Creation and the Function of Art

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Statement of Authentication

The work presented in this thesis is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, original except as acknowledged in the text. I hereby declare that I have not submitted this material, either in full or in part, for a degree at this or any other institution.

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Abstract

This thesis returns to the Greek understanding of art to rethink its capacities. It focuses on the relationship between techné (which involves but is not limited to artistic practice) and phusis (or nature) and the role of the function in deviating or affecting phusis.

The orthodox understanding of art that comes to us via Platonism exemplifies the degraded reality of the ideal. Aristotle proposes a different, though still problematic, approach to art. Aristotle presents a complex topos in which art, nature and creation are thought together. This allows for a power to affect what emerges from phusis. This deviation is techné, which involves intelligence coupled to action, and the work produced through it is art or poiesis.

As such, art cannot be resolved via an ontological or epistemological problem, but rather constitutes an encounter with the problematic. Deleuze emphasises this distinction in his characterisation of two kinds of problems. In the first general form, problems are already coupled to solutions, while in the second form the problem is an irresolvable and creative generator of difference.

Pure mathematics establishes itself through such an irreducibly problematic element – the function. This provides a new way to conceive of creation, so that it is no longer conflated with origins, but is instead understood as belonging to the particular.

The thesis begins with the Greek topos, and turns to insights from philosophy, pure mathematics, psychoanalysis, and biology in an endeavour to clarify the role of the function within techné. That is, it examines the deviations at play within logical forms; the deviations within and around the subject; the deviations particular beings affect upon phusis; in order to better situate the role of the function in art.
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Introduction

Re-problematising the Greek *Topos*

In our contemporary period, the orthodox understanding of art arguably comes to us via Platonism and a critique of its metaphysical assumptions. For art, this is to primarily address the poet’s exile from *the Republic*, by challenging the authority of representation. That is, to overturn the judgement of *mimesis*, in which art is degraded against the assumption of truths.

Yet, this does not assure a liberation of the power or function of art by a levelling of transcendence onto an immanent or abstract plane. While art variously acquires here new significance, this does not ensure it has been approached as a problem in its own right. Rather the uncertainty about art exemplifies the degraded reality of the ideal and the simulated nature of being.

The following work pursues another approach, away from Platonism and the strategy of its overturning. This is to return to Aristotle in order to examine his alternative proposal for *mimesis*. For Aristotle, art is not a second order imitation, nor a wilful distortion of truths. Art is rather the power of the *particular*, the power most proximate to nature. Yet what this power *imitates* is no longer a form – it is the *action* of *phusis* and the process bringing all to being.

Arguably, Aristotle does not simply propose an alternate mimetic theory, but a very different problematic approach to art. For Aristotle, art – *techné* – apprehends a complex problem or *topos* in which art, nature and creation were thought, together. Let us define the terms of this *topos*; it is the power to deviate cause from the self-propagating automaticity of *phusis*. This deviation is marked *techné*, which serves to indicate art and the distinction of human difference, together. More specifically,
techné signals *intelligence* if not the broader capacity *to sense*. But that is not all – for to deviate or change the direction of *phusis* requires a capacity to *act*. Techné is thus a kind of intelligence *coupled* to action, and the work thereby produced is *art* or *poiesis*.

Yet, for our contemporary understanding the terms of this *topos* are both very broad, and specified in a way that has largely lost meaning – arguably, this is because the problematic status of techné has become reduced to the series of solutions historically proposed to account for it. We speak of the ‘*work* of art’, but rarely does this evoke a complication with *praxis*. As such, the problem of work seems largely reducible to what it *produces*; namely, the finished product or ‘art object’, prepared for its commercial or intellectual consumption. However, returning to techné and art’s inaugural apprehension is to take up again those problems that have become delegitimised or otherwise abandoned. What is art? What is its relation to the decisive difference of human subjects from other natural beings? And do these broad, generic problems retain any relation to the field of art in its specific disciplinary contexts?

Let us address the fatigue with which this type of questioning is contemporaneously regarded. For this melding of the general and the particular evokes orthodox limits about the very nature of *problems*. We are told that where problems generate arrays of solutions with largely incompatible or incommensurable results, that this indicates the problem is poorly composed. Let us draw out the general principle here: problems are thought to be inherently tied to solutions, and so much so, that the value of a problem often concerns how well it anticipates its own resolution.

Yet, there is another way to think of problems: the problem remains irreducible to the series of solutions it produces. As such, there is no one-to-one correspondence between a problem and a solution. Rather problems are approached...
via their inherently productive and generative properties – they create and disgorge differences. From this perspective there would be no *corresponding* solution to the problem of *technē*; to return to it as the *problematic*, would rather constitute the attempt to comprehend its irreducibly *creative power*. This is not to reassert the rather glib platitude that art must be anything whatsoever – it is to inquire whether it is an irreducibly generative activity that *resists* a definitive resolution, be it ontological, sensible, material or theoretical. And because *technē* problematises art and human difference together, this questions whether the process of *particularisation* constitutes a resolution into subjective being. That is to say, if *technē* concerns an irresolvable generative activity, this calls into question what *kind of work* subjective beings are capable of.

