

## Chapter 1: *Techne*: A Concept of Power–Knowledge

“Ἡφαιστον κλυτόμητιν αἰείσειο, Μοῦσα λίγεια,  
ὃς μετ’ Ἀθηναίης γλαυκώπιδος ἀγλαὰ ἔργα  
ἀνθρώπους ἐδίδαξεν ἐπὶ χθονός, οἳ τὸ πάρος περ  
ἄντροις ναιετάασκον ἐν οὔρεσιν, ἥύτε θῆρες.  
νῦν δὲ δι’ Ἡφαιστον κλυτοτέχνην ἔργα δαέντες  
ῥηιδίως αἰῶνα τελεσφόρον εἰς ἐνιαυτὸν  
εὐκῆλοι διάγουσιν ἐνὶ σφετέροισι δόμοισιν.  
ἀλλ’ ἴληθ’ Ἡφαιστεῖ· δίδου δ’ ἀρετὴν τε καὶ ὄλβον.  
(Homeric Hymn 20)

Sing, clear-voiced Muse, of Hephaestus famed for inventions. With bright-eyed Athena he taught men glorious crafts throughout the world—men who before used to dwell in caves in the mountains like wild beasts. But now that they have learned crafts through Hephaestus the famed worker, easily they live a peaceful life in their own houses the whole year round.

Be gracious, Hephaestus, and grant me success and prosperity!

This is a hymn composed around the second half of the fifth century BCE in praise of Hephaestus, the god of crafts. In his introduction to the Homeric Hymns, Martin L. West (2003) ascribes to it the topic of »the concept of human progress from a primitive state« (p. 18). Its content is not limited to this concept, however, but consists of a set of astonishingly informative ideas concerning the relationship between knowledge and

power, which can be found not only in contemporary writers but also in ancient authors.

## 1.1 Hephaestus

It is worth noting that the root term for craft, namely »*techne*« (τέχνη), only occurs once in this hymn, not independently but as a component of the compound word κλυτοτέχνης (famous craftsman). The word translated as »craft« by Hugh G. Evelyn-White, as later by West (2003, p. 203), is »*erga*« (ἔργα; works). Given the context, this translation is apt. There are at least three aspects demonstrating its correctness. First, *techne* is teachable: Transmitting his *techne* to his pupil is a part of the master's work that defines what his *techne* is (cf. Plato, *Gorgias* 449b). In this sense, teaching *techne* is the *erga* of Hephaestus, whereas what humans learn from his *erga* are *technai*.<sup>2</sup> Second, *techne* as an act of production (ποίησις; cf. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 1140a) is inseparable from *erga* as a deed or product: A *techne* is defined by a corresponding *ergon* (cf. Plato, *Gorgias* 454a). Third, the *erga* taught by Hephaestus to humans, as we will see later, meet the essential criteria of *techne*, as Athena, the goddess of strategy, is also involved.

As one of the most important concepts of ancient Greek thought and practice, *techne*, as many scholars have identified, is characterized by a number of features, including specialization, rationality, teachability, goal-directedness, the combination of knowledge and power, the disciplining and regulating of practitioners, and so on (cf. Sprague 1976, pp. 10–14, 24, on specialization; Irwin 1977, pp. 71–74, on rationality and teachability; Hulme 2019 on goal-directedness, Foucault 2013, pp. 244–45, on the combination of knowledge and power; and Detel 1998, pp. 50–63, on the disciplining and regulating of subjects). Nevertheless, all those features, I argue, can be reduced to two essential components, that is, as the hymn above shows, *ergon* (Hephaestus) and strategy (Athena).

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2 *Technai* is the (nominative) plural form of *techne*.

The English word »work« is appropriate for translating *ergon* (ἔργον), since the latter refers to both »work« as an act of production and »work« as a product. In this sense, both »work« and »*ergon*« imply an indistinction between means and ends, although this indistinction rarely, if ever, materializes in practice. Aristotle believes that the distinction between means and ends in terms of *techne* is by no means a problem, as *techne* is a *poiesis* (ποίησις), that is, an act of production. *Poiesis* differs from *praxis* (πράξις) »τῆς μὲν γὰρ ποιήσεως ἕτερον τὸ τέλος· τῆς δὲ πράξεως οὐκ ἂν εἴη· ἔστι γὰρ αὐτὴ ἡ εὐπραξία τέλος« [Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 1140b 4–6; because the end of a *poiesis* is different from this *poiesis* itself, whereas a good *praxis* is the end of this *praxis* itself]. Doctors, for instance, as *technitai* (τεχνίται)<sup>3</sup> of medical *techne*, usually have no problem distinguishing the cure—their work as production and an instrument directed toward the recovery of the patient—from the recovery—the product and end achieved by their work. There is, however, at least one kind of *techne* characterized by the indistinction between *poiesis* and *praxis*. This will be discussed later.

*Techne* is specialized insofar as every concrete *techne* is embodied in individual work that is always specific. To work on a specific thing means to work under specific circumstances, with specific materials, and to produce a specific product, which, as the goal of production, leads to the specialization of *techne*. This is why, when Socrates was unsure of what *techne* rhetoric was, he asked Gorgias what its specific work was (Plato, *Gorgias* 454a).

Nevertheless, work is not sufficient in itself to be conceived of as an implementation of *techne*, because it can represent the exercise of mere experience (ἐμπειρία or τριβή), through which one may successfully produce a product without investigating the nature of the product and the

3 *Technitai* (τεχνίται) is the (nominative) plural form of *technites* (τεχνίτης), meaning »someone who practices *techne*.« The word is usually translated as »craftsman« or »artisan,« the meaning of which is not, indeed, as general as that of *technites*, which can also refer to an individual, such as a physician or politician, not usually counted as a craftsman or artisan. Furthermore, in subsequent sections, we will discuss a *techne* exercised by a depersonalized *technites*. Therefore, instead of translating, I prefer to transliterate the term.

relevant materials (cf. Plato, *Gorgias* 500e–501b). This kind of success is governed by luck because there is no necessary relationship between the product and the intentional work (cf. Plato, *Phaedrus* 270a). Only when Athena accompanies Hephaestus can the work that humans learn from the latter be considered *technē*.

