foreign*. *Einbilden* as en-imaging should be considered along with its sense as imagination. It could also be considered in terms of the prefix *ein-* as imaging in the direction of unification/consummation (one) and/or immanence (in). At the same time that the poetic image images, the poet joins itself to (conforms to, *sich fügt*) the foreign without ‘effecting’ its foreignness, i.e., it does not ‘appropriate’ it (VA 194). Such an ‘act’ appears in many ways similar to letting itself be mirrored in the topological matrix. Human action (poetic dwelling) begets a unified or singular image (*Ein-Bildung*) that is not to be confused with fantasy or illusion, but understood as visible or visual (*erblickbar*) embeddings (*Einschlüsse*) of the foreign in the view (*Anblick*) of the ‘used’ (*des Vertrauten*), the human (VA 195). Is this humankind become the foreign, or its conduit?

The question and/or problem of communication can be raised here again with these ‘visual embeddings of the foreign’. What is communicated (transferred or shared) in or by the ‘letting see’ of human action? What might be construed here as ‘common’ or mutually accessible grounds for communication or transfer, in the sense of making it possible?

In the first place, such embeddings are, as the term *Einschluss* can imply, singular conclusions, closures, or ends (*Ein-schluss*). This speaks to the motif running throughout this chapter of unique iterations of or by delimitation. Or perhaps these *Einschlüsse* are better understood as the singular, immanent interruptions that are the very possibility of Nature’s ‘totality’. A relation of *Ereignis* and presence (being) is sealed (*gedichtet*). These iterations of delimitation are iterations of Nature itself, in the sense of chorological articulations of a finite Nature as the intersection of occurrence(s). The radical individuation Heidegger suggests with terms like *Abgeschiedenheit* and *Untergang* and with the ‘poetic joining of spaces’ is not an individuation of a human, as ego or otherwise. Individuations are rather the radical (self) sequesterings of Nature,

which hides in its ‘totality’ and, in doing so, keeps itself safe or preserves itself. If there occurs here each time a Poem, such Poems produce no clear, formal image through which to interpret the others, no central orienting standard. The best that could be expected is a limited coherence of what occurs.

But this does not answer the question of what, if anything, is communicated in the poetic imaging of the foreign. It could be argued that the technical movement of presence is common to such embeddings. This would be more realistically considered as variations on standards of intelligibility (*koine* presencings) that beget various degrees of recognizable coherence. Such a conjecture, however, seems highly dubious, given that Heidegger pays little to no attention to its possibility. No, *what is communicated in poetic imagining is delimitation itself*. The Poem’s embeddings always communicate an acknowledgment of the unknown as primary. If technical knowledge can be considered both autonomous and shared (with humans), human practice is first and foremost one of shared ignorance. Ignorance here is a giving-over-to the interruption that demands not knowledge of the standard, but insight and inquiry (*gnosis*).

Once presence in the form of a technical standard comes into contact with humankind, communication becomes a matter of hermetics and hermeneutics in reciprocal interplay. The hermetic activity of sealing off the intervention and its afference occurs almost simultaneously with the hermeneutic activity of its decoding. Perhaps this is what Heidegger intends when he invokes Hölderlin’s image of humankind as song. When the godhead is truly acknowledged, technical presence provides infinite material for the fugue of human activity. The ‘image’ (*Einbildung*) that forms as the articulation or communication of *topos* is kept ‘formless’, that is, unfixed in terms of ontological register, by the I-You form of the hermit/hermetics and hermeneut, Poem and Reader (the hermit being the one who ‘seals’). Such articulations and communications will always spill over and spill into another, which takes them on again as foreign, and so on and so forth. The importance of this is that it maintains (or ‘keeps safe’) an interruption of or interjection into the automatic movement of presence, which is also the automatization of communication.¹⁴⁸ Here is one basic starting point of non-metaphysical communication: to preserve in a ‘physical’ *logos* the interstices (*Ereignis*) foreign to the technical *logos*.

¹⁴⁸ If technical knowledge is not interpreted, the entirety of human action becomes a reproduction (simulation) and the human is lost, which is to say ‘fixed’, given purpose, in its clone. Stielger draws from Simondon in order to say that ‘individuation’ is interpretation. This essay agrees generally with this directive. Bernard Stielger, *Nanjing Lectures*, p. 74.

Beyond this, the possibility of any universal standard for communication appears to be ruled out, and Heidegger’s preliminary offerings regarding practice offer little concerning this ‘traditional’ use of language. At the same time, local essentialisms are also ruled out. While some sense of the ‘local’ (or rather, the universal *in it*) may appear to be all that is ever articulated, Heidegger says little about *Ereignis*’s un-premeditated delimitation holding a particular local connection in place over a chronological scale – at least in the sense that culture and nation(-state) are understood in the modern context. Such a ‘continuity’ would always be a choice, decided each time by this I-You of chorology.

