

The Fate of the Distinction Between *Praxis* and *Poiesis*

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The distinction between *πρᾶξις* and *ποίησις*—understood as a distinction between action and production, doing and making—is often thought of as Aristotle's own, because we must look to him, and specifically to the Sixth Book of his *Nicomachean Ethics*, for its classic exposition. In fact, Aristotle explicitly tells us that he is taking up the distinction from "exoteric discourses" which were presumably well known to him and his contemporaries, but which are unfortunately unknown to us.¹ The familiarity of the distinction was such that he does not seem to have felt obliged to offer a sustained account of it, either in the Sixth Book of the *Ethics* or elsewhere. Nor is there any clear agreement amongst scholars as to how the distinction is understood by him, in part because of attempts to interpret Aristotle's discussion in the light of contemporary debates within the field of ethics, and in part because of the difficulties they themselves have introduced by insisting that his language conform to our own contemporary standards of what constitutes an exact and consistent terminology.² Aristotle initially understands *ποίησις* to be an activity which aims at an end distinct from the activity, whereas *πρᾶξις* by contrast is an activity whose end is nothing other than the activity itself. And he quickly assimilates this distinction to his own central distinction between the different kinds of being which belong to activities, a distinction he expresses in a number of different ways, but which is today most commonly referred to in terms of the difference between *κίνησις* and *ἐνέργεια*.

Aristotle may be the fundamental source for our understanding of this distinction, but we should be well aware that he has transformed it in the course of adopting it.³ And in its transformed sense, it governs his account of the ethical excellences or virtues, as well as his characterization of two of the five intellectual excellences, *φρόνησις* and *τέχνη*, which correspond to *πρᾶξις* and *ποίησις* respectively. On this occasion I am more concerned with posing certain questions for the reading of Heidegger which arise out of this distinction than with clarifying Aristotle's transformation of the distinction. But I am well aware that the present essay suffers from the lack of a detailed account of what I understand by the 'fate' of the distinction between *πρᾶξις* and *ποίησις*, not just in Aristotle, but in metaphysics generally. In the absence of such an account everything said here has only a preparatory status.

Heidegger's preoccupation with Aristotle during the Marburg period is well known and has been the subject of a number of recent studies.⁴ But those studies have not reflected the importance that Heidegger himself

attached to his reading of Aristotle's *Ethics*.⁵ This is no doubt a consequence of the fact that the key sources remain still unpublished, most importantly, the 1925/26 lecture course on Plato's *Sophist*, which began with a long discussion of the Sixth Book of the *Nicomachean Ethics*.⁶ The reserve on the part of the secondary literature is, however, more than made up for by the impact Heidegger's course had on the students who attended it, an impact which eventually came to fruition in two particularly significant works of philosophy. The first of these is Hannah Arendt's *The Human Condition*, which, even if it does not mention Heidegger by name, is governed by the distinction between *πράξεις* and *ποιήσεις*, first learned in his seminars on Aristotle.⁷ The second is Gadamer's *Truth and Method*, where the distinction between *φρόνησις* and *τέχνη* is appealed to in order to establish the kind of knowledge which characterizes the human sciences.⁸ And both Arendt and Gadamer agree that it is not simply the failure to make the distinction which has distorted our understanding of the nature of politics and of the human sciences, but the predominance of *τέχνη* and *ποιήσεις*. Meanwhile *φρόνησις* and *πράξεις* have fallen into oblivion, although the manner in which they have done so is not sufficiently clearly articulated by either Arendt or Gadamer.

So far as possible I want this essay to avoid speculating on the details of Heidegger's reading of the Sixth Book of Aristotle's *Ethics*. Nor do I intend to contrast Heidegger and Aristotle. Such comparisons between thinkers can be multiplied indefinitely, but the philosophical assumptions underlying enterprises of that kind have been challenged by Heidegger, in my view definitively. My question here is, in one sense at least, neither artificial nor extrinsic, but Heidegger's own. With reference to *Being and Time* and the Marburg lectures, it is the question of the destruction of the history of ontology. And, without wishing to restrict Heidegger to a single reformulation of his relation to previous thinking, that question subsequently came to be understood by him as that of the transformation of language at another beginning. Within the terms of that question or questions, I shall pose the further question of the place of *πράξεις* with regard to the dominance metaphysics grants to *ποιήσεις*. How far and in what way that is a question which properly belongs to Heidegger or even can be profitably pursued with reference to Heidegger cannot and should not be decided in advance.

To begin with *Being and Time*, it has frequently been said that with his analysis of the worldhood of the world Heidegger attempted to transfer to readiness to hand (*Zuhandenheit*) the priority traditionally accorded to presence at hand (*Vorhandenheit*). This impression has no doubt been encouraged by the fact the Heidegger claims quite explicitly to have deprived *Vorhandenheit* and pure intuition of their priority,⁹ a priority which, he also says, served as the foundation of Western philosophy since Parmenides.¹⁰ But in referring *Vorhandenheit* to *Zuhandenheit* Heidegger does not attempt to offer an alternative foundation for ontology. It is not the task of so-called fundamental ontology to offer a

rival thesis to that which has been maintained by the tradition. This is not simply a consequence of the fact that in *Being and Time* Heidegger explicitly puts in question the methodological tendency to derive everything and anything from a simple 'primal ground.'¹¹ In *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics* Heidegger explains, even more clearly that he does in *Being and Time* itself, that fundamental ontology does not attempt to issue a challenge to Greek philosophy: "neither being nor time need be deprived of the meanings which they have had until now, but a more primordial explication of these terms must establish their justification and their limits."¹² This is also what is meant by the so-called repetition or fetching back of ancient philosophy.¹³ The destruction of the traditional content of ancient ontology is not so much directed against that ontology as against its standard interpretation, which has come to provide an obstacle to its appreciation, blocking our access to the original experiences in which the first ways of determining the nature of being were achieved.¹⁴ But Heidegger is clear that that may mean examining what philosophy has always overlooked, because of a certain naiveté on the part of ancient ontology.¹⁵

When we look to Heidegger's lectures and essays for an illustration of this process of referring traditional concepts to the experiences underlying them, we find that he frequently points to the importance of the experience of production for the development of the concepts of philosophy. In a lecture-course delivered during 1927, the same year in which *Being and Time* appeared, Heidegger insisted that whereas the Kantian interpretation of existence is governed by perception, the interpretation of existence offered by ancient thought and Scholasticism was governed by productive behavior. This has important implications for the reading of *Being and Time*, as Heidegger himself indicates, when he restates the point in its own unmistakeable terminology. The present at hand is "before the hand" and so in relation to *Dasein*. And it is so as something produced.¹⁶ This reference of presence at hand to production is something of a surprise after *Being and Time*, where it is primarily referred to theory and to knowledge. Even more puzzling might be the suggestion that for the Greeks "a *being* is synonymous with a *present at hand disposable*" (*vorhandenes Verfügbares*), for disposability had earlier on the same page been identified as the character of things of use, the ready to hand.¹⁷ But this is no contradiction: present at hand and ready to hand are not opposed to each other as two separate realms, but rather belong together in what Heidegger, in an earlier lecture course, called "an exchange of presence."¹⁸ It is not simply that, as Heidegger insists, the Greek word *οὐσία* bears the pre-philosophical meaning of "disposable possessions and goods" along with its philosophical meaning. This pre-philosophical meaning in some way also belongs to ancient ontology, which is not fully cut off from its pre-philosophical roots until the language of philosophy shifts from Greek to Latin. But ancient ontology, while harbouring this meaning, nevertheless fails to articulate it and this is what constitutes, according to Heidegger, its naiveté. Hence

Heidegger can at this time conceive his task not as the overcoming of ancient ontology, but as the explicit elaboration of its basis.¹⁹ The explicit recognition of the ready to hand in its relation to the present at hand and the acknowledgement of the determinative role of the experience of production belong to that elaboration.

If there are still any residual doubts about the crucial significance of the Greek interpretation of being in terms of production for the reading of the Analysis of Environmentality in *Being and Time*, then these should be dispelled following the publication of Heidegger's 1931 lecture course on Book IX of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*. There, in the context of a discussion of Aristotle's account of the *ἐπιστήμη ποιητική* or *τέχνη*, Heidegger refers to the interpretation of production (*Herstellen*) given by Plato and Aristotle and repeats that the basic concepts of philosophy have developed from this interpretation. He then explains that "it is necessary to clarify what it means that man has a relation to the works which he produces. It is for this reason that a certain book called *Being and Time* talks of dealings with equipment."²⁰ The remark still leaves unexplained the precise purpose of the discussion of equipment in *Being and Time*, but it leaves in no doubt that the importance of the discussion will be overlooked if we focus only on the supposed novelty of the descriptions to be found there, or its 'phenomenological' credentials, and yet at the same time ignore its relation to previous thinking. As Heidegger says in *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, "the existential analytic of existence does not have as an objective a description of how we manage a knife and fork."²¹

But what then is the significance of these references to Greek ontology for the reading of *Being and Time*? The account of equipmentality in *Being and Time* is not an account of production as such, but of our relation with things which have been produced. Nevertheless, these two are not so very different, given the way that our relation with what has been made exhibits the goals which already control production. A thing is made to be useful and its making is already governed by the use to which it is to be put. Furthermore, the relations governing production and those governing use are not simply similar, but we understand them to be integrated. Just as the materials which are taken up and used when something is being made are already conceived from the standpoint of the product in the sense of the idea that the producer has in advance, so we understand that idea in its turn to have been conceived from the standpoint of the task for which the product is intended. Such a sequence of means and ends, whereby each end is in turn the means for something else, lends to a notorious infinite regress, which a number of philosophers have entertained, including Aristotle. It is with reference to this dilemma that in Book One of the *Nicomachean Ethics* he introduces his examination of the idea of the Good. He subsequently returns to the problem in Book Six with his discussion of the *οὐένεκα*. It is a similar regress that provides the context for Kant's introduction of human being as an end in itself. When Heidegger appeals in *Being and Time* to the notion of the for-the-sake-of-

which (*das Worumwillen*), he addresses the same problem to which these earlier thinkers were responding.²² This is confirmed by the way Heidegger introduced the for-the-sake-of-which in his lectures, not only with reference to Kant's account of the end itself, but also in order to elucidate the οὐ *ἐνεκα* both as it occurs in Plato's discussion of the good in the Sixth Book of the *Republic* and in Aristotle's Sixth Book of the *Ethics*.²³