## 1.2 Athena

What Athena brings to humans is her strategic thinking, which guides production by leading people to investigate the features of their respective products, the respective materials to be processed, and the respective circumstances in which they are working so as to choose the best approach to production. Strategic thinking requires work to be performed as *technē*, that is, work equipped with rational account (λόγος) in terms of a cause (αἰτία; cf. Plato, *Gorgias* 454a). In this sense, *technē* is a strategic act. If humans wish to achieve their goal, namely successful production, they must try to establish the etiology of their circumstances, materials, products, and *poiesis*. The form of strategic act is precisely described in Plato's *Phaedrus* 270 c–d:

Τὸ τοίνυν περὶ φύσεως σκόπει τί ποτε λέγει Ἱπποκράτης τε καὶ ὁ ἀληθὴς λόγος. Ἄρ' οὐχ ὥδε δεῖ διανοεῖσθαι περὶ ὁτουοῦν φύσεως; Πρῶτον μὲν, ἀπλοῦν ἢ πολυειδές ἐστιν οὐ περὶ βουλευσόμεθα εἶναι αὐτοὶ τεχνικοὶ καὶ ἄλλον δυνατοὶ ποιεῖν; Ἐπειτα δέ, ἂν μὲν ἀπλὺν ἢ, σκοπεῖν τὴν δύναμιν αὐτοῦ, τίνα πρὸς τί πέφυκεν εἰς τὸ δρᾶν ἔχον, ἢ τίνα εἰς τὸ παθεῖν ὑπὸ τοῦ; Ἐὰν δὲ πλείω εἶδη ἔχη, ταῦτα ἀριθμησάμενον, ὅπερ ἐφ' ἑνὸς τοῦτ' ἰδεῖν ἐφ' ἑκάστου, τῷ τί ποιεῖν αὐτὸ πέφυκεν, ἢ τῷ τί παθεῖν ὑπὸ τοῦ;

Consider, then, what Hippocrates and the true *logos* say about nature. Must one deliberate about the nature of anything? First, we must consider whether the object—regarding which we want to be professional and make others professional—is simple or complex. Next, if it is simple, we must investigate its power: What power disposed

to produce does it possess? Or what power disposed to be affected does it have? However, if it consists of many forms, after enumerating these, we must look at each one individually, regarding what it is disposed to produce or what it is disposed to be affected by.

The objects of the strategic act, as the passage suggests, can be put into two categories: products and materials. Products take precedence over materials because a practitioner cannot act strategically toward materials unless they know what product they wish to create. Once the product is determined, the *technites* must then deal with the materials, which can also be divided into two categories: materials to be processed and instruments of processing.

Such a way of thinking is perfectly exemplified by Plato's discussion of rhetoric, a concrete *techne* defined by persuasion as its *ergon*. Since persuasion is a specific state of the human soul, investigating the nature of the soul (φύσις τῇ ψυχῇς) is an integral part of a rhetorician's work (cf. Plato, *Phaedrus* 270b, 271a). Such an investigation demonstrates the diversity among individual souls and forces the rhetorician to analyze the specific soul they wish to convince. Additionally, rhetoricians must discern the related etiology of various discourses (λόγοι)—their instruments of persuasion—to choose the most appropriate one for the particular soul they wish to persuade (cf. Plato, *Phaedrus* 271a–d).

Instruments can be further subdivided into optional instruments and unalterable circumstances, the latter of which play an important role in determining which instruments and materials are readily available. If one must diplomatically persuade a leader in public, for instance, the types of speech one can employ are different from those one might use in private. Similarly, in the countryside of a developing country, the instruments available to cure a patient will be significantly more limited than in a metropolis of a developed country; it would be absurd to expect a doctor in the former scenario to use the same method to treat a disease as a doctor in the latter.

### 1.3 Practice as a Result of Strategy

In most cases, possessing propositional knowledge is not sufficient for a pupil to become a qualified *technites*. One must also discern the nature of the materials to be processed as quickly as possible during concrete work. To grasp the more opportune possibilities (cf. Plato, *Phaedrus* 272a: τούτων τὴν εὐκαιρίαν τε καὶ ἀκαιρίαν διαγνόντι [having discerned the opportunity and inopportunity of these]), continuous exercise and practice are necessary, as well as possession of propositional knowledge. We do not know whether the competence to grasp opportunities can be acquired without practice. Examining all possible ways to acquire this competence, however, renders it certain that there is no shorter path to mastering it than practice. When Socrates says, »εἴ τις πῆ ῥάων καὶ βραχυτέρα φαίνεται ἐπ’ αὐτὴν ὁδός, ἵνα μὴ μάτην πολλὴν ἀπὴ καὶ τραχεῖαν, ἐξὸν ὀλίγην τε καὶ λείαν« [*Phaedrus* 272b–c; If there seems to be an easier and shorter way to it, one does not follow a long and rough path for no good reason, when an easier and smoother one is available], he is undoubtedly suggesting the principle of strategic action: If there is no good reason to choose the longer way or give up the goal, one should always choose the shorter, smoother way to achieve that goal. In this sense, choosing appropriate instruments and applying propositional knowledge in practice, as well as the act of practice itself, count as consequences of strategy.

During practice, pupils are regulated by disciplinary power, which cultivates their competence in unconscious action, allowing them to discern materials’ features as rapidly as possible. In this sense, one could say that *technē* implies disciplinary power exercised by strategy over *technites* and »subjectivation« in the sense that the person is transformed into a subject mastering *technē*. As the hymn above shows, by learning *technē* from Hephaestus and Athena, primordial human beings transformed themselves into subjects whose lives differ from those of wild beasts. Nevertheless, as *Phaedrus* 269d–274b suggests, the features ascribed to *technē* are consequences of a strategic act aimed at a specific work.

It is inaccurate to say that pupils are compelled by the disciplinary power of rationality, since rationality itself cannot force anyone to do anything unless they desire to create something. It is also inaccurate, however,

to say that pupils are fundamentally compelled by their own rationality and desire, because they need not accept a determined form of disciplinary power if their rationality shows that the materials to be processed are of sufficiently high quality that they can randomly select a method to produce their product. Instead, individuals are compelled by the circumstances and materials at hand. Rationality drives them to explore the nature and etiology of these circumstances and materials, thus forcing them to choose the most appropriate way to work. Practiced *technē* also reveals relationships of power, in which one person's actions are affected by another's. A rhetorician, for instance, exerts power over the person they want to persuade, who then *πείται* (meaning both »is persuaded« and »obeys«). This relationship is mutual in that through the rhetorician's strategic thinking, the specific features of the soul to be persuaded also, as Plato points out, affect the rhetorician's action and force them to choose the most appropriate forms of persuasion. Furthermore, the power relationship enacted through *technē* is not limited to human relationships; the available instruments and the nonhuman materials to be processed also, by virtue of humans' strategic thinking, affect the actions of *technitai*.