In order to encounter the work of art on its own terms, the following thesis opens upon the nature of the *problematic*. This is to begin with Deleuze's characterisation of two kinds of problems in philosophical inquiry. The first is the *general form* with which we are very familiar, in which all problems are coupled to solutions. But from this dominant form, Deleuze distinguishes another kind of problem; namely, the problem as an irresolvable and creative generator of difference.

The discussion then turns to the emergence of pure mathematics, which establishes itself through a definitive account of such an irreducibly, problematic element – the *function*. It is the manner in which pure mathematics revolutionises what is understood by ‘function’, that provides for us another way to conceive of the nature of problems, with far reaching implications for art. Specifically, this will provide a revitalisation for the concept of creation, no longer conflated with origins, but as something irreducible, emergent and belonging to the *particular*.
The second chapter returns with Aristotle to the complex nature of the problem that art – *technē* – presents to thought. In this inaugural encounter *technē* will be found in the closest proximity to *ergon* – the production or *function* necessary for its particular work. It is argued, that this concerns a capacity to sense coupled to an ability to act upon this sense. And because these properties together distinguish human difference, this conjugation of sense coupled to action indicates the emergence of *agency*.

Moreover, it will be found that this complex conjugation remains recorded in the etymological structure of the term *subject*. But this will be to diverge from Aristotle for whom *technē* is a rational faculty, because contemporary theorisation (in particular, psychoanalysis) indicates that sense conjugated with action is already present in living bodies. This will be a crucial finding, because the problem of art is particularly obscured where subjective theory divides the body’s actions from thinking subjects. As such, the functional re-problematisation of *technē* offers not only a new approach to art, but also a kind of agency capable of traversing the breadth of artistic *praxis* from the depths of bodies to abstract ideas.

The third chapter returns to what remains of Aristotle’s apprehension about *technē*, where art announces itself by its deviation of nature (*phusis*). This will encounter what for contemporary thought is rarely implicated with the problem of subjectivity – namely, the problem of *technology*. But where Aristotle’s *technē* diminished art and thus *technology* in the order of affective powers, it will be argued that Gilbert Simondon revolutionises our understanding of technology, through his elaboration of a machinic evolution. This will be to challenge Aristotle’s metaphysics of the formal and final, into a circulation between material and efficient causes.
Yet, Simondon does much more than revolutionise our understanding of technology, by indicating that *technē* must be broadly at work in evolutionary processes. This is to arguably revive a new kind of metaphysical function for art. That is to say, that the creative work culminating in art, has an evolutionary precedence that belongs to all particular beings. Thus *technē*’s distinction of deviating nature is not an ancillary power belonging to human subjects, but effects the evolutionary processes through which bodies become progressively differentiated.

That is to say, Simondon’s evolutionary precedent takes up the task of Aristotelian *telos*, in which a contest of material and efficient causes 'shape' what comes into being. Moreover, this returns to human subjects and the emergence of art as a completely different kind of problem. Art is no longer the somewhat degraded, derivative power to reassemble existing elements into different forms or contents, but the culmination of a creative workflow through which particular beings intentionally deviate the living world.

The final chapter explores how this functional problem re-characterises art in both its general and specific, disciplinary senses. This will first be to refute that *poiesis* is a singular process, making or creating, through which epistemological sense making continues to secure its dominion over the work of art. Rather, it will assert that the creative power emergent with *technē* deviates the primary process to constitute a secondary, *efficient* workflow – creative *poiesis*.

Upon this evolutionary precedent and across this deviant flow, the work of art propagates. This will be to differentiate art from all processes of production. This enables a new differentiation for art, so that it will be distinguished from all the various modes of production that have come to dominate our thinking about being: sense-making and the production of knowledge, subjective formation, material
fabrication, and so on. Rather the work of art, propagating across a ‘rival’ creative workflow, will be the work to deviate these processes of production in their becoming, resulting in new kinds of beings. This difference in workflow will distinguish between art and craft, art and technology, but also, art and knowledge – in particular, those epistemological disciplines that concern themselves specifically with art.