To emphasize these historical connections is not to diminish what Heidegger sought to accomplish in his thinking during this period. Having characterized his thinking as a repetition, it stood removed from the inside-outside opposition which tends to dominate contemporary discussions of the relation of thinking to its forebears. Hence we should not be surprised to find a reference to *πρᾶξις* at the very point in *Being and Time* where Heidegger introduces the notion of equipment. He writes, "The Greeks had an appropriate name for 'things': *πράγματα* - that is to say, that with which one has to do in one's concerned dealings (*πρᾶξις*)."²⁴ And yet, in what would be another example of their so-called naïveté, they failed to think the ontological character of what they named, thereby setting Heidegger the task he takes up in these sections. "Ontologically, the specifically 'pragmatic' character of the *πράγματα* is just what the Greeks left in obscurity; they thought of these 'proximally' as 'mere things.' We shall call those entities which we encounter in concern *equipment*."²⁴ This reference to *πρᾶξις* is not to be understood in terms of Aristotle's distinction between *πρᾶξις* and *ποίησις*. The sense meant is well-explained in the 1935-36 lecture course, published by Heidegger under the title *Die Frage nach dem Ding*. Heidegger, in a discussion of the meaning of τὰ *μαθηματα*, distinguishes four other Greek senses of thing: τὰ *φυσικά*, things insofar as they originate and come forth from themselves; τὰ *ποιούμενα*, things insofar as they are produced by the human hand and stand as such; τὰ *χρήματα*, things insofar as they are in use and stand at our constant disposal, whether *φυσικά* or *ποιούμενα*; and, finally, τὰ *πράγματα*. The last named are explicated as "the things insofar as we have to do with them at all, whether we work on them, transform them, or we only look at and examine them - *πράγματα*, with regard to *πρᾶξις*: here *πρᾶξις* is taken in a truly wide sense, neither in the narrow meaning of practical use (*χρῆσθαι*), nor in the sense of *πρᾶξις* as moral action: *πρᾶξις* is all doing, pursuing and enduring, which also includes *ποίησις*."²⁵ It is this broad sense of *πράγματα* that Heidegger evokes in *Being and Time*.

But even if Heidegger in section 15 of *Being and Time* evokes the broad meaning of *πρᾶξις*, and not its narrower sense where it is distinguished from *ποίησις*, this does not resolve the fate of these terms with regard to *Being and Time*. I have already noted how in Section 18 Heidegger passes from the sequence of serviceability and usability to the 'for-the-sake-of-which' and how the last named is understood as echoing earlier discussions from the history of metaphysics. On this occasion I shall concentrate on the relation of Heidegger's discussion to Aristotle's

Nicomachean Ethics, although that is not to deny the importance of the other echoes of metaphysics to be heard in this section.

The focus of Heidegger's preoccupation with the *Nicomachean Ethics* seems always to have been the Sixth Book, where Aristotle turns from the ethical excellences to the intellectual excellences.²⁶ Aristotle begins by recalling an earlier distinction between the so-called rational and irrational parts of the soul, one having the λόγος and the other being without it.²⁷ Aristotle then divides the former into the epistemic, which is invariable, and the deliberative, which is variable. Showing no concern to develop an unambiguous terminology, Aristotle then further divides the epistemic or theoretical into two parts, one of which is σοφία, whereas the other is ἐπιστήμη itself. Similarly, the deliberative or practical is divided into φρόνησις and τέχνη. Another name Aristotle gives to the deliberative in the 'logistical,' which is usually understood to mean the capacity for calculation.²⁸ Alongside the two epistemic excellences and the two practical excellences, there is a fifth excellence, νοῦς, which is privileged above all others because it is concerned with first principles.²⁹ This framework is of particular importance because Aristotle maintains that within both the deliberative and epistemic parts of the soul there is an ordering, so that each has a βελτιότης ἕξις, a support faculty or disposition.

As regards the deliberative or practical, Aristotle attempts to show the superiority of φρόνησις over τέχνη in various ways, but a particularly decisive passage in the following, where Aristotle subordinates ποίησις to πράξις:

Thought alone moves nothing, but only thought for-the-sake-of something and concerned with action. This indeed governs ποίησις also, since whoever makes something always has some further end in view: that which is made is not an end in itself, it is relative and for someone. Whereas that which is done (το πρακτόν) is an end in itself, since doing well (ἐνπραξία) is the end, and what desire aims at.³⁰

But what does it mean for πράξις to govern ποίησις or for the practical to be the principle of the productive? Aristotle conceives 'principle' or ἀρχή with reference to his doctrine of the four causes. In the paraphrase attributed to Andronicus of Rhodes it is suggested that ἀρχή here means 'efficient cause.'³¹ But this interpretation is not so much mistaken as misleading. The important point is rather that the practical is construed as the final cause of ποίησις, as is indeed suggested by the reference to the οὐ ἔνεκα in the previous sentence. Πράξις may bear its own end in itself, but how can it be the cause of ποίησις without being conceived as an external goal? And if we grant to Heidegger that the doctrine of the four causes has its source in the experience of making, then Aristotle's reference of πράξις to causality—be it the efficient or the final cause—places it within the referential teleology of ποίησις.³² In this way

πραξις— at the very time that it is privileged over ποιήσις—comes to be interpreted in the light of ποιήσις, and φρόνησις is referred to τέχνη.³³ Even if I would hesitate before declaring this passage the decisive moment in the history of the traditional subordination of πραξις to ποιήσις, it is striking that Aristotle appears to accomplish the reverse of what he intends. For when πραξις is construed as the goal of ποιήσις, does it not cease to be πραξις?

Aristotle's *Ethics* may be the fundamental philosophical source for an understanding of πραξις, but the transformation πραξις undergoes in being assimilated into the language of Aristotle's metaphysics, and the distortion it suffers when it is integrated into a structure which postpones it in favor of ποιήσις, better shows the problem of sustaining a recognition of πραξις than it shows πραξις itself. And this problem is inherent to πραξις. There is a fundamental difficulty when it comes to providing pure examples of πραξις, for it is not the object of a representation or of will, but is determined by the situation which calls for it. And yet it is also true that the situation does not have its meaning in advance of the action, but is only shown to be the situation that it was retrospectively in the light of the action. This retrospective determination of the situation and thus of the action itself arises, as Arendt has argued, in the construction of a story about it.³⁴ But such story-telling is itself a form of ποιήσις. It would seem that πραξις shows itself only by submitting to the manner of revealing characteristic of ποιήσις, so that it does not show itself as itself and according to its own manner of appearing, except as a trace.

When in Section 18 of *Being and Time* Heidegger refers the "towards which" of serviceability to the "for-the-sake-of-which," he repeats the Aristotelian integration of ποιήσις and πραξις through the οὐ ἔνεχα, an integration which, as we have seen, distorts the nature of πραξις. But what is the significance of this echo or repetition even of an Aristotelian text at the heart of Heidegger's account of the worldhood of the world? Heidegger does not in fact confine the *Worumwillen* or for-the-sake-of-which to a form of teleological thinking. The for-the-sake-of-which is that wherein *Dasein* understands itself beforehand. It is that for which entities are freed, relating us to the horizon in which we are situated and on which entities may be encountered. Heidegger's introduction of the notion of horizon to elucidate the worldhood of the world and his subsequent reference to the *Lichtung* or clearing show instead that he is not so much underwriting as undercutting the tendency to understand the metaphysical tradition in terms of teleology. And he does this not by turning his back on that tradition, but by repeating it in order to show its primordial sources.

The lecture courses from this period shed further light on this process. In various texts Heidegger understands φρόνησις (conventionally translated as prudence or practical reason) in terms of *Umsicht* or circumspection and τέχνη as *Wissen* or know-how, a knowledge which is governed by *Vorsicht* or fore-sight as an advance-look to the *εἶδος*. In his 1927 lectures, *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, Heidegger ex-

plains that "the view in which the equipmental context stands at first, completely unobtrusive and unthought, is the view and sight of practical circumspection, of our practical everyday orientation."³⁵ This gives circumspection a broader signification than *φρόνησις* as the ability to recognize what action a situation calls for, but both are ways of seeing which are not directed to this or that, but which let a situation show itself. And it allows Heidegger to say that "all producing is, as we say, fore-sighted (*vor-sichtig*) and circum-sighted (*um-sichtig*)."³⁶ Circumspective seeing is thus placed within the context of the ontological constitution of production, as it was with Aristotle. Up to this point the discussion of circumspection in *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology* might seem to be straight-forward phenomenological description, just as the account of the worldhood of the world in section 15 to 18 in *Being and Time* are usually construed in this way. But Heidegger here continues by pointing out that circumspection is prominent wherever ontology interprets what it is that is to be produced. He then suggests that even such pre-eminent expressions within Greek philosophy as *ἰδέα*, *εἶδος* and *θεωρεῖν* reflect the sight which pertains to production, a sight which "does not yet need to be a theoretical contemplation in the narrower sense but is first simply looking toward the produced in the sense of circumspective self-orientation." And then, having insisted on the role of production in Greek ontology, Heidegger repeats the claim of *Being and Time* that the access to the present at hand to be found in intuition, *νοεῖν* or even *θεωρεῖν* has dominated philosophy from Parmenides through Kant. In this way the 1927 lecture course confirms that the challenge to the priority of intuition is issued not from outside the tradition, but from the experience of production underlying it. *Θεωρεῖν* is used by Greek philosophy to say intuition, but a more penetrating hearing finds in it a reference to production.

But is the point of Heidegger's investigations into the role of the experience of making in the development of the concepts of Greek ontology to be found in the opposition between production and pure theory? If that were his aim, it might be judged a serious matter that his account of production was in terms of practical circumspection. Would Heidegger not thereby have maintained the traditional indifference in which the distinction between *ποίησις* and *πράξις* has been held? And would he not thereby—to use the language of section six of *Being and Time*—remain the victim of the self-evidence which blocks our access to primordial sources as much as the traditional privileging of theory which he had sought to put in question? Certain passages from *The Metaphysical Foundations of Logic*, Heidegger's last lecture-course at Marburg, may help us judge how appropriate such questions are.