#### 1.4 The Priority of Hephaestus

It is worth noting that Homeric Hymn 20 is sung in eulogy of Hephaestus alone, although Athena is also mentioned. The priority of Hephaestus in terms of *technē* appears to suggest that *ergon* is more important than strategy. This suggestion is not surprising, given that the hymn is influenced by Protagoras, the Sophist (cf. West 2003, p. 18) who considers himself a *technites* of Sophistic *technē* (σοφιστική τέχνη; cf. Plato, *Protagoras* 316d–317c). In his *Lectures on the Will to Know* (1971/2013), Foucault claims that Plato's and Aristotle's works are characterized by a tendency—vividly represented by the Socrates–Sophists polemics on the question of »Why do we desire to know?«—to reject the tracing of the human thirst for knowledge to something outside the framework of knowledge itself (pp. 14–15). What Plato and Aristotle wish, in Foucault's reading, to reject is exactly what the hymn prays for at its conclusion: »ἀλλ' ἴληθ', Ἡφαίστε·

δίδου δ' ἀρετὴν τε καὶ ὄλβον» [Be gracious, Hephaestus; give me virtue and happiness!].<sup>4</sup> This implies a quite different answer to the question of »Why do we desire to know?«: »Because we want virtue (ἀρετή) and happiness (ὄλβος).« Learning virtue (ἀρετή) through a remarkable *technites* is exactly the idea expressed by Protagoras in Plato's dialogue, where he claims that virtue, as knowledge–*techne*, »οὐ φύσει ἡγούνται εἶναι οὐδ' ἀπὸ τοῦ αὐτομάτου» [Protagoras 323c; is neither natural nor self-generated].

For most of his life, Plato saw the Sophists, including Protagoras, as his adversaries. This did not apply, however, to the question of whether virtue is knowledge. The assertion that »virtue is knowledge« (ἐστὶν ἐπιστήμη τις ἡ ἀρετή; Plato, *Meno* 86c–87d) is not only the view of Protagoras but also a Socratic idea. As Foucault (2013) points out, the polemic concerns rather the question of whether knowledge derives »from the exteriority and violence of desire« (p. 16). Unlike Plato, who sought to protect the purity of knowledge through »the will to know« in his early and intermediate works, Protagoras believes that virtue, as a kind of knowledge, is by no means a transcendental *episteme* spontaneously recollected by the human soul but is, instead, a *techne* taught by teachers and developed through practice specific to a certain political goal.

This does not mean, however, that Plato and Protagoras believe in a strict distinction between *episteme* and *techne*. Plato usually uses both terms to describe different aspects of »knowledge,« and as Richard Parry (2024) has demonstrated, the two are even used interchangeably in some of his dialogues, such as the *Charmides* (165c) and the *Euthydemus* (281a). I use two different terms here—namely, knowledge–*episteme* and knowledge–*techne*—exclusively to designate the two opposed understandings of the origin of knowledge. In the *Meno*, Socrates primarily uses *episteme* to emphasize that virtue, as a kind of knowledge, is unteachable, whereas Protagoras, in the dialogue bearing his name, uses τέχνη to express the opposing view that virtue, as a kind of knowledge, is teachable.

4 We should note, however, that Foucault's diagnosis—that Plato tends to reduce the will to know to part of propositional knowledge itself—is, as we will see in the following sections, only applicable to the early Plato, maintaining the theory of recollection found, for example, in the *Meno*, *Phaedo*, and *Protagoras*.

For *technitai* such as Protagoras, truth in the form of propositional knowledge—namely knowledge-*episteme* concerning a specific goal or materials—brought by Athena and grasped through cultivated human virtue is neither an effect of the »will to know« nor a precondition of production: Rather, it is an effect of the synergy between the master’s teaching and the pupil’s desire to create something. In other words, according to Protagoras’ view (adopted in Homeric Hymn 20), knowledge derives from something outside knowledge itself and cannot, consequently, be traced back to any ultimate precondition conceived of as knowledge, such as what Foucault calls »the will to know.«

The prioritization of Hephaestus over Athena did not originate with Protagoras but is a remnant of a custom dating back to at least the late Archaic period, as expressed by Pindar in *Olympian* 7 (60–90):

ἔνθα ποτὲ βρέχε θεῶν βασιλεὺς ὁ μέγας χρυσέαις νιφάδεσσι πόλιν,  
 ἀνίχ’ Ἀφαίστου τέχναισιν  
 χαλκελάτῳ πελέκει πατέρος Αθαναΐα κορυφὰν κατ’ ἄκραν  
 ἀνορούσαις’ ἀλάλαξεν ὑπερμάκει βοᾷ  
 [...]   
 Ἐν δ’ ἀρετὰν  
 ἔβαλεν καὶ χάρματ’ ἀνθρώποισι Προμαθέος Αἰδῶς.

The great king of the gods showered the city with golden snow, when, by the *techne* of Hephaestus with the bronze-forged hatchet, Athena leapt from the top of her father’s head and cried aloud with a mighty shout. [...] She who casts virtue (ἀρετή) and joys (χάρμα) into men is the daughter of Forethought, Reverence.<sup>5</sup>

According to Pindar, the birth of Athena, the goddess of strategy and *episteme* who brought virtue and joy to humans, was not an effect created by Athena herself but rather a work of Hephaestus’ *techne*. Influenced by this story, Homeric Hymn 20 attributes both human virtue and human happiness to Hephaestus as the god of *techne*. *Techne* is knowledge, but it is not the

5 Modified from the translation by Svarlien (1990).

kind of knowledge produced by a will to know that »is not founded on anything other than the precondition of knowledge itself« (Foucault 1971, p. 15).

The answer to Foucault's (1971) question of »What is knowledge before truth?« (p. 208) is provided by Pindar and Protagoras: It is *techne*. In his interpretation of Nietzsche's theory of truth, Foucault suggests a kind of knowledge characterized by the prioritization of usefulness over truth. This kind of knowledge

1. is »not inherent in human nature«;
2. is »not imitated by human intelligence remembering a divine spectacle«;
3. is »not joined to the structure of the world as a reading, a decipherment, a perception, or a self-evidence«;
4. is »organized not for knowledge but for mastery over things«;
5. is »prior to any truth and governed entirely by need«;
6. is »useful knowledge that serves life«;
7. conceives thought as »the effect of extra-thought, not as natural result, but as violence and illusion«; and
8. conceives truth as »a product or an effect of knowledge,« not as »its norm, or condition, or foundation, or justification« (pp. 203–211).