Finally, this will return to the problematic itself, where art concerns the work of deviating *phasis*. This fundamental proximity to nature is not a return to an ideal accord or Romanticism, but a mode of counter-orientation or a contest of forces. Moreover, this is not a confrontation with the origin or the ‘cause’ of primary processes; it is a return to our own nature, in which the workflow of the material or the efficient is decided. It is to confront particular beings with their power to choose between a general resolution of the material into a constituted being or to deviate into a transformative process. That is to say, the function of art offers an intensification of the power emergent with the particular, to intentionally shape processes in their becoming.
Chapter 1

Functions and Models

Art and knowledge
1.1. Functions and Problems

1.1.1. The general form of problems

The following chapter takes up the broad question of thinking about art by inquiring into what concerns and animates it as a function. This functional aspect needs to be thought of as being distinct from the method and materials of artistic production and from the various procedures which attempt to make sense of art: those aspects which open up to reading or interpretation, and are thought to be something essentially semiotic or meaningful. This necessarily involves a move beyond certain representational modes of thinking about art, in order to rethink art’s relation to aesthetics and the broad categorisations of formalism. Although a richness of meaning is produced through the systematic interrogation of singular bodies of work, the mechanisms that constitute the work – the operations of artistic praxis – cannot be meaningly derived through these interpretative procedures.

However this inquiry into ‘function’ no longer pertains to a general or common sense that addresses the purpose art is thought to perform. Rather it will require a more searching interrogation into the very nature of problems. If such an interrogation is necessary, it is because the default or general nature of problems already privileges a certain domination of art that obscures what it works to do.

That a critical assumption about the nature of problems pervades models of thought has its locus in Deleuze; ‘We are led to believe that problems are given ready-made, and that they disappear in the responses or the solution.’ For Deleuze, this dominion of solutions is evident in the form and structure of representational

\[1\] G. Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, pp. 158.
philosophy: namely, the assumption that a fundamental unity lies at the heart of things in accordance with which everything is allotted a relative veracity. The model is constructed by enveloping the problematic into various theoretical propositions: but it presents the series of immanent entities and affects it describes as the inevitable solution to the synthetic unity it produces. This opens a dissonance between the world of ideas and the experiential world in which we find ourselves, a theme that will become encoded into the form of the model itself; ‘Platonism thus founds the entire domain that philosophy will later recognize as its own: the domain of representation filled by copies-icons, and defined not by an extrinsic relation to an object, but by an intrinsic relation to the model or foundation.’

It is by making the generative problem singular and predictable, that the order of being is modelled, from the infinitesimal to the infinite. Moreover, that is why the fragment, difference, partiality and heterogeneity have long been assumed to be errors, produced by our limited capacity to apprehend this larger pattern. The model is thus the intelligible matrix by which the particular tries to think a universal, and represents the attempt at positing a unifying substratum capable of determining in an ordered sensible series, everything that comes to be.

Although the model has developed into the default for organised thought, it is Deleuze’s characterisation of it in the Platonic simulacrum that is of particular interest for the problem of art. It is the concept of the model that leads Plato to famously denounce the value of art in The Republic. As the often-cited example demonstrates, the pure form or idea of the bed only finds a partial representation in the craftsmen’s fashioning of a material object. This demonstrates the first order representation from the ideal model to the material copy (icônes). From this, a second representation

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2 G. Deleuze, The Simulacrum and Ancient Philosophy, pp. 296.
(mimesis), characterises artistic praxis – a second copy (phantasmes) of the material, an image or simulacrum. But, because the artist like the craftsman, has an intrinsic relation to the forms but defers this in favour of taking the material as a model, Plato emphasises this as an intentional movement against the natural revelation of the real and the true; artists lie. As such, the artist is the enemy of the good because there is a wilful reversal of the ordering set out by the model: rather than moving toward uncovering the true essence from which the object emanates, artistic praxis moves the copy away from the essence degrading it further into the world of appearances.

There is another dimension to the procedure Plato puts into effect that should be emphasised. Following Nietzsche, Deleuze demonstrates that a moral judgement lies at the foundation of the Platonic procedure, which in a pre-philosophical way determines what this representational model rationalises. Rather than asking after veracity – how ‘true’ the model is, or how accurately it measures real experience – Deleuze inquires after the model’s intentionality; that is to say, Deleuze asks what function it performs.

1.1.2. The function of Platonism and the resolution of philosophical models

Deleuze begins with the observation that the Model-Copy relation involves the illegitimate institution of a transcendent perspective into the immanent. This moment is formalised in the logic of Essentialism and predicates, among other things, the division between phusis and nous, upon which the subject will long after be split. Nevertheless, Deleuze argues this is a consequence of the model, insofar as it does not locate the intentional basis of representational thought:

…the true Platonic distinction lies elsewhere: it is of another nature, not between the original and the image but between two kinds of images [idoles], of which
copies [icônes] are only the first kind, the other being simulacra [phantasmes]. The model-copy distinction is there only in order to found and apply the copy-simulacra distinction, since the copies are selected, justified and saved in the name of the identity of the model and owing to their internal resemblance to this ideal model. The function of the notion of the model is not to oppose the world of images in its entirety but to select the good images, the icons which resemble from within, and eliminate the bad images or simulacra...What appears then, in its purest state, before the logic of representation could be deployed, is a moral vision of the world.⁵