The Metaphysical Foundations of Logic returns to the issue of transcendence which already in *Being and Time* was the focus of the structure designated by the for-the sake-of-which. But Heidegger makes clear that his approach towards such conceptions as intuition, *ἰδέα* or *θεωρία* is governed by his conviction that they remain unsuitable for

thinking transcendence, because they lack a primordial rootedness in *Da-sein*. And yet, in accordance with the explicit principle that insofar as transcendence was central to philosophy it must have come to light in all genuine philosophy—"be it only in a quite veiled way and not conceived as such"³⁷—Heidegger suggests another possibility: "Dasein was also known to antiquity as authentic action, as *πρᾶξις*."³⁸ Not that Heidegger simply reverses the traditional privileging of theory over practice. To protect himself against this misinterpretation, he immediately warns that "if we now pose the problem of transcendence in connection with the problem of freedom, we must not take freedom in a narrow sense, so that it pertains to *πρᾶξις* in contradistinction to *θεωρία*." This would lead in the direction of Kantianism. "But the problem is the common root of both intuition, *θεωρεῖν*, as well as action, *πρᾶξις*." And yet, if Heidegger thereby seems to withdraw the word *πρᾶξις* almost as soon as he offered it, a few lines later he returns to it as a name for the root of transcendence. "Though in Plato transcendence was not investigated down to the genuine roots, the inescapable pressure of the phenomenon nevertheless brought to light the connection between the transcendent intended by the *ἰδέα* and the root of transcendence, *πρᾶξις*."³⁹ Throughout this discussion Heidegger does not mention *ποίησις*. Does that mean that *πρᾶξις* is here understood to include *ποίησις*? The context is, after all, what Heidegger calls "a vague historical orientation to Plato's doctrine of ideas."⁴⁰ Or could it be that Heidegger here means by "authentic action," *πρᾶξις* as opposed to *ποίησις*? When Heidegger recalls at the end of the discussion that the *οὐ ἔνεκα* ("as that for-the-sake-of-which something is, is not or is otherwise")⁴¹ is particularly prominent in Aristotle, does Heidegger hear in the *οὐ ἔνεκα* a trace of *πρᾶξις* in the narrow sense, "be it only in a quite veiled way and not conceived as such," to use the phrase he introduced earlier in the discussion? To what extent does *πρᾶξις* survive its interpretation as the *οὐ ἔνεκα* of *ποίησις*? Is it only the *poietic* that—to recall Heidegger's description of the linguistic work of art—determines what is holy and what unholy, what great and what small, what brave and what cowardly, who master and who slave?⁴² Does not *πρᾶξις* also determine the situation which provokes it? And is this not what characterizes the truth or rather the *ἀλήθεια* of action to which Aristotle himself testifies in the *Ethics*?⁴³

Leaving open for the moment the question of what Heidegger understands by *πρᾶξις* as the root of transcendence, this section of the last Marburg course helps with another question mentioned earlier, that of whether or not Heidegger in *Being and Time* should be understood as reversing the traditional privilege of the theoretical over the practical. The passages just quoted show that Heidegger's thinking is concerned with the question of transcendence rather than with the traditional distinction between theory and practice. Hence the difficulties which arise when one tries to construe Heidegger's scattered remarks on this theme in *Being and Time* as representing a single position of his own. There is some equivocation as to whether Heidegger asserts the primacy

of the practical or whether he simply dissolves the distinction between theory and practice.⁴⁴ But this ambiguity is not accidental. It is a consequence of the ambiguity within metaphysics itself concerning the question of the relative priority of intuition or theory on the one hand and the experience of production on the other. In finding support for the latter in the form of the priority of readiness to hand, Heidegger remains within the confines of a repetition of Greek ontology. Significantly the ambiguity which surrounds the question of the relative priority of theory and practice in *Being and Time* reappears in later texts with reference to the dominance of the one or the other within the history of metaphysics. So one text asserts the supremacy of *θεωρία* for Greek life,⁴⁵ while another from roughly the same time insists that "Plato experiences everything present as an object of making, indeed, decisively for the sequel."⁴⁶ These references could be multiplied. I introduce them only to make all the more plausible my suggestion that the equivocation concerning the question of theory and practice in *Being and Time* arises from metaphysics itself and appears there in fulfilment of the task of the repetition and destruction of the history of ontology. Heidegger's discussion of theory and practice does not decide in favour of one or the other, nor is the distinction regarded as ultimate.

Both of the questions raised by a reading of these pages of *The Metaphysical Foundations of Logic*—the question of the nature of *πρᾶξις* and the question of the distinction between theory and practice—are taken up more explicitly in the "Letter on Humanism"; and I shall take them up again in that context. Otherwise Heidegger focuses explicitly on *πρᾶξις* only rarely; and his sights are clearly set on *ποίησις*. Furthermore, this is not always the broad conception of *ποίησις* which includes *πρᾶξις*, in the way that *πρᾶξις* may be understood to include *ποίησις* both in *Being and Time* and the 1935/36 lectures referred to earlier. Rather, *ποίησις* is in these late works often expressly referred to the experience of making. Heidegger's early observation that a number of the most important Greek philosophical concepts were originally determined with reference to production is repeated. So, for example, in "The Origin of the Work of Art" Heidegger repeats the general conviction already stated in *Being and Time* that "what seems natural to us is probably just something familiar in a long tradition that has forgotten the unfair source from which it arose."⁴⁷ He then proposes that the form-matter distinction in its universal application refers originally to the process of making and the interrelation of form and matter controlled beforehand by the purposes for which the thing is made.⁴⁸ Similarly, the 1962 "Seminar on the Lecture *Time and Being*" shows the importance of the experience of making for Western metaphysics by sketching an account of metaphysics in terms of it. The presencing of what is present is interpreted by Aristotle as *ποίησις*, from which it passes to subsequent metaphysics, where it comes to be understood as *creatio*, and later still as "positing" with reference to the transcendental consciousness of objects. "The fundamental characteristic of the letting-presence of

metaphysics is production (*Hervorbringen*).” Only Plato’s role in this history is left deliberately unclear, with his references to light more prominent than those to *ποίησις*, particularly at first.⁴⁹ It would require a more detailed survey than I could possibly offer here in order to try and make sense of the different emphases of Heidegger’s various accounts of the place of *ποίησις*.⁵⁰

It is sufficient in the present context to show that in his reflections on *ποίησις* Heidegger developed another relation to Greek thinking to that found in the Marburg period. This is most readily done with reference to the 1953 lecture “Question concerning Technology.” This lecture contains Heidegger’s most far-reaching thoughts on the role of *ποίησις*, and the discussion is more carefully articulated than elsewhere. So, for example, he draws attention to the breadth of the Greek conception of *ποίησις*, which should be understood to include *φύσις* as well.⁵¹ Furthermore, he emphasises that the translation ‘making’ is inadequate to the Greek understanding of *ποίησις*, which means something more like ‘bringing forth.’

And yet nowhere in “The Question Concerning Technology” does Heidegger mention *πρᾶξις*. The omission might not at first appear very serious, although it is at least surprising when one observes that Heidegger specifically refers to *Nicomachean Ethics* Book VI, chapters 3 and 4, where, in what he calls a “discussion of special importance,” Aristotle distinguishes between *ἐπιστήμη* and *τέχνη*. But of course, as everyone knows Aristotle’s discussion of the intellectual excellences also names *φρόνησις*, *νοῦς* and *σοφία*. Does it matter that Heidegger has given only a partial presentation of Aristotle’s account? This misrepresentation of Aristotle might simplify Heidegger’s attempt to show the centrality of *ποίησις* within metaphysics, but it is no more than an easily recognized short cut. Heidegger is in this passage more concerned with focusing on Aristotle’s acknowledgement that *ἀλήθεια* in the sense of revealing belongs to the ancient words for knowing in the broadest sense, *τέχνη* and *ἐπιστήμη*, than with their narrower delimitation in Aristotle. Can Aristotle’s testimony be ignored in this way? Certainly *φρόνησις*, as the kind of knowing corresponding to *πρᾶξις*, is also a revealing.⁵² But does not this support Heidegger’s presentation less than it challenges it?

In order to appreciate the role of “The Question Concerning Technology” within the broader framework of Heidegger’s thinking, it is important to recognize that in this essay he returns, even if only briefly and implicitly, to the structure already elucidated in *Being and Time* as the for-the-sake-of-which. Heidegger takes up Heisenberg’s description of the technological age as one in which “it seems as though man everywhere and always encounters only himself.”⁵³ Human beings are encouraged in their posture as “lords of the earth” by the illusion that everything they encounter is their own construct. Heidegger, however, does not limit himself to the familiar observation that wherever we go we encounter man-made creations: the tools of everyday life, machine prepared food and a countryside radically transformed by humanity.

These were the phenomena to which Heidegger referred in the lecture to which Heidegger directs us. Heidegger was concerned with the conception of truth in science and the recognition that science does not investigate nature as such, but only, for example, our *knowledge* of particles.⁵⁴ By contrast, Heidegger's observations extend to what he calls the blocking of *ποίησις*, the annihilation of the thing and the refusal of the world. That is to say, in the technological age, the age of *Gestell*, the horizon of the for-the-sake-of-which has collapsed in on human beings.

Heidegger approaches the same theme elsewhere through his interpretation of Protagoras' saying that "man is the measure of all use things (*χρήματα*)."⁵⁵ That "man always encounters only himself" can be understood as the modern counterpart of Protagoras' saying.⁵⁶ This does not mean that the latter is to be understood with reference to modern technology, but rather the reverse: technology derives historically from *τέχνη* as a mode of *ἀληθεύειν*.⁵⁶ And yet what allows this history to be recognized is the sense in which it has completed itself. This is what lies behind Heidegger's statement in the essay on technology that is an illusion—indeed "the final delusion"—to suppose that man encounters only himself. It is an illusion because in this situation human beings in fact fail to encounter themselves *in their essence*, that is to say as addressed by being. But in "The Question Concerning Technology," and also the essay "The Turning," Heidegger proceeds to show that the refusal of the world is that which allows revealing to be recognized as such. That is why it is described as the final delusion. The annihilation of the thing in the age of technology functions somewhat like the default of equipment in Section 16 of *Being and Time* and, as the latter revealed what was called the worldhood of the world, the former shows "the innermost indestructible belongingness of man within granting."⁵⁷ It is not a question of revitalizing our appreciation of ancient ontology by returning to its sources, but rather of another beginning, albeit that this too cannot take place without reference to the first.