All these properties, as described earlier, can be reduced to two essential features of *techne*. As Protagoras says, *techne* »οὐ φύσει ἡγούνται εἶναι οὐδ' ἀπὸ τοῦ αὐτομάτου« [Plato, *Protagoras* 323c; is neither natural nor self-generated]. It is organized for processing materials and producing useful effects that serve life. It is entirely governed by *ergon*, which is aimed at satisfying needs. Although strategy is an inseparable part of it, it is primarily »the effect of extra-thought,« produced by the power relationship between teacher and pupil, as well as between the *technites* and their materials. None of the concrete contents of strategic thinking can be a divine norm or condition of practiced *techne* in all cases, because the basic principle of strategy is nothing other than choosing the best way to act based on the concrete circumstances and the materials at hand. If the concrete circumstances require it, all normative principles, including truth, rationality, and even *techne* itself, can be abandoned.

## 1.5 The Function of Appearance

The opposition between the will to know and the logic of *techne* is significant because, as Gorgias of Leontinoi suggests (*Encomium of Helen* 13: »εἰς λόγος πολὺν ὄχλον ἔτερψε καὶ ἔπεισε τέχνη γραφαίς, οὐκ ἀληθείᾳ λεχθεὶς« [a single statement, which delighted and persuaded a numerous crowd, is drawn by virtue of *techne*, not spoken in truth], within the framework of *techne*, the suspension of rationality is rationally acceptable if achieving a goal is hindered by the pursuit of truth. Within the framework of the will to know, however, such a suspension is by no means rational. Foucault (1971) points out that Nietzsche's epistemological task is to conceive of a type of knowledge based on appearance, which is not conceived of »as the opposite of reality« (pp. 217–218). This understanding of appearance is characteristic of *techne*, providing one reason why Plato describes Sophists as *technitai* who produce appearance (τὸ φανταστικὸν; *Sophist* 262e–268e).

For knowledge–*techne*, truth is not, per se, an epistemological norm or condition. Rather, it is an optional instrument. If discovering relevant truth is too difficult or does not help in achieving one's goal, producing a useful appearance to achieve the goal is undoubtedly rational. The most famous examples of *technitai* who use artificial appearances to achieve their goals are the ancient Sophists, who used the appearance of »truth,« which is not discovered in the natural world, to convince people of arguments. This is not, however, the real reason for Plato's accusation against the Sophists, given that he himself does not appear to have minded using artificial appearances to convince people of a truth if he considered it necessary or efficient. As John M. Cooper (1997) points out, »according to the *Phaedrus*, rhetorically skilled speakers will base what they say on the full philosophical truth but will vary and embellish it as needed to attract and hold their hearers' attention and to persuade them to accept what is essential in it« (p. 1225). Thus, as *Phaedrus* 259d–260d suggests, the true reason for Plato's accusation lies in the fact that the *content* of the persuasion produced by Sophists is artificial appearance, as well as the instruments they use to persuade people.

In terms of the rationality behind knowledge–*techne*, Foucault's framing of Nietzsche's project is not a provocative exaggeration. Knowledge, in this context, is not based on truth as something discovered but consists of invented truths, that is, artificial appearances. Setting aside today's ideology of scientific realism, this type of knowledge is very common in modern scientific theories. Atoms, photons, quarks, and forces are all considered »theoretical models.« They are not entities, such as trees or tables, that one can identify in the real world but artificial appearances produced to achieve goals such as predicting phenomena. People consider knowledge based on such theoretical models to be true not because they have discovered entities named atoms or forces in the real world but simply because this knowledge, consisting of »non-true« appearances, is useful.

## 1.6 The Goal-Directedness of *Techne* in Plato's Philosophy

Given that *techne* plays a central role in Plato's ethical and moral philosophy, many scholars are inclined to restrict *ergon* to good goals, claiming that every *techne*, in Plato's view, must be characterized by a certain goal (*ergon*) that is morally good.

Interpretations of Plato's works have yielded, roughly speaking, four different answers to the question of whether or not a *techne* must be directed at the good. Two of these answers are radical. The first, advanced by Paul Woodruff (1990), claims that any adequate *techne* is essentially directed at the good (p. 73). The second and opposing answer, advanced by David Roochnik (1996), claims that any *techne* is value-neutral (p. 92).

Woodruff (1990) asserts that »any true *techn[e]* [...] must aim at the good, and must therefore know what this is.« This interpretation contradicts the idea of specialization as a feature of *techne*: To avoid this contradiction, Woodruff distinguishes the »true *techne*« from other, subordinate *technai*, to which specializations are attributed. The latter he considers too specialized for practitioners to know how to direct their skills toward the good, so that these *technai* »would have to be subordinate to a *techn[e]* that did specialize in the relevant good.« Thus, in Woodruff's reading, Socrates implies the »consequence of this principle that the same basic knowledge is essential

to every *techne*—knowledge of the good« (p. 73). This interpretation, however, sounds somewhat far-fetched and lacks support in the original texts.

In contrast, Roochnik (1996) suggests that it is inappropriate to conceive of *techne* as essentially good-directed. Instead, he invokes Plato's argument in the *Laches* in favor of the neutrality of *technai*: »The doctor qua doctor knows only what health and disease are, and can thereby intervene in order to produce one or the other. He does not, however, know whether he should apply or withhold his knowledge. He does not know, for example, whether it is better or worse for a given patient to die« (p. 101). Nevertheless, Roochnik also adopts a radical position: »*Techne* is value-neutral; it can be applied for good or ill, and the quality of the application is independent of the *techne* itself« (p. 92). To avoid a contradiction's arising from the fact that some *technai*, such as justice, are associated with the good, Roochnik distinguishes the *techne* itself from its application, which may be good or evil.

In between these radical positions, Raphael Woolf (2004), instead of offering a universal account, divides the use of *techne* into misuse and correct use. After identifying some cases of misuse, he argues that »the fact that we speak of misuse in these cases shows that we think of correct use in terms of the proprietary benefit of the given activity« (p. 120). This means that the definition of »*techne*« implies good-directedness. There is, however, a problem with this explanation: When we speak of the correct use of a given *techne*, we also think of its misuse in terms of proprietary benefits. Following this logic, we might conclude, albeit ridiculously, that that *techne* is directed at evil.