The Copy-Simulacrum distinction is subordinate to that of the Model-Copy, and – as a consequence or effect – sets up the conditions for the philosophy of Representation. This in turn relies upon the establishment of a 'pre-philosophical image of thought', and refers to the importation of an idea into the 'original spatium' in which thought arises.⁴ This idea is not tied to reason, logic, or sense, but rather to a moral judgment, a doxa, in the form of an essentially 'good and clear' nature.⁵ In short, Deleuze argues that rather than encounter the immanent problems of empirical forms and phenomena, Platonism addresses itself to an ideal conception of the world predicated upon a moral judgment of the 'Good' and the 'Bad'. What is significant in this reading is that the measure of veracity that the representational model puts into effect is thereby traced to a proposition, rather than an encounter with immanent problems.

This finding has immediate implications for artistic praxis, which the model measures to be the furthest distance from the truth. Arguably, it does not simply call into question the way the model values artistic praxis, but rather its ability to determine the kind of problem that art presents. For what Deleuze is at pains to show is that the problematic legacy of Platonic thought is not overcome by simply de-

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³ G. Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, pp. 127.
⁴ Ibid., pp. 131-132.
⁵ Deleuze elaborates on this idea in *Difference and Repetition* arguing for the dominance or persistence of this 'image of thought' in favour of a 'genitality' or a 'thought without image', in which the idea regains its 'inventive' power of apprehending the fundamentally differential nature of the problematic. pp. 147-167
theologising philosophy and ridding it of the transcendent fixation of its axioms, but more significantly persists in the structural and epistemological paradigms through which Platonism underpins philosophical sense making. Thus the function of the doxa or judgment insofar as it governs the model’s founding principles, brings to light a kind of loop or closure that the model performs. That is, the ideal unity the model produces is reflected back upon the immanent, pre-philosophical encounter, as though it were already there in operation.

In short, representational philosophy predetermines a general form of the problem, an identical relation between two reciprocal terms (problem-solution) and this situation has far reaching consequences for art. It must be argued that to approach the problem of artistic praxis requires encountering its immanent affective operations rather than an ideal unity thought to sufficiently represent it. Unless artistic praxis is problematised as it is encountered, there is no way to determine how it relates to a particular ideal model – that is, before statements about art from the perspective of ideal models can be reliably produced. This need is exemplified in the way that aesthetic theory, predicated upon the representational model, tends to conflate process with produced, such that it is quite difficult to see that art objects and the work of art (what art works to do) are not at all the same. Aesthetics treats the work of art as a readymade for thought – that is, something that has already been resolved for the purposes of ideal contemplation. But for the work of art, aesthetic properties are a particular product or effect of the process, an outcome that does not reflect the nature of the work. And without a method to encounter what constitutes praxis – the affective workflow – there is no way to approach the question of art’s function, which is the broad task we have undertaken.
Let us commence this task by highlighting first those functions that become subsumed in the production of the model. Deleuze’s argument can be approached in a different way, by enquiring into the function that animates the representational model itself. Before representation is a proposition about the kind of reality art evidences, it is the functional operation (ergon) that is used to model art in The Republic. That is to say, Plato’s dialogues do not begin at the zenith, where the procedure culminates (the proposition or judgement the model develops) but rather from the apprehension that art is differentiated by the function it performs. What must be emphasised is that this functional productivity is put to work to produce the ideal representation – the transformation of immanent experience into an abstract relation – for only then can it be presented as a ready-made in thought. The progression of the dialectic in which the model is systematically made sensible, might then be contrasted with the immediacy with which the function may be grasped. And in this first encounter with the function, what should be emphasised is the immediacy of its apprehension together with the immediacy in which it is put to work, evident in both the construction and the contemplation of the ideal model.

It might then be argued that Deleuze’s analysis shows, not only that the model is predicated upon a pre-philosophical judgment, but also that the doxa operates by immediately overlaying or claiming the function. Thus, the Socratic method, which considers the function enveloped within an ideal series, might already illuminate a very peculiar property: it is exceedingly difficult to identify what a function is, precisely because one may only do so by considering its effects – what it does or how it transforms or changes that upon which it operates. Of course, this difficulty does not begin and end with Plato; it remains in effect whenever the function is carried over into the ‘image of thought’, in which problems default to the general ‘problem-
solution’ form. And if, as Deleuze argues, this difficulty is ramified in the task that philosophy thereafter takes as its own, it marks an impediment for philosophical sense-making to approach the function of art. As such, these issues concerning the function must be clarified through the specialised field that attempts to deal with them: pure mathematics.