This is why Heidegger must follow the lesson taught by Hölderlin in the poem *Patmos*:

*Wo aber Gefahr ist, wächst
Das Rettende auch.*

*Where danger is, that which rescues
Burgeons too.*

Having recognized the decisive role of *ποίησις* within metaphysics, Heidegger does not turn his back on it, but attempts to come to terms with metaphysics through *ποίησις*. That is also what lay behind his attempt to reinterpret the traditional doctrine of the four causes mentioned earlier. Here the multiplicity of meanings of *ποίησις* which play off each other throughout the essay are made to culminate in a series of questions which lead to *ποίησις* in the sense of poetry and the fine arts in the sense

of τέχνη, an association already prepared for in "The Origin of the Work of Art."⁵⁸ Heidegger asks if ποίησις in the sense of poetry could not found anew "our vision of that which grants and our trust in it."⁵⁹ His official answer is that "no one can tell," but the import or the question—and that is what Heidegger would have us attend to—is more positive. It is not simply an idle hope. It is a pious hope, expressed in the piety of questioning and based on the account of the history of metaphysics in terms of ποίησις.

Poetry here does not mean everything that usually goes under the name of poetry. Other essays of the same period suggest that the sense of poetry operative here is related to that of "poetic dwelling." So, for example, in the essay ". . . dichterisch wohnet der Mensch. . ." poetry is explicitly associated not only with ποίησις, which is mentioned only in passing, but also with building. "Poetry is, as a letting dwell, a kind of building."⁶⁰ Two further kinds of building are also identified: first, the cultivation of what produces growth out of itself and, secondly, the construction of buildings and other works made by hand. Heidegger identifies these as, respectively, *colere* and *cultura*, on the one hand, and *aedificare*, on the other.⁶¹ But could they not also be referred to φύσις and ποίησις? Ποίησις in its narrow sense could be associated with *aedificare* and by the same token building, as Heidegger understands it here, suggests ποίησις in its broader sense. And yet poetry is not simply one more kind of building among others, but another kind of building, the incipient (*anfänglich*) form of building. It lets dwell because it is the authentic gauging or measure of the dimension of dwelling.⁶² In this notion of measuring which is developed at some length in the essay, one can hear an answer to Protagoras. But how are we to understand 'dwelling'? In lectures and essays in the 1940's Heidegger offers it as his translation of the Greek ἦθος and thereby refers it to ethics.⁶³ The relation between ἦθος and ethics was indeed specifically acknowledged by Aristotle in the *Nicomachean Ethics*.⁶⁴ Furthermore, Aristotle takes it for granted that, as the intellectual excellence which corresponds with the ethical excellences, φρόνησις arises out of ἦθος.

To attempt to establish a relation between dwelling in Heidegger and Aristotle's φρόνησις would seem an artificial enterprise were it not for the 1951 lecture "Building, Dwelling, Thinking." I propose that its title should be understood as a form of remembrance of Aristotle's threefold division between the theoretical, the practical and the poetic or productive.⁶⁵ Heidegger observes that we are accustomed to think of "dwelling and building as related as end and means."⁶⁶ This is indeed how φρόνησις and τέχνη present themselves in Aristotle as a consequence of the integration of ποίησις and πράξις within a single system or framework. And later in the essay Heidegger is more explicit about the deficiencies of the Greek understanding in this realm. Heidegger suggests that the Greek conception of τέχνη is not adequate to building in its narrow sense as construction. He writes, "The erecting of buildings would not be suitably defined even if we were to think of it in the sense of the original Greek τέχνη as

solely a letting appear, which brings something made, as something present, among the things that are already present.”⁶⁷ As in “. . . poetically man dwells . . .” Heidegger refers the twin senses of building as cultivating and as constructing to a third sense, building as dwelling. So it is not only production as understood in terms of outcome or results which is deemed insufficient. Even the broader conception of τέχνη leaves unthought the relation of building to dwelling and so overlooks the essence of building as letting dwell: “To build is in itself already to dwell.”⁶⁸ Heidegger is saying that the inadequacy of the Greek concept of τέχνη lies in its failure to think the nature of dwelling, a failure which is no doubt enhanced at the hands of Aristotle by its distinction from φρόνησις, with its trace of dwelling. Heidegger is concerned to combat the idea that building and dwelling are two separate activities. One should not be fooled by the fact that Heidegger calls the distinction “correct.”⁶⁹ This is one of Heidegger’s favorite ways of dismissing an idea which he regards as insufficiently fundamental.

It is only with explicit reference to metaphysics that Heidegger can think in a way which is other than that of metaphysics. That is why in my reading of such essays as “Building, Dwelling, Thinking” I emphasize the references to metaphysics to be found there. This is not to reduce what Heidegger says to what might already be found in metaphysics. Nor is it to establish a comparison external to the essential movement of the text, as the reference to τέχνη in the essay shown. ‘Building’ should not be reduced to ποίησις, nor ‘dwelling’ to φρόνησις, nor ‘thinking’ to θεωρία. And yet the words of the former chain can be thought only with reference to the latter. The remembrance of metaphysics is the only way in which the otherness of another beginning can be maintained. The fashionable swift dismissal of metaphysics is as self-defeating as a half-hearted rejection of metaphysics is pointless. The thinking of another beginning does not oppose itself to metaphysics, because nothing would be more metaphysical than that. Heidegger attempts to think what the Greeks left unthought in the only way that is possible—with reference to what the Greeks did think. Heidegger makes exactly this point at the end of the 1957 lecture: “The Principle of Identity”: “Only when we turn thoughtfully toward what has already been thought, will we be available for what must still be thought.”⁷⁰

This can be illustrated with reference to the central thought of the essay “Building, Dwelling, Thinking.” In the first instance it is expressed only negatively. Heidegger says there that “dwelling is never completely thought of as the basic character of human being.”⁷¹ But although it has neither been thought nor experienced, when Heidegger comes to say it in his 1944 lecture course on Heraclitus he chose to say it in Greek and indeed in an echo of the traditional metaphysical definition of human being: ἀνθρώπος ζῶον ἡθὺς ἔχον.⁷² This is not the preferred way of saying it. At the end of “Building, Dwelling, Thinking” Heidegger offers the formula: “Dwelling is the basic character of Being in keeping with which mortals exist.”⁷³ But if it seems significant that in “Building, Dwelling,

Thinking" Heidegger shows himself prepared to leave Greek behind and draw instead on Old English and High German to say and to establish the character of dwelling, then it should not be forgotten that in the twelfth section of *Being and Time* he had, with Grimm's assistance, already turned to ancient German and for the same purpose. Ancient German is not an alternative source to ancient Greek to be preferred because it might be somehow outside metaphysics. What differentiates the early attempts to fetch back (*wiederholen*) metaphysics from later attempts to take the step back (*Schritt zurück*) into the essence of metaphysics is Heidegger's deeper appreciation of the situation from which thinking today must make its start. And the difference has already been outlined with reference to his understanding of the essence of technology and of the final delusion to which we seem to succumb at the time of technology.

There is a tendency to want to understand dwelling as Heidegger's name for the condition to which he would like to lead us, a condition which would hopefully follow the technological world or rather its refusal of world. But this is to withhold from dwelling the place Heidegger gives it, a place which is at once both more provisional and more fundamental. In "The Turning" he writes that "unless man first establishes himself beforehand in the space proper to his essence and there takes up his dwelling, he will not be capable of anything essential within the destining now holding sway."⁷⁴ This helps to explain the outrageous statement with which Heidegger ends "Building, Dwelling, Thinking." It runs: "As soon as man gives thought to his homelessness, it is a misery no longer."⁷⁵ It shows just how far remembrance of *ἡθός* might be from what would today pass for ethics. Can the statement be conceived as anything other than a mark of Heidegger's failure to come to terms with the split between theory and practice? It is surely not enough simply to say that Heidegger would not want to deny the need for new houses, but sees homelessness as a deeper problem than that of their construction. Ultimately Heidegger is saying that were we able to think, then we would already be dwelling. This is the import of my quotation from "The Turning," as also perhaps of the constant refrain from *What Is Called Thinking?* that we are still not yet thinking. Heidegger is not simply trying to shock us, though no doubt that is part of it. And he is being deadily serious. The point is that homelessness is the danger and like the blocking of *ποίησις* it might serve as that which rescues. The possibility we must entertain is that the statement about homelessness is already such a thinking, the thinking of a turning. And if it is such, then this thinking is itself a form of *πράξις*.

What that might mean was already the subject of the 1947 "Letter on Humanism," which predates the essays whose focus on *ποίησις* I have just been considering. It is the sole writing of Heidegger which announces itself as concerned with action. The opening sentence runs: "We are still far from pondering the essence of action decisively enough."⁷⁶ The question is whether Heidegger succeeds in the course of the essay to tell us anything more than that about the essence of action. He explains

that the failure arises because we think of action as causing an effect, an effect which is in turn prized for its utility. One might suppose that that means the failure arises because we think of action in terms of production. But Heidegger himself immediately explicates the essence of action as "accomplishment" (*Vollbringen*) which is understood as "unfolding something into the fullness of its essence" or in Latin *producere*. This would seem to suggest that Heidegger was content to assimilate action to production, $\pi\rho\acute{\alpha}\xi\iota\varsigma$ to $\pi\acute{o}\iota\eta\sigma\iota\varsigma$.