The fourth position, presented by Hulme (2019), claims that not all *technai* need be directed toward the good, unless good-directedness here means goal-directedness (p. 242). Hulme points out that Plato does not reserve the word »*techne*« for *technai* directed at the unconditional good, such as justice. Unlike Roochnik, however, she does not think that *techne* itself is value-neutral, since Plato frequently describes *technai* directly linked to the unconditional good (p. 229), such as, again, justice.<sup>6</sup> In this sense, good-directedness is a feature of some specific *technai* but not of all.

6 Plato conceives justice (δικαιοσύνη) as a *techne*. Cf. *Republic* 1 and the *Gorgias*.

The fourth answer appears preferable. Hulme's (2019) interpretation is consistent with Plato's texts and does not require us to deny any notable feature of *technē*. In contrast, Woodruff's (1990) interpretation lacks support in the original texts and inaptly identifies the specific *technē* whose *ergon* is morally good as *technē* in general, thus disqualifying other concrete *technai* specific to *erga* for which the moral good is indifferent. Roochnik's (1996) interpretation, meanwhile, excludes the concrete application, which is, in fact, *technē* in action. Woolf's (2004) argument, finally, cannot prove the good-directedness of *technē*, because it depends on problematic logic, even though he does not exclude any feature of *technē*. Hulme's interpretation fits Plato's texts more closely than the others. It is true that Plato considers good-directedness a specific *ergon* and, consequently, essential to some *technai*, such as justice. Nevertheless, this good-directedness pertains to the specialized *ergon*, as he also holds practices defined by value-neutral *erga*, such as medicine, to be *technai* (cf. Plato, *Gorgias* 464b–c).

Hulme (2019) indicates that »there is no hint in either of these dialogues [the *Gorgias* and the *Phaedrus*] that the other τέχναι, by failing to be the τέχνη of good and bad, are not true τέχναι« (p. 23). Nevertheless, in the *Gorgias*, Plato includes a sentence that appears to prove that good-directedness is an essential feature of *technē* (501c):

[...] ἔγωγέ φημι τὸ τοιοῦτο κολακείαν εἶναι [...] ὅτου ἂν τις τὴν ἡδονὴν, ἀσκέπτως ἔχων τοῦ ἀμείνονός τε καὶ τοῦ χείρονος [...].

I say that such a thing is flattery, in which one may take care of pleasure, ignoring the better and the worse.

This sentence cannot, however, prove that every *technē* must be directed at the good. In the *Gorgias*, Socrates always defines flattery in terms of a collision between whichever *technē* produces X and those *technai* that pretend to produce X but in fact produce Y. Gymnastic exercise, for example, produces health, whereas cosmetics produce a beautiful appearance. If someone makes cosmetics pretend to produce health, then these cosmetics are an instance of flattery in terms of the production of health, since the

rationality of cosmetics concerns only beautiful appearances, meaning it does not consider the good in terms of health. Plato never says, however, that a *techne* such as cosmetics is in itself an instance of flattery. In short, good-directedness is not an essential feature of *techne* itself but a special characteristic of some particular *technai*.

## 1.7 In Defense of the Common Interpretation of *Techne* in Plato's Dialogues

Luc Brisson (2001) challenges the common interpretation of *techne* as »productive craft.« His rejection of this interpretation consists of three parts. First, he states that the result of *techne* is not always a product (TNP). Second, he identifies some types of *techne* as irrational processes (TIR). Third, he demonstrates that the agent of *techne* is not always a »producer« (ANP). As my understanding of Platonic *techne*, despite its distillation of the features ascribed to that *techne*, remains within the framework of the common interpretation, a response to Brisson's challenge is appropriate here.

### 1.7.1 TNP

According to Brisson (2001), TNP is justified by two propositions:

- (1) There is at least one type of *techne* whose result cannot be considered a product but is, rather, a discovery.
- (2) The notion of *ergon* is complex and ambivalent, so it is better to put this notion aside and, as Aristotle suggests, use the notion of *poesis* to understand *techne*.

To prove the first of these propositions, Brisson invokes mathematical *technai*, such as geometry, astronomy, and calculation. In *Euthydemus* 290c, Plato indeed refers to these *technai*, stating that the result of mathematics is »neither an invention nor a production of the human spirit, but a discovery« (Brisson 2001). The notion of a result is thus divided into two categories: product and discovery. Brisson regards the mathematical as

the typical object of discovery, whose »properties, just as the odd and the even, exist outside the mind, which can only unveil their properties, or ›re-cognize‹ them.« Conversely, an object of production, he argues, must possess properties created by humans (p. xiii).

Does a discovery lack all artificial properties, however, or does it, in fact, possess one? Let us use the circle as an example. If the circle, discovered by the human mind, does not possess any artificial properties, this means that the idea of a circle is also a circle in the real world. Such an interpretation appears to fit into the theory of anamnesis formulated by the real Socrates or the young Plato. There is no evidence, however, that the young Plato suggests that there is no difference between the recollected idea and the idea to be recollected; if he did, anamnesis would become a meaningless concept, since it is impossible to recollect what has already been recollected. Thus, if (the discovery of) the circle is a recollected idea, then it possesses at least one artificial property: »recollectedness.« Furthermore, Plato's hunting analogy in *Euthydemus* 290b–c, which Brisson (2001) invokes, suggests that a »discovery,« within which category both mathematical knowledge and prey fall, possesses at least one artificial property, namely usefulness:

οὐ δύνανται τούτῳ χρῆσθαι, ἀλλ' οἱ μὲν κυνηγέται καὶ οἱ ἀλιῆς  
τοῖς ὀψοποιοῖς παραδιδόασιν.

They [hunters] are not able to use it [the prey], but they and the fishermen hand it over [to the cooks].

Usefulness is not a property of the animals in the forest but an artificial property of prey. Cooks are incapable of using the animals in the forest because these animals are not hunted and cannot be used directly: In other words, wild animals cannot be used without the application of the hunter's *technē*, which produces usefulness. In the same sense, dialecticians (διαλεκτικοί) are incapable of using mathematical ideas that have not yet been recollected: They can only use discoveries, whose usefulness has been produced by mathematicians and other *technitai*. Discovery thus entails both natural and artificial properties, so there is no essential dif-

ference between discoveries and products. All human products possess both natural and artificial properties.

Another justification for TNP relates to the notion of *ergon*. As section 1.1 above demonstrates, this notion is, indeed, complex and ambivalent. Nevertheless, appealing to Aristotle's notion of *poiesis* does not negate the status of *techne*'s result as a product, a point he himself makes in the *Nicomachean Ethics* (1140a):

Ἔστι δὲ τέχνη πᾶσα περὶ γένεσιν καὶ τὸ τεχνάζειν καὶ θεωρεῖν ὅπως ἂν γένηται τι τῶν ἐνδεχομένων καὶ εἶναι καὶ μὴ εἶναι, καὶ ὧν ἡ ἀρχὴ ἐν τῷ ποιοῦντι ἀλλὰ μὴ ἐν τῷ ποιουμένῳ.