1.2. Mathematical functions

1.2.1. The function is a different kind of problem

To begin, an observation: functions are not essentially captured in either of the series upon which they operate; neither in the series of inputs that they work upon nor within the series or set of effects they generate. This is adequately expressed in the general mathematical definition of a function $f$: it is a ‘black box’ through which a series of inputs $x$ are transformed into a series of outputs $f(x)$ or $y$ (Figure 1).

Ontologically speaking a function would belong to the order of becoming as a transformation irreducible to the series of inputs upon which it operates and the set of outputs it produces. It thus operates in a kind of ontological indetermination between

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6 G. Deleuze, The Simulacrum and Ancient Philosophy, pp. 296.
two series of beings; an extant set and another it brings forth as a series of effects.
This is not analogous to the classical model of causality that persists with the assumption that problems are of the general form.\(^7\)

The domain of inputs \((x)\) does not directly produce a codomain of outputs \((y \text{ or } f(x))\); rather the intervention of the function \((f)\) introduces a third mediating element into the direct relation between cause and effect. If this unsettles models predicated upon ontological deduction, it is because while the codomain \((y)\) can be taken as a series of solutions, this does not ensure that the causal element, the generative problem, necessarily belongs to what it proposes as the original series \((x)\). Even in mathematical notation, the fact that functions are often represented or communicated by graphs, mapped upon a plane of \((x, y)\) coordinates, literally illustrates that the function itself remains strictly inexpressible; what is rather demonstrated is its effect, the transformation of a domain, into another series (co-domain). In such a manner, the function can be grasped, its uniqueness, its kind of transformational properties may be apprehended, but it nowhere appears in the system, even where the process is infinitely computed.\(^8\)

That is to say, the dynamism of the function cannot be reduced to the sets of relations between which it operates (domain, codomain), making the power of predictive modelling always contingent upon computation. There may be regions where infinite proximities (asymptotes) rupture into two or more regions of radical

\(^7\)‘Problems, therefore, continue to be traced from the corresponding propositions, and to be evaluated according to the possibility of their finding a solution.’ G. Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, pp. 160.

\(^8\)A. Turing famously demonstrated this limit of computation in, *On Computable Numbers, with an Application to the Entscheidungsproblem*. We will return to this finding in greater detail throughout the following discussion.
discontinuity (see figure 2). There may be a singularity in which the direction of curvature suddenly reverses (figure 3). And these are the most simple of cases. What is of interest here is that although the graph may map or model the function to various resolutions this modelling can never exhaust the generative potentiality of the function itself. It is perhaps worth pointing out that the treatment of the function in ideal models has more in common with these limitations of geometric graphing than is commonly acknowledged.

Nevertheless, no matter how implicit and even necessary functions might be argued to be, they have only very recently been studied in earnest; an orthodox history of science does not reveal this inherent privilege or taste for the function, over and against the elaboration of the model.\footnote{Deleuze proposes that science concerns the interrogation and creation of functions in \textit{What is Philosophy}? But the manner in which Deleuze makes this predilection for the function an exclusive condition distinguishing science from all other disciplines must be disputed, particularly concerning the work of art (to which he assigns the creation of precepts and affects).}

\textit{Figure 2. $1/x = y$}

\textit{Figure 3. $x^3 = y$}
its antiquity, Aristotle clearly defines science (*epistêmê*) as the faculty of constructive contemplation tasked with discovering the eternal, unchanging principles of nature. In this image, functions remain obscure because they are thought to inhere within the cause, which determines their transformative properties (whether this is a formal essence or an abstract universal). Thus the history of mathematics records its subsumption within a dominating *epistêmê*: that is, dominated by an end outside of the mathematical, in which it was rather a tool to be applied. That is to say, whether first by philosophy or in the emergence of a specific scientific discipline, it is dominated from without by the general form of the problem.

Arguably, this obscurity of the function has an analogue expression in the history of art. And indeed, it will be argued that the same forces of revolutionary modernity in which the function becomes the central problem for pure mathematics, has an artistic parallel in aesthetic innovation. In both cases, what characterises the transition to modernity was the refusal to reject certain functions that were paradoxical to or radically undermined the orthodox consensus of the model – the *doxa*, of the ‘clear and distinct’, the ‘good’ and the ‘beautiful’. For mathematics, this involved challenging the principle vocation of science transmitted to it via the philosophical model – that it be charged with discovering the universal, unchanging process or founding relation, upon which a model could be made adequate to the cause of all beings.
1.2.2. Pure mathematics and monstrous functions

Pure mathematics establishes itself by prioritising the function so that it is no longer indentured to the dictates of ideal models. This is to reject the role of the *doxa* in predetermining what are properly functional problems.