This impression is apparently confirmed when Heidegger announces his task to be that of freeing us from "the technical interpretation of thinking." The name is significant. The technical interpretation of thinking was already operative in Plato and Aristotle who, according to Heidegger, took "thinking itself to be a $\tau\acute{\epsilon}\chi\eta\eta$, a process of reflection in service to doing and making. But here reflection is already seen from the perspective of $\pi\rho\acute{\alpha}\xi\iota\varsigma$ and $\pi\acute{o}\iota\eta\sigma\iota\varsigma$."⁷⁷ This means that they understood thinking 'reactively.' In an attempt to preserve the autonomy of thinking, it is set in opposition to acting and making, and thereby lets itself be determined by them. The reason why Heidegger quite properly finds the phrase 'technical interpretation of thinking' more exact than, for example, 'the practical interpretation of thinking' is that thinking is content to justify itself in terms of the service it performs. Thinking, one might say, no longer unfolds according to its essence but, removed from the element of being, it comes to serve as an instrument of education. "Philosophy gradually becomes a technique for explaining from highest causes."⁷⁸ Thinking opposes itself to the technical and the practical, but in the very process of denying the practical (in the broad sense) it becomes technical. Were it not that the "Letter on Humanism" was purportedly on action, one might readily suppose that the reference to $\pi\rho\acute{\alpha}\xi\iota\varsigma$ in the lines quoted above was entirely redundant.

At the end of the "Letter on Humanism" Heidegger rejoins the themes with which he opened the essay, and he does so with reference to the claim that thinking acts. We are told that, by its inconsequential accomplishment of bringing the unspoken word of being to language, the thinking of being exceeds all *theoria* and *praxis*.⁷⁹ What benefit it is to thinking to call it a deed is not made clear. It seems rather that the designation is more effective as a diminution of action. A little later we read: "We measure deeds by the impressive and successful achievements of *praxis*. But the deed of thinking is neither theoretical nor practical, nor is it the conjuncture of these two forms of behavior."⁸⁰ It would seem from this that the issue had been decided against $\pi\rho\acute{\alpha}\xi\iota\varsigma$ and that Heidegger had introduced the question of action only to serve as a foil for his discussion of thinking.

And yet the situation is perhaps not so simple. There are indications that Heidegger does address the essence of action in the "Letter on Humanism" and in the only way open to him—not directly, but discreetly. First of all, it could be suggested that $\pi\rho\acute{\alpha}\xi\iota\varsigma$ enters into the essay in Heidegger's retelling of Aristotle's account of Heraclitus's encounter

with some strangers. It is a story about the difference between the blindness of mere curiosity and the capacity to see a situation as an opportunity for word and action—what Aristotle calls *φρόνησις*. Although this is not why Aristotle introduces the story, it shows what he would have called *θεωρία*, *φρόνησις* and *τέχνη* in combination.⁸¹ Heraclitus, the thinker, tells the strangers about dwelling. He says *εἶναι γὰρ καὶ ἐνταῦθα θεοὺς*, which Heidegger translates as “for there are gods present even here.” In a subsequent essay on Heraclitus, Heidegger writes that “thinking changes the world.”⁸² This is illustrated, albeit in a particular way, in the story about Heraclitus; for Heraclitus’s words transform the situation. They are in this sense an action; and we know this action through a making, the story handed down for generations, until the present day.⁸³ But only with Heidegger’s retelling of the story does it point beyond the unity of the metaphysical terms, unknown as such to Heraclitus, to their remembrance in building, dwelling and thinking.

In a second discreet reference to the difference between *πράξις* and *ποίησις* in the “Letter on Humanism” Heidegger makes what might at first appear to be only a passing remark on the difference between speech and writing. He writes to Beaufret that his questions would have been better answered in direct conversation. Writing lacks the flexibility of conversation, whereas speaking remains purely “in the element of being.”⁸⁴ an element which has been deserted by the technical interpretation of thinking. On the other hand, the compensation of writing lies in its “wholesome pressure toward deliberate linguistic formulation.” This, in a later passage, Heidegger refers to as “the now rare handicraft (*Handwerk*) of writing” and also as carefulness in saying, the cultivation of the letter.⁸⁵ A possible example of this rare handicraft might be found in his use of typography at the end of the “Letter on Humanism” and indeed in the two passages referred to earlier where Heidegger sought to place thinking beyond the distinction between theory and practice. In both cases Heidegger refers to “praxis” and not to *πράξις* in the Greek alphabet, which is his practice elsewhere in the essay.⁸⁶ This is perhaps Heidegger’s way of indicating that in juxtaposing thinking with praxis, he is addressing not “authentic *πράξις*,” but praxis in its metaphysical determination, which we could call the ‘technical interpretation of *πράξις*.’ In both passages Heidegger refers to the achievements (*Leistungen*) of praxis, and not its accomplishment (*Vollbringen*). But it was this latter word which had at the beginning of the essay defined the essence of action. At the end of the essay it is used only of the thinking of being and the humbleness of its inconsequential accomplishment. “Inconsequential” means here that it is not judged in terms of its effects, not prized according to its utility. In other words, praxis does not display the essence of action.

At the same time and in the same way, Heidegger writes that the thinking of being exceeds *theoria*; and as with the similar remarks about praxis, he avoids the use of the Greek alphabet. The explanation is no different in this case, but it is perhaps clearer to see. It should be recalled

that at the beginning of the essay Heidegger had outlined his task of freeing us from the technical interpretation of thinking. "The characterization of thinking as *θεωρία* and the determination of knowing as 'theoretical' behavior occur already within the 'technical' interpretation of thinking."⁸⁷ That is to say, the technical interpretation of thinking is as much a reduction of *θεωρία* as it is of thinking. It is *theoria*, not *θεωρία*, which is so easily surpassed. Underlying Heidegger's discussion of *θεωρία* and *πρόᾱξις* in the "Letter on Humanism" and unknown to the first readers of this essay is the 1942/43 lecture course on Parmenides, where both words are given an originary meaning. Indeed the account of *πρόᾱξις* there recalls the discussion twenty-five years earlier in *The Metaphysical Foundations of Logic*. Heidegger no longer writes of transcendence, but of *πρόᾱγμα* as "the one original inseparable whole of the relation between things and men."⁸⁸ We should allow the possibility that the word is given a fundamental status on both occasions and that as such it also underlies the "Letter on Humanism."

When Heidegger said that thinking acts, he was not diminishing the notion of action, however much it might sound like it from a contemporary perspective. But neither should one claim too much for this particular formulation. As he has himself reminded us, prior to the opposition of the theoretical and the practical the Greeks thought of *θεωρία* as the highest form of doing.⁸⁹ They too could have made sense of his sentence, although not as Heidegger himself understood it. The full meaning of the saying that thinking is the most decisive form of action is, as the so-called Athens lecture of 1967 tells us, that it is through thinking that the world-relation of human beings can first begin to change. In other words, thinking acts through its role in the epochal destiny of the history of being. But above all, thinking is called to act at the time of the final delusion and the refusal of the world. And yet he makes clear that if thinking is to act then it must escape the inadequate distinction between theory and praxis by taking the step back to what was unthought in the beginning of Western thinking to what was already named there and so dictated to our thinking—the inner connection between *φύσις* and *τέχνη*.⁹⁰

Heidegger, in the "Letter on Humanism," may separate thinking from theory and praxis, but that does not mean that it is a narrow conception of thinking. 'Thinking' as understood there already points in the direction of building and dwelling, and not as a conjunction of terms, but through their inner connection. This is already suggested by the references to dwelling in the course of the essay and the reference to poetry Heidegger feels obliged to add at its end, albeit somewhat artificially.⁹¹ Whether or not my comments on the story about Heraclitus and on Heidegger's use of typography are found persuasive, what is important is that it be seen that Heidegger is not indifferent to the distinction between *πρόᾱξις* and *ποίησις*, like so many thinkers within metaphysics. He has not succumbed to a technical interpretation of *πρόᾱξις*, which would understand it reactively with reference to *ποίησις*. Heidegger's treatment is impressive for its reserve. It would have been very easy for him to adopt the attitude

which is now common whereby it is imagined that one can attain a displaced or de-con-structed concept of action simply by edict.⁹² There are those who would have us believe it is enough to *record* that a word is to be understood without reference to its metaphysical connotations from Aristotle or elsewhere to accomplish this. The present essay has tried to indicate the difficulties of such attempts.

So long as *πρᾶξις* is understood with reference to its distinction from *ποίησις*, then it amounts to "a technical interpretation of *πρᾶξις*," just as Heidegger wrote in the "Letter on Humanism" of the technical interpretation of thinking. In its technical interpretation *πρᾶξις* is only understood reactively and is thereby returned to *ποίησις*. But how can *πρᾶξις* be understood other than reactively, given the dominance of *ποίησις* in metaphysics? Does not the distinction between *ποίησις* and *πρᾶξις* impose itself on our every attempt to circumvent it, even if it is a distinction which is impossible to maintain any longer in its metaphysical form?

Simply to ignore the distinction between *πρᾶξις* and *ποίησις* is to succumb to the metaphysical dominance of *ποίησις*. But to insist on *πρᾶξις* in contradistinction to *ποίησις* is still to remain in the orbit of metaphysics. Heidegger seeks in the early Greek language an understanding of *πρᾶξις*—as also of *ποίησις*—which might be said to be prior to their difference and so indifferent to it. These attempts correspond to what he was trying to say with the word 'thinking' in the "Letter on Humanism." The extent to which *πρᾶξις* might originally have been undecided with regard to the standard alternatives is quite other from its broad metaphysical sense, which includes both *ποίησις* and *πρᾶξις* in the narrow sense of the words. But can we today think the early sense without reducing it to the broad sense or allowing it to be governed by the metaphysical distinction? When, in the lecture course on Heraclitus mentioned earlier, Heidegger attempts to return to an original sense of *πρᾶξις* and turns to *πρᾶγμα* as "the one original inseparable whole of the relation between things and men," he comes to focus on the hands. The reference to hands is supported by the German word for action (*Handeln*) as also the words *vorhanden* and *zuhanden*. But is this not to return action to making? Has not the hand always been the fundamental instrument of making in its distinction from action and labor?⁹³ Such considerations haunt all attempts to pose the question of *πρᾶξις* without reference to its distinction from *ποίησις*.