Every *techne* is about bringing something into being; to apply a *techne* means to investigate in what way a thing may be, may not be, and may come into being; and the origin of this [thing as the object of *techne*] lies in the one who makes it, not in the thing made.

According to Aristotle, the result of a *techne* necessarily possesses artificial properties originating from a given *technites*. Thus, the introduction of *poiesis* does not demonstrate that the result of a *techne* can be a non-product; rather, it proves that the result *must* be a product.

The idea that *techne* is defined by the *ergon* was common sense in ancient Greece, and there is no textual evidence to suggest that either Plato or Socrates denied it. In fact, when Socrates did not understand Gorgias' definition of rhetoric, his question to Gorgias concerned its *ergon*.

## 1.7.2 TIR

TIR aims to dissociate rationality from *techne*. This statement, however, is reasonable if and only if it refers to specific types of *technai*.

To justify TIR, Brisson refers to two passages from Plato's dialogues discussing poets. The first is from the *Ion*, in which Socrates claims that »πάντες γὰρ οἱ τε τῶν ἐπῶν ποιηταὶ [...] οὐκ ἐκ τέχνης ἀλλ' ἐνθεοὶ ὄντες« [533e; all poets, qua poets, are inspired not by means of *techne*]. The second is from the *Phaedrus*, in which Socrates uses the phrase »τραγωδίας

ποίησιν» [268d; the *poiesis* of tragedy], suggesting that composing poetry is a *techné*, although he considers good poetry (ποίησις) to be a product of madness (μᾶνία), not *techné*.

Putting aside the fact that ποίησις, as a polysemous term, means both »production« and »poetry,« let us simply accept Brisson's (2001) interpretation as reasonable. According to his reasoning, these passages demonstrate that poetizing is a *techné* that »does not involve a set of rules capable of being taught« and »cannot be reduced to the mechanical application of definite procedures, for it is a madness which depends on divine favour« (p. xii). In this context, he concludes that rationality is not an essential property of *techné*. Regarding the contrast between mere experience (ἐμπειρία) and *techné*, as introduced by Socrates in the *Gorgias* (464e–465b), it »seems to have only a polemical function: to refuse the status of *tekhnê*, considered as genuine competence, to rhetoric, which demands such status« (Brisson 2001, p. xiii).

Brisson's emphasis on the role of irrational elements, however, is not sufficient to dissociate rationality from *techné*, unless two propositions are true: (PP1) An action, A, by a practitioner, P, can be conceived of as rational if and only if the whole process of A is governed by rationality; and (PP2) a knowledge–*techné*, KT, is teachable if and only if the whole process of KT is teachable. If these propositions were true, however, then almost no *techné* could be considered rational or teachable, since guesswork and practice are indispensable to almost every *techné* applied in the real world.

As section 1.2 describes, when one applies a *techné*, it is necessary to establish the nature of the materials to be processed. Materials, however, are always specific, and according to Plato, one can never have perfect knowledge of any specific thing, only opinion (cf. *Meno* 97a–98a; *Phaedo* 78c–79d; *Republic* 5.476c–479a; *Theaetetus* 151d–186e; *Parmenides* 130a–134e). Thus, any knowledge used to determine the most appropriate form of action involves guesswork, which is an »irrational element« because there is no sufficient evidence to reveal the full nature of the materials concerned. Nonetheless, in this context, the »irrational element« is, in fact, rational because the rationality of *techné* is primarily instrumental, whereas the irrationality ascribed to A is »evidential.« According to

instrumental rationality, the A of P can be conceived of as rational in terms of P's goal, G, if A helps P achieve G.

An action based on evidential rationality often helps one achieve a goal; however, if evidential rationality indicates that achieving a specific goal requires an irrational action, such as one governed by madness, then irrational action becomes instrumentally rational. In this sense, it is incorrect to consider poetizing, an irrational action governed by madness, a *techne* devoid of rationality, as madness can thus serve as an instrument to help poets achieve their goals. With the expression «οὐκ ἐκ τέχνης» [not by means of *techne*], therefore, Socrates does not attempt to emphasize an alleged opposition between *techne* and madness: Rather, he distinguishes between the instruments one can use, such as madness, and the *techne*, such as poetizing, which concerns which instruments one should use. This distinction was already common knowledge in ancient Greece by the time the *Iliad* was composed (cf. Homer, *Iliad* 3.59–62).

*Techne* is the power to use instruments or process materials appropriately. In this sense, it can, itself, be conceived of as an instrument that enables one to use other, concrete instruments more effectively. This does not mean, however, that all instruments guided by *techne* should also possess features of *techne*. In fact, the statement that »poetizing is a *techne*, which does not involve a set of rules capable of being taught«—which Brisson uses to deny the status of teachability as an essential feature of *techne*—is, in itself, a rule of poetizing that masters can teach their pupils, directing them to focus on inspiration rather than futile reasoning. Ascribing rationality to *techne* does not imply that the entire process of applying *techne* must be seen as a rigorous implementation of principles held to be rational, such as »find out the nature of the materials before you begin to use them.« If following such a principle hinders the achievement of the goal, then there is no more rational action than to suspend it.

Nevertheless, Brisson's argument remains illuminating, demonstrating that the concrete practice of *techne* can incorporate both evidential and instrumental rationalities, as well as rational and irrational elements. As a form of expertise, *techne* usually consists of two parts: one that can be translated into propositional knowledge and one that cannot. In this sense, the assertion that *techne* is always rational is ambiguous; rather

than »rationality,« »strategy« more accurately denotes its characteristics. As a form of consideration, strategic thinking

- (1) aims at specific goals;
- (2) is primarily instrumentally rational; and
- (3) requires practitioners to act according to specific circumstances, namely
  - (3.1) to use evidential rationality if relevant evidence is available;
  - (3.2) to use irrational instruments if doing so helps them achieve their goal;
  - (3.3) to suspend strategic thinking if necessary;and so on.

### 1.7.3 ANP

In stating ANP, Brisson (2001) means that there are many people who possess certain *technai* but cannot be conceived of as δημιουργοί (»craftsmen«), which he equates with »producers.« He justifies this opinion with reference to the Sophists, who always present themselves as possessors of Sophistic *technē* but never as δημιουργοί, and Socrates' elenchus, a *technē* described as »a dialogical and dialectic concept« (p. xiv).