What distinguishes pure mathematics from applied mathematics, and what determines it as abstract, is a change in emphasis from something essentially utilitarian to a distinct field in its own right. This implies that mathematics is no longer simply the tool through which the labour of scientific knowledge proceeds. What then emerges is an opportunity for the central interrogation of the function as a thing in-itsel, rather than as a medial relation between an extra-mathematical problem and solution. If pure mathematics challenges the broader scientific *epistêmê* in this regard it is because this focus upon functions no longer necessitates the discovery or *synthesis* of eternal, unchanging ‘truths’.

Pure mathematics arguably emerges disparately in a number of late 19th – early 20th century mathematicians, each independently pursuing problems that challenged the paradigm of the classical model: Cantor, Peano, Lebesgue and Hausdorff. These works had one common denominator – they focused on mathematical sets that were irregular and/or fragmented – non-differentiable equations that were considered anomalous, even obscene from the classical perspective. ‘These new structures were regarded...as “pathological,”...as a “gallery of monsters”, kin to the cubist painting and atonal music that were upsetting established standards of taste in the arts about the same time...’\(^\text{10}\) Although their contemporaries dismissed the work as absurd curiosities, these mathematical practitioners believed

they had crossed a crucial threshold – an opening upon a purely abstract plane which, ‘transcended completely the limitations imposed by its natural origins’.\textsuperscript{11} That is to say, pure mathematics was born of a break with that particular domination of the 
doxa, in which the investigation of functions was constrained to discovering what was eternal and unchanging about \textit{phusis}. As we will see, this is the liberation from the task of discovering the ‘always, already’ fundament, to an entirely new and \textit{creative} vocation.

\textit{1.2.3. The aestheticism of the doxa, mathematics and elegance}

Let us examine more closely the nature of the doxa, or rather the particular form which pure mathematics rejects. This doxa is not only moral as Deleuze has shown – it is also \textit{aesthetic}. What here is ‘extra-mathematical’ (that is, metaphysical or more broadly ontological) is the expectation that the general form of the problem-solution coupling will conform to the qualities of the \textit{elegant}, \textit{simple} and \textit{beautiful}. These demands do not emerge from the experimentation with functions – they are ‘extra-mathematical’ brackets that put mathematical work to the service of other ends.

Let us consider an early and decisive example: Euclidian geometry ‘discovers’ the essential axioms of space, the pure dimensional abscissas that order the material world.\textsuperscript{12} In a set of three elegant propositions, Euclidian geometry postulates the essential basis of space and all spatial relationships. Yet the veracity of the theorem is not established by the elegance of its synthetic unity, but in the demonstration of

\textsuperscript{11} Ibid., pp. 13.
\textsuperscript{12} The abscissas or axes are the dimensional lines upon which Euclidian geometry is performed. These axioms become represented via the 17th century algebraic translation of Euclidian geometry into the \textit{x}, \textit{y} axes in \textit{figure 2} and \textit{3}. They exemplify the classical or Platonic ideal of the fundament or formal law upon which the world of beings is constructed.
affects the theory makes possible: Euclidian geometry, if nothing else testifies to the powerful application of Platonic ideals as a means of ordering the material world, insofar as they permit a profound reshaping of the natural chaotic landscape into ordered divisions of the *polis*. That is, it gives to *technē* (art, in the broad sense of craft or manufacturing) not the fundamental idea, but the power to establish material foundations; the ‘squaring’ of the earth, the strength and rigidity of right angles and parallels, the city grid and the engineering of the temple. Euclidian geometry thus arguably demonstrates that the ideal bequeaths order and civility upon the material world.

But Euclidian geometry does not simply demonstrate the affective power of theoretical premises. It is rather turned to demonstrate two critical assumptions of the model: first, that ideal, unified and eternal principles can be used to dominate material beings by apprehending their causal nature. It is the unity of the abstract, spatial theorems that empowers a superior formal domination over the shaping of clay, wood or bronze alike. And although it is the immanent application of the functional operations themselves at work, this power is attributed to the elegance and beauty of the theoretical determinations, whose interior conformation to the model is presented as a demonstration of its apprehension of universal causes.

Secondly, once this arrogation of the function’s powers to the model has been carried out, there is an immediate consequence; where the problem has been equated to the proposition, it is a simple matter of turning it about so that the ideal model is now said to be the adequate cause of processes of becoming. That is, the affective power exerted by the model is thought to confirm its ideal assumptions, so that its judgments flow across the nature of immanent experience. That the Euclidian perfection of parallels never finds an actual equivalence in papyrus stalks, in date
palm trunks or in the tessellation of rocks, simply expresses the general degradation of the natural from the ideal, and reinforces the model’s requirement to bring more perfect forms to being. And if this judgment long inhibits the interrogation of functions beyond their classical presentation, it is because when the mathematician, throws up disjunctive equations – functions which run to non-sensible, infinite results, or which radically confront the underlying unity and order of the ideal model – this is thought evidence of the relative degree of degradation in which the human mind is steeped, which only the realisation of a mathematical perfection, of a pure elevation into the ideal, can overcome.