To claim to have at one's disposal a so-called deconstructed notion of action is simply to find a new way of repeating the metaphysical gesture. If the naiveté of Greek ontology lay in its failure to recognize its roots, the naiveté of today's attempts to overcome that ontology is to be found in the belief that we can take up what they left unthought as if we could make it our own. Heidegger confronted this difficulty by accompanying his attempts to think the early, the oldest of the old, with a remembrance of that which followed. He accepted the necessity whereby it is only in explicit relation to the history of metaphysics that the early sense of *πρᾶξις* can address the situation in which the thinking

of *πρᾶξις* finds itself today. But to what extent could that history be conceived on the classical model? How far could it retain a similarity to the stories of the poets with beginning, middle and end? Heidegger's answer to these questions is to be found in his account of the essentially discontinuous destining of being. It is not a question simply of placing the oblivion of *πρᾶξις* within the context of the history of the dominance of *ποίησις*. What does that mean?

The distinction between *πρᾶξις* and *ποίησις* may quite correctly be recognized as metaphysical, and amongst philosophers it could even be said to be "exoteric" in the sense of 'familiar.' But it is "exoteric" also in another sense, that of being external to the history of metaphysics. It is metaphysical insofar as it leads to the subordination of *πρᾶξις* to *ποίησις* and its consequent concealment. And it is anything but a metaphysical distinction insofar as *πρᾶξις* cannot be reduced to such a role and necessarily exceeds every attempt to contain it. The undoing of this subordination is a prime task of the thinking of another beginning and it can only be accomplished insofar as it thinks in remembrance of the distinction. The concealment of *πρᾶξις* is not accidental, but a necessary consequence of the dominance of the poetical form of presencing. Yet *πρᾶξις*—as a mark of the exoteric and not simply as one concept among others—has left its trace, and not just in Aristotle. For example, Heidegger quotes a sentence from Eckhart which can serve as an illustration of the interrupting of metaphysics on the part of *πρᾶξις*. This has nothing to do with the prevalence of Aristotelianism within metaphysics. Equally the fact that the passage lacks political significance in any sense which would be recognisable to Aristotle which is something which can, of course, be referred to the different conditions prevailing at the time when it was written) is not denied. But on this occasion I have left to one side the political dimension of *πρᾶξις* and its place with reference to the metaphysical determination of the theoretical, practical and productive, albeit that to do so is a traditional prejudice of metaphysics. *Πρᾶξις* in the sense of that which interrupts is neither to be measured by nor limited to a specific idea of *πρᾶξις* which we might hold in advance.

In "The Turning" Heidegger asks the ethical question, in its traditional form: *Was sollen wir tun?*—"What should we do?"⁹⁴ It might seem that Heidegger simply evades the question, by postponing it. We must, he says, first ask, *Wie müssen wir denken?*—"How must we think?" But this too could be called an ethical question. I do not mean that it asks about the way moral considerations can be legitimately allowed to determine thinking. It is ethical in remembrance of the Greek sense of *ἦθος*. By contrast, the ethical question in its familiar form—"what should I do?"—already conceives ethics in terms of *ποίησις*. Heidegger's deflection of the conventional question of ethics to thinking is not the straightforward evasion of ethics which it might seem.⁹⁵ What we should do cannot be said in abstraction, because what is essential is to recognize the specific situation for what it is. The capacity to do so corresponds to what Aristotle called *φρόνησις*, and it arises from dwelling. That is why

Heidegger only posed these questions after he had insisted on the importance of dwelling in the sentence earlier. Between them Heidegger quotes a short sentence from Eckhart.

The sentence reads: "Those who are not of a great essence, whatever work they perform, nothing comes of it." It is drawn from *Die Rede der Unterscheidung* which means 'The Counsels on Discernment,' but also 'Discourse on Difference.' The section in which it is to be found is called, "On the Advantage of Self-abandonment which one should practice inwardly and outwardly." Eckhart there contrasts acting and being. "If you are just, then your works too are just. We ought not to think of building holiness upon action; we ought to build it upon a way of being, for it is not what we do that makes us holy, but we ought to make holy what we do. However holy the works may be, they do not, as works, makes us at all holy; but as we are holy and have being, to that extent we make all our works holy, be it eating, sleeping, keeping vigil or whatever it may be." Then comes the sentence quoted by Heidegger, and after it Eckhart's explanation. "Take good heed: We ought to do everything we can to be good; it does not matter so much what we may do, or what kinds of works ours may be. What matters is the ground on which the works are."⁹⁶ Within the context of Heidegger's discussion it is the notion of the ground which strikes us first. Heidegger says there that "modern man must first and above all find his way back into the full breadth of the space proper to his essence."⁹⁷ Essence is thought differently by Eckhart and Heidegger. In Heidegger this essence is understood with reference to dwelling, and specifically to dwelling in the truth of being. For Eckhart, the great essence of man arises when man belongs to God. "A man's essence and ground—from which his works derive their goodness—is good when his mind (*Gemüt*) is wholly directed to God."

There is nothing arbitrary about Heidegger's reference to this passage. There are doubtless people who imagine that before any saying of Eckhart can properly take up a place in a text of Heidegger's it would need to be purified of its context in a thinker who the barest knowledge of historical chronology tells us belongs clearly within the time of metaphysics. But it can in fact be seen that restoring the sentence to its context in Eckhart's works allows it to contribute much more to Heidegger's own enterprise, notwithstanding that Eckhart thinks from a thoroughly different basis from that of Heidegger. Eckhart advises against becoming attached to one's works or allowing goals and plans to govern one's life. In their place he counsels being free of one's works as soon as one performs them. This idea comes to fruition in his words *Gelassenheit* and *Abgeschiedenheit*. Heidegger's adoption of the first of these is well known. Many of his readers would prefer to free the word completely from its heritage, regarding that as only something accidental and without fundamental significance. But remembrance does not always simply draw thinking back into metaphysics. "Whatever and however we may try to think, we think within the sphere of tradition.

Tradition prevails when it frees us from thinking back (*Nachdenken*) to a thinking forward (*Vordenken*), which is no longer a planning."⁹⁸

NOTES

¹VI.iv.2. 1140a 2-3. At one time it was assumed that these 'exoteric discourses' referred to Aristotle's own more popular writings, but for some time it has been generally accepted that the phrase is more usually meant to suggest that some idea or distinction is widespread. See, for example, *The Ethics of Aristotle* with Essays and Notes by Sir Alexander Grant, London, Longmans, Green & Co., 1874, vol. 1, pp. 397-408 and *Notes on the Nicomachean Ethics* by J.A. Stewart, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1892, vol. 1, p. 162. For a recent discussion which reverts to the older view see R.A. Gauthier and J.Y. Jolif *L'éthique à Nicomaque* tome II, Paris, Béatrice-Nauwelaerts, 1970, deuxième partie, pp. 456-458.

²For a recent example of this tendency, which also challenges the standard interpretation of the distinction, see Theodor Ebert, "Praxis und Poiesis. Zu einer handlungstheoretischen Unterscheidung des Aristoteles," *Zeitschrift für philosophische Forschung* 30, 1976, pp. 12-30.

³Gauthier and Jolif are surely correct that the distinction between $\pi\rho\acute{\alpha}\xi\iota\varsigma$ and $\pi\omicron\iota\eta\sigma\iota\varsigma$ in Plato's *Charmides* (163 b-e) is not the same as that to be found in Aristotle. See also J. Hintikka "Some Remarks on praxis, poiesis and ergon in Plato and in Aristotle," *Studia Philosophica in honorem Svena Krohn Annales Universitatis Turkuensis*, ser. B, 126 (1973) pp. 53-62, who goes much further than I would in claiming that the tendency to understand the distinction as one between action and fabrication was due to Aristotle's conceptual framework, p. 60.

⁴F. Volpi, *Heidegger e Aristotle* Padova, Daphne Editrice, 1984 and "Heidegger in Marburg. Die Auseinandersetzung mit Aristoteles," *Philosophischer Literaturanzeiger* 37, 2, 1984, pp. 172-188. T. Sheehan, "Heidegger, Aristotle, Phenomenology," *Philosophy Today* 19, 2, 1975, pp. 87-94 and "Heidegger's Philosophy of Mind," *Contemporary Philosophy, A New Survey* vol. 4, ed. G. Fløistad, The Hague, Martinus Nijhoff, 1983, pp. 287-318. However, note the important remark on Aristotle's *Ethics* in the last essay, p. 299.

⁵A striking exception is Reiner Schürmann's *La principe d'anarchie* Paris, Seuil, 1982. This important study addresses many of the topics that I raise here. I have resisted the temptation to try and situate my essay with reference to his book, believing that it would require more than a piecemeal treatment to do it justice. On the importance of Aristotle's *Ethics* for Heidegger see, for example, "Brief an P. William William J. Richardson," *Heidegger, Through Phenomenology to Thought* The Hague, Martinus Nijhoff, 1963 pp. x-xiii.

⁶This volume, which was one of the first to be announced but which has still not appeared, will be volume 19. The prospectus for the Gesamtausgabe also refers to a lecture to the Kant-Gesellschaft of Cologne a year earlier under the title "Wahrsein und Dasein. Aristoteles, *Ethica Nicomachea* Z." In the absence of these texts Helene Weiss' book on Aristotle serves as the most important source for Heidegger's reading of Aristotle at this period. *Kausalität und Zufall in der Philosophie des Aristoteles* Basel, Haus zum Falken, 1942. She acknowledges her debt to Heidegger's unpublished interpretations of Greek philosophy in the introduction and repeats it specifically with reference to her account of the *Nicomachean Ethics* in a chapter entitled "Praxis," p. 100n.

⁷H. Arendt, *The Human Condition* New York, Doubleday Anchor, 1959; *Vita Activa oder Vom tätigen Leben* Munich, R. Piper, 1981. As I am unable here to give my own account of *πραξις*, Arendt's discussion in Chapter Five must serve provisionally in its place. However, it is clear that as an account of the Greek sources her account of the distinction between *πραξις* and *ποίησις* needs some revision. Furthermore, her general overview needs to be supplemented by a fuller discussion of the oblivion of *πραξις* in Western metaphysics and an appreciation of how to construe the occasional witnessing to *πραξις*, which interrupts this oblivion. Finally, there is a further, less accidental, sense in which I cannot here give an account of *πραξις*, which should become more clear by the end of this essay. According to this understanding my appeal to Arendt will turn out to be all the more provisional and, by the same token, less easy for me to replace.