Heidegger’s commentary on the ‘national’ – particularly as it stems from Hölderlin’s attempts to articulate what is ‘national’ about German literature and poetry in distinction from the Greeks – should be taken in its most ‘radical’ sense. In referring the ‘fatherland’ to the relation between the ‘land’ (*topos*) and ‘highest god’, and the national to its etymological roots in *nasci* and *natura*, Heidegger could be referring to nothing other than *Ereignis*, as it transmutes *physis*, and its localization (delimitation) of presence (GA 4, 158–159fn). Moreover, for Hölderlin the relationship of ‘land’ to the ‘highest god’ (more generally, to a particular interruption, *ein Reinentsprungenes*) is necessarily finite and subject to ‘passing away’ (*vergehen*).¹⁴⁹ According to everything that has been said, the construction and maintenance of a national culture as anything more than transient happenstance could only be grounded in technic. Heidegger’s dream of a ‘Germaness’ that would stem from an attentiveness to *Ereignis* is really little more than a techno-linguistic fantasy.

The exigent, yielded immanence (*Inständigkeit in der Gelassenheit*) that corresponds to delimitation is thus the spontaneity of a thinking that is ‘actively’ stripped of presumptuousness, and through which the ‘products’ of the technical *logos* pass transformed (GA 77, 147). The only sense of antecedence that rests with *Ereignis* is delimitation as the bare precondition for thinking *physis*, i.e., for thinking. The lack of premeditation, presupposition, or predetermination is the essential distinction between *Ereignis* and technic, to the extent that both are concerned with the structure and structuring of being. The delimiting intervention of *Ereignis* is noteworthy in its radically generic nature. It has no concern for the paradigmatic or the standard. It is the occurrence, each time, of a unique measure.

If metaphysics is not abandoned but is rather ‘let be’, then the thinking Heidegger attempts to prepare stands in some relation to the movement of metaphysics. If metaphysics remains concerned with the production of some standard through which *physis* is known and understood, or knows and

¹⁴⁹ Hölderlin, KSA-4, pp. 294ff.

understands itself, then Heidegger's poetic thought takes up a rather queer position to the standard, quite literally. The standard – technical knowledge or intelligibility – helps provide the raw material for the sequestering of the topological matrix, which perverts the standard towards something unique. Queer is strange, non-standard. The term relates to the foregone in several ways. *Quer* (diagonal, across) and *queren* evoke the crossing of the topological matrix that Heidegger writes with an "X", the crossing out of a standard form of presence (being as *idea*). The Proto-Germanic *þwerhaz* ('cross, adverse') suggests that delimitation begets what is somehow at odds with the standard. The PIE **terkʷ-* ('to turn') – defined in German as *sich drehen* and *tanzen* – invokes the round dance of the mirror play. This even turns to 'thinking' (*überlegen*) as turning to and fro in thought. The measure of human action is like a spindle (Sanskrit, *tarkú*), the afferent course of individuation that must remain upon the foreign, there is nothing but immanence. It is as if Heidegger's entire trajectory in thought is, upon final analysis, an analytic unfolding of the measure of queer human action as the 'check' against knowledge and the knowable.

In the end, Heidegger offers only a map of a potential non-metaphysical mode of thought, a mode of thinking that would move both 'beyond' and 'with' the 'long history' of, at the very least, the occident. This map is born from transmutations of the metaphysical understanding of reality that he inherits and deconstructs. It is a quite general map of Nature when Nature is understood as what orients itself as or by delimitation, as finitude. The free use of technic that seems to concern Heidegger as he transitions from a consolidated thinking of *Gestell* to a generic thinking of *Ereignis* is perhaps best understood in terms of an 'allowing'. This is the 'allowing' of technical standards into chorological configurations that interrupt them. A free use of or relation to technic is thus the safekeeping of these interruptions as the safeguarding *against* the optic imperative, a safeguarding that must be done in a manner that does not itself mimic the production of the *idea*.

APPENDIX 2

Insert or Appendix 4 to *Satz der Identität*

The following is a reproduction of *Blatt 4* from the supplement to *Identität und Differenz* (GA 11, 94):

Blatt 4

Identität aus dem Ereignis

vgl. Der Satz der Identität S. 48

- Identität: 1) bekannt durch den “Satz der Identität”
“Logik”
- 2) Fichte – Schelling – Hegel – Onto – Logie –
Onto – Theo –
woher hier bestimmt? Sein als “Ey!
Ich als Identität von Subjekt und Objekt
das Absolute und das absolute Wissen
- 3) τὸ γὰρ αὐτό – Parmenides
Zu-sammen gehören – und ἐν *Ein-heit*
3a) das verwandeltet αὐτὸ καθ’ αὐτό –
| ταῦτό | \
τὸ αὐτό τόπος
- 4) Ereignis selbst – die *Topo* | *logie*
in ihrer Sage

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