This aesthetic expectation brackets mathematical investigation by giving a predetermined form to its problem-solution coupling. This is no longer just an extra-mathematical expectation, but also works to limit its immanent experimentations. Moreover, it further brackets mathematical praxis by determining what kind of experimental activity it performs. That is, it proposes that praxis proceeds from a confused appearance in immanent beings to a perfect ordering of axioms and theorems. Along this ascending line of clarification, what counts as real is encountered ever more decisively as the axioms discover their perfect convergence as ideal essences. All this flows from the demands of the model, in whose name functions remain relative operations, and upon whose authority they are judged and selected, appropriated or abandoned.

1.2.4. Liberation of the function

What we must remain attentive to, is that this exemplifies how the pre-philosophical doxa – the judgement of the ‘good’ (the simple, the elegant, the beautiful) conditions
the emergent, experimental activity upon which mathematical *praxis* is based. For it is
the positing of the autonomy of the abstract that allows this veracity between the
degraded material world and the perfection of mathematical ideas to be disrupted
sufficiently to challenge the authority of the model. Thus, when pure mathematics
establishes itself through the positing of an abstract, projective horizon, it has a
powerful effect: *it liberates the function*. The positing of the abstract projective
horizon is explicitly designed to defer or ward off the selective demands of the model,
and more specifically, the criteria of judgement that makes mathematics something
always applied, something arrogated within an adjacent scientific *epistêmê*. This
foregrounding of functional experimentations, with its emergent irruptions of
surprising, category defying, even paradoxical results, leads it to confront the model
again, but on a more implicit, occulted or subversive level. For if the criteria of
judgement are suspended in favour of the proliferation and emergence of functions
*per se*, wherever these functions do not conform to the image predicted by the model,
the model itself becomes the subject of doubt.

In order to approach this more subversive level, it must first be noticed that a
general property of models is revealed in this tracing of mathematics’ relativity to the
scientific field that subsumes it; that is to say, *the model acquires its affective
capabilities through the functions it arrogates*. This is because functions are already
put to work between the general form of the problem, the two extant series, be they
ideal and material, theory and *praxis*, mind and body, and so on. That is, the function
is reduced to an identical relation between two series of terms: the domain upon
which it operates and the co-domain which it produces. As such, the model does not
address anything about the function because *the function remains independent of both*
Let us assemble these emergent properties from the mathematical elaboration of the function. Functions do not inhere within any given series (domain), differentiating them from determinable causes. Moreover, the function cannot be assigned an ontological certitude, because its presence is only expressed in the transformation it effects between series. Insofar as the purpose of the model remains to make thought adequate to the nature of cause, this independence of the function places limitations upon the model’s predictive capabilities. Thus, functions cannot be adequately captured by the model, because functions generate the abstract relations through which models relate to immanent events. Together, these properties imply that functions can never be bracketed into the form of the problem-solution type. The consequences of this are significant, and will be taken up in later chapters, but what must be highlighted here, is something very pressing in the move pure mathematics makes. It is calling into question the fundamental assumption of what knowledge is doing, and moreover, what science’s radical efficacy seemed to prove; that knowledge is fundamentally revelatory, a process of discovering the existent but hidden rules and mechanisms ordering the appearance of all beings. However, this labouring, this digging into the heart of things, for truth and certainty, is precisely what is abandoned when pure mathematics turns toward the abstract plane as its projective horizon, no longer concerning itself with the search for eternal, immutable principles.

Pure mathematics does not simply anticipate or echo the trajectory of secular philosophy and science, which might be argued after Deleuze, to have dethroned
transcendence only to strengthen the old orthodox poiesis (the general form of the
problem whose task remains to resolve how all comes to being). For what
differentiates pure mathematics is that it has abandoned the task of discovery, in
favour of creation. For once the domination of the model in determining the nature of
problems is abandoned, mathematics undertakes an entirely new project – the
experimentation and creation of new functional operations. Thus what links the
abstract creation of functions within pure mathematics to the more undecidable
activity of the function within various ontological series is this power of differential
emergence, of something new entering an existing body or entity, or emerging in its
own right – something not traceable to its original, formal conditions. Whether they
produce purely abstract values that describe geometric curves, or the dynamic
interplay between mass and movement to describe gravity, functions are found where
a process brings that into being that was not in being before.

1.2.5. Mathematical and natural functions

It has been argued that pure mathematics is distinguished by the experimental praxis
of creating functions, thereby liberating itself from the demands of an extra-
mathematical model. But this liberation from the task of discovering what is eternal or
already existent raises other problems about the nature of creation, per se. For if the
function is not given to thought as a ready-made donation nor as an act ex nihilo, how
are we to think about what might constitute this creative activity?