⁸H.-G. Gadamer, *Wahrheit und Methode* Tübingen, J.C.B. Mohr, 1975, pp. 295-307; trans. William Glen-Doepel, *Truth and Methode* London, Sheed & Ward, 1975, pp. 278-289. Gadamer in a number of essays is quite explicit about his debt to Heidegger's seminars and lectures on the *Nicomachean Ethics*. See further, Paul Schuchmann "Aristotle's phronesis and Gadamer's hermeneutics," *Philosophy Today* 23, 1979, pp. 41-50 and Joseph Dunne "Aristotle after Gadamer: An analysis of the distinction between the concepts of phronesis and techne," *Irish Philosophical Journal* vol 2, no. 2, 1985, pp. 105-123.

⁹*Sein und Zeit* (GA 2) p. 196; *Sein und Zeit*, Tübingen, Niemeyer, 1967, p. 147; tr. J. Macquarrie and E. Robinson *Being and Time* Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1967, p. 187.

¹⁰GA 2, pp. 227 and 474; *Sein und Zeit* (1967), pp. 171 and 358; tr., pp. 215 and 410.

¹¹GA 2, p. 175; *Sein und Zeit* (1967), p. 131; tr., p. 170.

¹²*Kant und das Problem der Metaphysik* vierte erweiterte Auflage, Frankfurt, Klostermann, 1973, p. 235; tr. J.S. Churchill *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics* Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1968, p. 251.

¹³For example *Metaphysische Anfangsgründe der Logik* (GA 26), p. 197; tr. *Metaphysical Foundations of Logic*, p. 155. But as an indication of how insecure my attempted distinction between the notion of "repeti-

tion" and that of "another beginning" is, see *Einführung in die Metaphysik* (GA 40), p. 42; *Einführung in die Metaphysik* Tübingen, Niemeyer, 1953, p. 29; tr. R. Manheim *An Introduction to Metaphysics* New Haven, Yale University Press, 1973, p. 39.

¹⁴GA 2, p. 30; *Sein und Zeit* (1967), p. 22; tr., p. 44.

¹⁵*Die Grundprobleme der Phänomenologie* (GA 20), p. 251; tr. *Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, p. 186. See also *Prolegomena zur Geschichte des Zeitbegriffs* (GA 24), p. 155; tr. *History of the Concept of Time*, p. 110.

¹⁶GA 24, p. 143; tr., p. 101. See further Jacques Taminiaux, "Heidegger et les Grecs à l'époque de l'ontologie fondamentale," *Études Phénoménologiques* 1, 1985, pp. 95-112.

¹⁷GA 24, p. 153; tr., pp. 108-109. See also GA 20, p. 258; tr., p. 190. It should be noted that there are differences in emphasis between the various formulations of this distinction to be found in the Marburg Lectures, and one should not attempt to insist that they be brought into absolute consistency.

¹⁸GA 20, p. 264; tr., p. 194

¹⁹GA 24, pp. 156-157; p. 111.

²⁰*Aristoteles, Metaphysik IX 1-3* (GA 33), p. 137.

²¹*Kant und das Problem der Metaphysik* p. 228; tr., 243.

²²GA 2, pp. 113-117; *Sein und Zeit* (1967), pp. 113-117; tr., 84-87. Arendt draws on Section 18 of *Being and Time* when she explores the difficulties confronting utilitarianism and all philosophies which draw on the experience of instrumentality. Her main references to the "for the sake of" are, however, neither to Aristotle nor Heidegger, but to Kant. That she does not adopt the Aristotelian 'solution' and refer the "for the sake of" to action is an indication of her alertness to the dangers of substituting making for doing. *Human Condition*, sec. 21, pp. 134-137; *Vita Activa*, pp. 140-143.

²³For example, GA 26, pp. 137, 237 and 240; tr., pp. 111, 184 and 186.

²⁴GA 2, p. 92; *Sein und Zeit* (1967), p. 68; tr., pp. 96-97. Also GA 20, p. 250; tr., p. 185.

²⁵*Die Frage nach dem Ding* (GA 41), p. 70; *Die Frage nach dem Ding* Tübingen, Niemeyer, 1962, pp. 53-54; tr. W. Barton and V. Deutsch *What Is a Thing?* Chicago, Henry Regnery, 1970, p. 70 *Πρᾶξις* is also understood in this broad sense, which includes *ποίησις*, in a discussion of Plato in GA 40, p. 62; *Einführung in die Metaphysik* (1953) p. 44; tr., p. 58.

²⁶See especially *Wegmarken* (GA 9), p. 354; *Wegmarken* (1967), p. 184; tr. *Basic Writings* ed. D.F. Krell, New York, Harper & Row, 1977, pp. 222-223.

²⁷When he introduced the distinction earlier, he described it, in the same phrase he used for the distinction between *πρᾶξις* and *ποίησις*, as current "in exoteric discourses." *Nicomachean Ethics* I. xiii. 9, 1102a28.

²⁸Heidegger, in a discussion of this passage understands *λογισμός* as

circumspective calculation, consideration, and so relate it to choice and decision. GA 33, pp. 125-128.

²⁹*Nicomachean Ethics* VI. vi. 2, 1141a6-9.

³⁰*Nicomachean Ethics* VI. ii. 5, 1139a35-1139b4, my translation. For recent discussion of this passage, see Troels Engberg-Pedersen *Aristotle's Theory of Moral Insight* Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1983, p. 29.

³¹Andronicus Rhodius, *Ethicorum Nicomacheorum Paraphrasis* Cantabrigiae, Johannes Hayes, 1679, pp. 254-255. By contrast, St. Thomas Aquinas in his Commentary understands this whole chapter of the *Ethics* in terms of chapters 10 and 11 of Book III of the *De Anima*. Hence he does not see any ordering of *πραξις* and *ποιησις* implied in this passage, but rather understands it in terms of the distinction between speculative and practical reason. In *dicem libros ethicorum Aristotelis ad Nicomachum* Torino, Marietti, 1964, paras. 1135-1136, p. 311; trans. C.I. Litzinger *Commentary on the Nicomachean Ethics*, Chicago, Henry Regnery, 1964, pp. 547-548. Aquinas thereby finds a way of avoiding any suggestion here of the superiority of *πραξις* over *ποιησις*.

³²That there is in Aristotle an "assimilation of moral reasoning to technical deliberation" is now a common observation in the contemporary interpretation of his *Ethics*, but it is provided with a very different significance than that which I am attempting to give it here. See, for example, John M. Cooper *Reason and Human Good in Aristotle* Cambridge, Mass, Harvard University Press, 1975, p. 2.

³³GA 26, p. 146; tr., p. 118. In "The Question Concerning Technology" Heidegger challenges the conventional interpretation of the four causes as offering a further illustration of the transformation which Greek philosophy underwent with its translation into Latin. Insofar as have myself in this paragraph relied on such conventional terms as final and efficient cause, the later Heidegger might have judged my reading of Aristotle anachronistic. Whether and in what way a reading of these passages from the *Ethics* in terms of *veranlassen* or occasioning would make a difference cannot be answered here, but I shall say more later on what lies behind Heidegger's attempt to reconstrue the Greek notion of *ποιησις*. *Vorträge und Aufsätze* Pfullingen, Neske, 1978, pp. 11-18; tr. *Basic Writings* pp. 289-292.

³⁴Arendt, *Human Condition* sec. 26, p. 171; *Vita Activa* pp. 184-185.

³⁵GA 24, p. 232; tr., p. 163.

³⁶GA 24, p. 154; tr., p. 109.

³⁷GA 26, p. 234; tr., p. 182.

³⁸GA 26, p. 236; tr., p. 183.

³⁹GA 26, p. 237; tr., p. 184.

⁴⁰GA 26, p. 233; tr., p. 181.

⁴¹GA 26, p. 237; tr., p. 184.

⁴²*Holzwege* (GA 5), p. 29; *Der Ursprung des Kunstwerkes* Stuttgart, Reclam, 1970, p. 43; tr. *Poetry, Language, Thought* p. 43. Recalling Heraclitus, Fragment 53.

⁴³See note 52.

⁴⁴The problems of the rival claims are discussed—and at various points exaggerated—by Gerold Prauss in his *Erkennen und Handeln in Heideggers 'Sein und Zeit'* Freiburg, Alber, 1977. Unfortunately Prauss does not recognize the underlying questions which are being entertained by Heidegger, because like so many readers before him he does not read *Being and Time* in terms of its stated task of destroying the history of ontology.

⁴⁵*Vorträge und Aufsätze* (1978) p. 53; tr. W. Lovitt *Question Concerning Technology* New York, Harper & Row, 1977, p. 164. See also *Parmenides* (GA 54), p. 220.

⁴⁶*Vorträge und Aufsätze* (1978) p. 160; tr. *Poetry, Language, Thought* p. 168.

⁴⁷GA 5, p. 9; *Der Ursprung des Kunstwerkes* p. 17; tr. *Poetry, Language, Thought* p. 24.

⁴⁸GA 5, p. 11; *Der Ursprung des Kunstwerkes* p. 20; tr. *Poetry, Language, Thought* pp. 26-27. Also *Nietzsche: Der Wille zu Macht als Kunst* (GA 43), p. 96; *Nietzsche Band 1*, Pfullingen, Neske, 1961, p. 98; tr. D.F. Krell *Nietzsche, Volume One: The Will to Power as Art* New York, Harper & Row, 1979, p. 82: "The distinction of 'matter and form' arose in the sphere of equipment (utensils)..."

⁴⁹*Zur Sache des Denkens* Tübingen, Niemeyer, 1969, p. 49; tr. J. Stambaugh *On Time and Being* New York, Harper & Row, 1977; pp. 45-46.

⁵⁰For example, GA 9, p. 340; *Wegmarken* (1967) p. 171; tr. *Basic Writings* p. 220. Also *Vier Seminare* Klostermann, Frankfurt, 1977, p. 130.