It is odd to equate producers with craftsmen, as if other practitioners never participated in production. In fact, no individual's status as a producer can be denied, even if we limit the meaning of »production« to its economic sense: Even someone who never directly participates in commodity production should, nonetheless, be considered a producer because their consumption is a necessary step in social production, enabling the reproduction of commodities. Indeed, the scope of the word »producer« is much broader than that of δημιουργός. An individual producer, for instance, may produce effects without specific goals, whereas a specific goal is an inseparable part of the work of a δημιουργός who possesses a given *technē*. In short, the possessor of *technē* is not always a δημιουργός, but this does not logically mean that the agent of *technē* is not always a »producer,« nor that their *technē* is not always a productive craft.

Nevertheless, if we understand the word »producer« in the narrow sense of its referring exclusively to a single person, then it is not incorrect to claim that the agent of *techne* is not always a single producer, since it may, in some cases, be a group of cooperative producers. Shipbuilding is a typical instance of the sort of *techne* that requires such a group of craftsmen. The construction of Athenian triremes during the Peloponnesian War, for example, usually required the equivalent of some 6,000 man-days of labor (cf. Hanson 2005, p. 262). For the sake of generality, therefore, I propose to use the word *technites* (τεχνίτης), a simple derivative of *techne*, to refer to the agent of *techne* in general. A *technites* can be a craftsman, a politician, a group of cooperating craftsmen, or—as we will see later—a unity of citizens living together.

## 1.8 A General Concept of *Techne* in Archaic and Classical Greece

When we distill all possible features of *techne* into *ergon* and strategy, it becomes clear that neither Plato's nor the Sophists' understandings of *techne*, although they are stylized theorizations, are beyond the ancient common sense of *techne* that had existed at least since Homer (*Iliad* 3.60–62):

Ἑκτορ· ἐπεὶ με κατ' αἶσαν ἐνείκεσας οὐδ' ὑπὲρ αἶσαν·  
αἰεὶ τοι κραδίη πέλεκυς ὥς ἐστιν ἀτειρὴς  
ὅς τ' εἴσιν διὰ δουρὸς ὑπ' ἀνέρος ὅς ῥά τε τέχνη  
νήϊον ἐκτάμνησιν, ὁφέλλει δ' ἀνδρὸς ἐρωήν.

Hector! You reproach me appropriately, not beyond what is appropriate.

Always, your heart is like an unfrayable axe,  
which passes through boles by a man, who, with *techne*, shapes  
timbers for shipbuilding,  
and increases man's force.

These words are addressed by Paris to Hector after the latter, with violent rage, has accused the former of bringing disaster upon Troy. As we

can see, these archaic verses contain features that the ancient Greeks ascribed to *techne*.

Paris holds Hector's accusation to be appropriate (κατ' αἴσαν), that is, grounded in reality. This is not only because Hector's indignation is reasonable but also because the content of what Hector has said grasps the situation of Troy, as well as the etiology of the disaster it faces. In other words, Hector's speech was not simply angry words; it was the result of strategic thinking based on the situation at hand. The axe analogy points to the distinction between *techne* and instrument: A man's *techne* is not an axe but rather a form of knowledge about how to wield an axe appropriately, that is, based on the specific features of the wood to be chopped. Socrates emphasizes the same logic in Plato's *Phaedrus* when he says that a rhetorician should use speech appropriately, that is, according to the specific features of the individual soul to be persuaded (270c–d). Since the time of Homer, *techne*, or the competence to act appropriately, had been considered knowledge–power.

When Paris refers to the axe and *techne*, he refers to timbers and shipbuilding. This suggests that *techne* always deals with specific materials, such as timbers or emotions, and is directed at a specific goal, such as shipbuilding or »increasing man's force.« The same form of logic can be found in the work of the historian Thucydides when he has a Corinthian delegate use the verb τεχνάομαι, derived from the noun τέχνη (*techne*), to describe strategic thinking during the Peloponnesian War (1.122.1):

ἥκιστα γὰρ πόλεμος ἐπὶ ῥητοῖς χωρεῖ, αὐτὸς δὲ ἀφ' αὐτοῦ τὰ πολλὰ τεχνάται πρὸς τὸ παρατυγχάνον.

For war [of all things] proceeds least upon literal rules, it contrives how to act from itself according to what is happening.

By »πόλεμος« (war), the Corinthian delegate does not mean the war as an event but the act of fighting a war. In his opinion, strategy is necessary because fighting a war is a *techne* that cannot be translated into propositional knowledge. Because its *ergon* is to defeat the Athenians, the Peloponnesian League has had to adapt its actions to what is happening (πρὸς

τὸ παρατυγχάνον), that is, the circumstances and materials of the *technē* of war.

In the *Timaeus*, one of Plato's most rhetorical works, a similar account is given of the heart's function (69c–70c). According to Plato, the heart is inhabited by part of the soul that is capable of rationality. This rationality, in turn, allows the heart to govern the other parts of the soul, as well as the body and irrational emotions. In other words, with the heart following rationality, one can make use of irrational potential in a rational way. This is precisely what the analogy of Hector's heart suggests: The heart itself is not rational; rather, it is an instrument that can be controlled by the rationality of *technē*. This enables Hector to use irrational powers, such as indignation and violent rage, in a rational way. The passage from the *Timaeus* might be a tribute to Homer, who thus formulated the first analogy of the craft of the soul, or it may simply reflect the common understanding of the soul in ancient Greece.

In sum, the existing literature suggests that in Archaic and Classical Greece, *technē* had a relatively unified meaning: a pragmatic and strategic act defined by the *ergon*, which indicated both work as a goal and work as an action.

## 1.9 Plato's Πολιτική Turn: The Sublation of »the Will to Know«

The passage of Homer cited in section 1.8 implies a conception of knowledge that does not rely on truth, as Foucault and Nietzsche envisaged. In this sense, *technē* is a sort of »knowledge before truth« (Foucault 1971, p. 208). In the passage, the word »truth« (ἀλήθεια) is absent; instead, Paris uses »κατ' αἴσαν« (appropriately) to evaluate Hector's statement. This suggests that he does not care whether Hector's statement corresponds with the »truth« when he recognizes it as a report of Troy's situation, pointing to the strategy—for Paris to engage in single combat with Menelaus—that could end the war without further bloodshed (cf. Homer, *Iliad* 3.35–75).

In this context, Löbl (1997) suggests that Gorgias' idea of opposing *technē* to truth (ἀλήθεια; cf. Gorgias of Leontinoi, *Encomium of Helen* 13) was inherited from Homer (p. 175). This suggestion, however, is inaccurate. It is

correct that Gorgias' understanding of *techne* can be traced back to Homer, but there is a problem in that the common understanding of ἀλήθεια in the Classical period differed from that in the Archaic period. At least until the later Archaic period, the term was not yet used to refer to an abstract entity to be discovered, meaning that it never marked any abstract and independent entity in Homeric Greek. As Rose Cherubin (2009) points out, »Homer uses *alētheia* exclusively or almost exclusively to characterize expressions, reports, or transmissions of information; specifically, he uses it of communications that are supposed to be true, comprehensive of all relevant details, undistorted, free of falsehoods, and complete« (p. 53). The concept of truth–ἀλήθεια, which denotes the abstract entity behind appearances, is, to borrow Foucault's and Nietzsche's words, an »invention« of Classical Greece. The history of *techne* is longer than that of the concept of truth. The Sophists of the fifth century BCE viewed the invention of the latter concept as a result of the development of *techne*: People invent truth as an instrument with which their goals, in many cases, can be achieved more easily. When Gorgias contrasts *techne* with truth, this does not mean that he believes *techne* is unrelated to truth, nor that he considers appropriateness strictly opposed to truth. What he attempts to emphasize is rather that *techne* is primarily regulated by appropriateness given a specific goal rather than by truth, which deserves attention only when grasping it is beneficial.

Such an attitude toward truth is, as Foucault (1971) demonstrates, rejected in Plato's early work through »the will to know« and the use of *techne* as a synonym of *episteme* in some dialogues (p. 16; cf. Plato, *Charmides* 165c; *Euthydemus* 281a; *Ion* 532c; *Protagoras* 356d–e). From Plato's complete works, it is almost impossible to extract a unified understanding of *techne*. In his early works, his attitude toward the concept is ambivalent. One reason for this might be that these works extensively represent the opinions of the historical Socrates, who used to draw conclusions from his interlocutors' statements. A more important reason, however, is that virtue possesses »technicity,« by which I mean »features of *techne*«: Virtue has specific goals, such as knowing what good is, acting for good, and making others good; and to achieve these goals, one must act based on concrete circumstances and the specific person one wishes to make good. As the Sophists often taught people to use certain knowledge–*techne* in the guise of vir-

tue to achieve goals incompatible with goodness, the young Plato devoted himself to developing a scheme of knowledge–virtue—primarily through the theory of anamnesis—motivated exclusively by the desire for knowledge–virtue. This desire is a kind of »will to know,« a sort of knowledge that is immune to any effect from outside the agent of knowledge–virtue.

Nonetheless, Plato gradually changed his attitude and developed a relatively unified concept of *techne* from the *Politeia* (*The Republic*), which is usually considered one of his middle works, where collective education is highlighted (cf. *Republic* 4.423e–424a). Furthermore, many Sophistic understandings of *techne* are accepted in his later works, especially the *Timaeus* and the *Nomoi*, with Plato prioritizing the appropriateness defined by the *ergon* and ranking citizens' virtues more highly than the doctrine of the alliance between knowledge and truth (AKT).

In her book *Technè dans les Dialogues de Platon: L'empreinte de la sophistique*, Anne Balansard argues that the word »*techne*« plays a polemical role in some of Plato's dialogues, such as the *Gorgias*, *Phaedrus*, and *Nomoi*, serving to reject the rhetoric that Sophists disguise as justice, virtue, politics, or, in short, *techne* of all areas (p. 234). Her statement is consistent with Plato's plan in the *Gorgias*, one of his early works, but it is worth noting that he changes his attitude in the *Phaedrus* and the *Nomoi*. In the latter works, his use of the word no longer aims to reject rhetoric in general but rather to reject its abuse and develop a rhetoric free of Sophistry (cf. Hulme 2019, pp. 240–41, on rhetoric in the *Phaedrus* and *Gorgias*; Mülke, 2021 on rhetoric in the *Nomoi*).

Sophistic rhetoric conceives of persuasion as its ultimate goal, regardless of whether or not the content of a given persuasion is good. Conversely, the goal of Platonic rhetoric is to convince people of truly good content (cf. Plato, *Phaedrus* 262b)—that is, knowledge of a kind that benefits both the one convinced and their fellow citizens, as well as their state—although the speech, as an instrument used to persuade people, is free from the AKT. This also means, however, that Platonic rhetoric, albeit important, can only be a sub-*techne* that is subject to the so-called πολιτική [τέχνη] (*politike [techne]*)<sup>7</sup>, the political *techne*. Just as anesthesiology, although

7 In Plato's Greek, a noun ending in -ική is usually an abbreviation of an adjective end-

important, cannot encompass the entire field of medicine, rhetoric cannot assume the whole work of the *politike*. As Plato suggests in *Phaedrus* 270c–d, complex material must be divided into many simple parts, and each sub-*techne* is responsible for its own part.

If my reading is accurate, in later life, Plato shifted his focus to the *politike*, the concept having been proposed earlier by Plato himself or the historical Socrates in the *Gorgias*. For the later Plato, the *ergon* of such a *techne* is the collective cultivation of citizens' virtues that should lead to the common good. It is divided into two sub-*technai*: δικαιοσύνη (justice) and νομοθετική (the *techne* of *nomos*). Because the material of both sub-*technai* is the soul, the *politike* is conceived of as »the craft of the soul« (ἡ τέχνη ἐπὶ τῇ ψυχῇ; cf. *Gorgias* 464b).

It is worth noting that focusing on the craft of the soul does not mean that Plato rejects his early doctrine that knowledge is sufficient for virtue (KSV; cf. Fine 1999, p. 29); instead, he overcomes the powerless conception of knowledge–*episteme* characterized by the will to know what justice is at the propositional level. Furthermore, he develops a theory of the *politike*, that is, a form of knowledge–*techne* characterized by the will to power or, in other words, by the *ergon* that continues enhancing the power to build a just community capable of real existence. The later Plato's *politike* is primarily a theory of power, as well as a political ontology. It investigates the etiology of the state and asks, What causes a just state to come into being? What causes it to persist? What leads to its collapse?

The key to answering these questions lies in the craft of the soul.

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ing in -ικ- followed by the noun τέχνη. For example, πολιτική is an abbreviation of πολιτική τέχνη, and ιατρική (medicine) is an abbreviation of ιατρική τέχνη (medical *techne*).