⁵¹*Vorträge und Aufsätze* (1978) p. 15; tr. *Basic Writings* p. 293. See also 'Vom Wesen und Begriff der $\Phi\upsilon\sigma\iota\varsigma$ ': "Making, $\pi\omicron\iota\omicron\iota\varsigma$, is one kind of production, whereas 'growing' (the going back into itself and emerging out of itself), *physis*, is another": GA 9, p. 289; *Wegmarken* (1967) p. 359; tr. T. Sheehan "On the Being and Conception of $\Phi\upsilon\sigma\iota\varsigma$ " *Man and World* 9, 3, 1976, p. 20. Also *Vier Seminare* Klostermann, Frankfurt, 1977, p. 130 and GA 24, p. 151; tr., p. 107. Notice further that Heidegger also hears the word *Tun* in the sense of *Wirken* as related through the same Indo-Germanic word-stem to the Greek $\theta\epsilon\omicron\iota\varsigma$. This latter is not only understood so that it refers to $\phi\upsilon\sigma\iota\varsigma$ as well as human activity. It also serves as another route by which Heidegger thinks the unity of metaphysics in relation to doing in a broad sense, this time through the various words related to *Stellen*. *Vorträge und Aufsätze* (1978) p. 45; tr. *Question Concerning Technology* p. 159.

⁵²Although Aristotle is clear that the $\epsilon\gamma\gamma\omicron\nu$ of every part of the intellect

is to attain truth, Aristotle is more explicit about truth in respect of *πράξεις* (VI.ii.3) and *φρόνησις* (VI.vi.5) than about *τέχνη*. Indeed, he omits any reference to *τέχνη* in one of two lists which record the excellences whereby the mind achieves the truth (VI.vi.2, 1141a2-8). The omission could be explained as an error in transcription or as an acknowledgement of the dependence of *τέχνη* on *φρόνησις*.

⁶³*Vorträge und Aufsätze* (1978) p. 31; tr. *Basic Writings* p. 308. I discuss Heidegger's essay in Chapter Five of *The Question of Language in Heidegger's History of Being* New Jersey, Humanities, 1985. See also, Michael Haar "The End of Distress: the End of Technology?" *Research in Phenomenology* X111, 1983, pp. 43-63.

⁶⁴*Die Künste im technischen Zeitalter* Munich, R. Oldenberg, 1954, pp. 59-62.

⁶⁵On Protagoras, see GA 5, pp. 103-106; *Holzwege* (1972); pp. 94-98; tr. *The Question Concerning Technology* pp. 143-147. Also *Nietzsche* Band 2, pp. 127-173; tr. F.A. Capuzzi *Nietzsche* vol. 4, *Nihilism* New York, Harper & Row, 1982, pp. 85-122.

⁶⁶GA 9, p. 340; *Wegmarken* (1967), p. 171; tr. *Basic Writings* p. 220. See already *Grundfragen der Philosophie* (GA45), pp. 178-179.

⁶⁷*Vorträge und Aufsätze* (1978) p. 36; tr. *Basic Writings* p. 314.

⁶⁸GA 5, pp. 46-47 and 62; *Der Ursprung des Kunstwerkes* pp.65-66 and 84-85, tr. *Poetry, Language, Thought* pp. 59 and 74.

⁶⁹*Vorträge und Aufsätze* (1978) p. 39; tr. *Basic Writings* (1978) p. 316. It should not be forgotten that the lecture was part of a series on "The arts in the age of technology."

⁷⁰*Vorträge und Aufsätze* (1978) p. 183; tr. *Poetry, Language, Thought* p. 215.

⁷¹*Vorträge und Aufsätze* (1978) p. 185; tr. *Poetry, Language, Thought* p. 217.

⁷²*Vorträge und Aufsätze* (1978) ; tr. *Poetry, Language, Thought* p. 227.

⁷³GA 9, p. 354; *Wegmarken* (1967) p. 185; tr. *Basic Writings* p. 233. Also *Heraklit* (GA 55), pp. 205-206 and 214.

⁷⁴*Nicomachean Ethics* II.i.i, 1103a17.

⁷⁵*Metaphysics* V.i.5, 1025b25. Also *Nicomachean Ethics* I.i.1. 1139a27 and *Eudemian Ethics* I.i.2, 1214a8-12.

⁷⁶*Vorträge und Aufsätze* (1978) p. 140; tr. *Poetry, Language, Thought* p. 146.

⁷⁷*Vorträge und Aufsätze* (1978) p. 154; tr. *Poetry, Language, Thought* p. 159

⁷⁸*Vorträge und Aufsätze* (1978) p. 140; tr. *Poetry, Language, Thought* p. 146.

⁷⁹*Vorträge und Aufsätze* (1978) p. 140; tr. *Poetry, Language, Thought* p. 146.

⁸⁰*Identität und Differenz* Pfullingen, Neske, 1957, p. 34; tr. J. Stambaugh *Identity and Difference* New York, Harper & Row, 1969, p. 41

⁷¹*Vorträge und Aufsätze* (1978) p. 142 *Poetry, Language, Thought* p. 148.

⁷²GA 55, pp. 217 and 223.

⁷³*Vorträge und Aufsätze* p. 155; tr. *Poetry, Language, Thought* p. 160.

⁷⁴*Die Technik und die Kehre* p. 39; tr. *The Question Concerning Technology* pp. 132-133.

⁷⁵*Vorträge und Aufsätze* (1978) p. 156; tr. *Poetry, Language, Thought* p. 161.

⁷⁶GA 9, p. 313; *Wegmarken* (1967) p. 145; tr. *Basic Writings* p. 193. On the *Letter on Humanism* see John Sallis, "Reason and Ek-sistence" in *Delimitations, Phenomenology and the End of Metaphysics* Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1986, forthcoming.

⁷⁷GA 9, p. 314; *Wegmarken* (1967) p. 146; tr. *Basic Writings* p. 194.

⁷⁸GA 9, p. 317; *Wegmarken* (1967) p. 149; tr. *Basic Writings* p. 197.

⁷⁹GA 9, p. 361; *Wegmarken* (1967) p. 191-192; tr. *Basic Writings* p. 239.

⁸⁰GA 9, p. 362; *Wegmarken* (1967) p. 192; tr. *Basic Writings* p. 240.

⁸¹This is of course an unAristotelian conception. In the *Ethics* Aristotle offers Anaxagoras and Thales as evidence for the separation of σοφία and φρόνησις. *Nicomachean Ethics* VI.vii.3, 1141b4.

⁸²"Logos (Heraklit, Fragment 50)" *Vorträge und Aufsätze* (1978) p. 221; tr. D.F. Krell and F. Capuzzi *Early Greek Thinking* New York, Harper & Row, 1975, p. 78.

⁸³GW 9, pp. 354-356; *Wegmarken* (1967) pp. 185-187; tr. *Basic Writings* pp. 233-235. I discuss this story at greater length in "Deconstruction and the Possibility of Ethics" *Deconstruction and Philosophy: The Texts of Jacques Derrida* ed. John Sallis, University of Chicago Press, 1986, pp. 122-139.

⁸⁴"The element of the truth of being" according to GW 9, p. 315. Cf. *Wegmarken* p. 147; tr. *Basic Writings* p. 195.

⁸⁵GW 9, pp. 344 and 364; *Wegmarken* (1967) pp. 174 and 194; tr. *Basic Writings* pp. 223 and 241-242.

⁸⁶The difference disappears in the typography of the English translation.

⁸⁷GW 9, p. 314; *Wegmarken* (1967) p. 146; tr. *Basic Writings* p. 194.

⁸⁸GA 54, p. 124. See also, GA 54, pp. 118 and 219.

⁸⁹*Vorträge und Aufsätze* (1978) p. 48; tr. *The Question Concerning Technology* p. 164. Also GA 55, p. 203 and *Vier Seminare* p. 91.

⁹⁰"Die Herkunft der Kunst und die Bestimmung des Denkens" *Distanz und Nähe* P. Jaeger and R. Lütke, Würzburg, Königshausen & Neumann, 1983, pp. 20-21.

⁹¹GW 9, pp. 362-363; *Wegmarken* (1967) p. 193; tr. *Basic Writings* p. 240.

⁹²Even if the word 'deconstruction' might seem to evoke the name of Derrida, it should be recognized that I am not by any means referring to Derrida, but rather to the misuse to which his thinking has sometimes been put.

⁹³H. Arendt, *The Human Condition* sec. 11, pp. 72-81; *Vita Activa* pp. 76-85. See also Aristotle *De partibus animalium* 4. 10 and Klaus Bartels "Der Begriff Techne bei Aristoteles," *Synusia* 1965, pp. 275-287.

⁹⁴*Die Technik und die Kehre* p. 40; tr. *The Question Concerning Technology* p. 40.

⁹⁵See my "Deconstruction and the Possibility of Ethics" as referred to in note 83.

⁹⁶*Die deutschen und lateinischen Werke* J. Quint, Stuttgart and Berlin, W. Kohlhammer, 1962, V, pp. 197-198; tr. E. Colledge and B. McGinn, *Meister Eckhart* New York, Paulist Press, 1981, pp. 250-251. See also, R. Schürmann *Meister Eckhart: Mystic and Philosopher* Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1978, p. 256 n. 103 and J. D. Caputo *The Mystical Elements in Heidegger's Thought* Athens, Ohio University Press, 1978, p. 156.

⁹⁷*Die Technik und die Kehre* p. 39; tr. *The Question Concerning Technology* p. 39.

⁹⁸*Identität und Differenz* (1957), p. 34; tr. *Identity and Difference* p. 41.

The present essay is indebted to two—very different—places and the opportunities for thinking made available to me by both of them. The essay is based on a series of lectures delivered at the Collegium Phaenomenologicum, Perugia, in July 1984. The interaction which took place on that occasion to a large extent determined the direction they took and I am grateful to all the participants and particularly Parvis Emad, David Krell, Giuseppina Moneta, John Sallis and Charles Scott. The written version of the essay was prepared during a year's leave from Essex University, which I spent at the Technische Universität at Braunschweig and I would like to express my gratitude to Professors Boeder and Scheier for the hospitality they showed me and for the example they provided.