Let us proceed first with a critical distinction we have yet to clarify about
functions: there is a dynamic sense which concerns the function’s immanent,
transformative activity and there is a static sense which concerns the abstraction of
this dynamic activity into a symbolic representation. Much confusion about functions derives from a conflation between these distinctions, or more precisely, when the dynamism of the immanent functional process is thought reducible to its symbolic referent or relation. That is to say, the encounter with a ‘naturally’ occurring process which gives rise to a symbolic relation, is thought to be exhausted within it, such that experience gives way to the idea, or the sensation of a body resolves into a sense-perception and so on. But this is not at all the case. For if the function remains a different kind of problem to the general form, it is first because the function is a dynamism irreducible to the relation, that persists within the abstract dimension or strata. As we will see, the creativity of mathematical praxis will not be endemic to abstraction (a priori, foundational or ex nihilo), but will be carried over by the dynamism of the function from the world of living bodies.

It was Brouwer’s radical mathematical project, Intuitionism, which clarifies the irreducibility between the function (dynamic) and the relation (static). Moreover, it must be argued that Brouwer establishes an entirely new way to think about creation.

Intuitionism unsettled the orthodox foundations of mathematics, by bringing a resolute scepticism to bear upon universal propositions or axioms, which were

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13 ‘Brouwer made it clear, as I think beyond any doubt, that there is no evidence supporting the belief in the existential character of the totality of all natural numbers ... the sequence of numbers which grows beyond any stage already reached by passing to the next number, is a manifold of possibilities open towards infinity; it remains forever in the status of creation, but is not a closed realm of things existing in themselves. That we blindly converted one into the other is the true source of our difficulties, including the antinomies...Brouwer opened our eyes and made us see how far classical mathematics, nourished by a belief in the ‘absolute’ that transcends all human possibilities of realization, goes beyond such statements as can claim real meaning and truth founded on evidence. According to his view and reading of history, classical logic was abstracted from the mathematics of finite sets and their subsets. (The word finite is here to be taken in the precise sense that the members of such a set are explicitly exhibited one by one.) Forgetful of this limited origin, one afterwards mistook that logic for something above and prior to all mathematics, and finally applied it, without justification, to the mathematics of infinite sets.’ H. Weyl, Mathematics and logic: A brief survey serving as a preface to a review of The Philosophy of Bertrand Russell, pp. 9-10.
deduced from dynamic or particular functional operations. Consider the simple case of natural numbers resolved to an infinite set – that is, the proposition that our most familiar series of numbers carries on in an ordered fashion to infinity (1, 2, 3, 4,…∞).

How was this seemingly inevitable solution reached? First, an immanent processual event must be abstracted into some kind of principle or relation. A given individual possesses a singular thing and acquires another, resulting in a doubling of the original allotment: one thing with another thing = two things. Now, although this situation already involves some abstractions (counting, numbering) these do not yet make sense of the process: there remains an open set of elements or numerals (1, 1, 2) but this abstract set remains to be certified by an active demonstration. In order for this abstraction to become useful (not a meaningless set of representations of real world phenomena) a proposition must be formulated to organise it into a series, sufficient to generate a general principle. This is not a problem about forms, beings or objects – it is to ask how the process animating immanent experiences can be abstracted, sufficient to model from it a general principle.

As such, a singular capture, one particular snap shot of the process is not enough – further demonstrations of the process are required. The individual acquires another thing – what has it done to the allotment? Has it doubled again (a multiplication relation which would indicate a power rule)? No, it is additional to those already acquired: (1 + 1) + 1 = 3. What will happen to the allotment if another object is acquired? Insofar as it can be assumed that this process will faithfully repeat without variation, in each encounter of this immanent situation, there may now be postulated a rule. If the subject continues to acquire objects, the allotment will grow in ordered increments toward infinity.
The question is, what kind of a rule is this? This is to query how the proposition models the immanent unfolding or functional computation of the process. This is because the infinite resolution can never be actualised by carrying out the calculative process, which it proposes to represent. Even if a specially designated computing device were set to the task, the duration of the universe would expire, still falling *infinitely short* of demonstrating the general principle; that it will go on in a perfectly ordered fashion to infinity. So how can one be *assured* this rule will continue to apply? Brouwer is as strict on this point as Hume is upon the demonstrability of predicable cause/effect relations, more generally; he tells us that this can never be more than a speculative assumption. Even in this simple case, where positive natural integers carry on to infinity, he tells us that this proposition lacks a *sufficient rigour*.

Technically, Brouwer’s objection is formalised in a rejection of the law of excluded middle, the logic of the *reductio ad absurdum*. As such, it bears upon the mechanism of *representation* that *constructs* the Platonic model, where an immanent, unfolding of process is made to correspond or *resolve* into an abstract, determinable relation. For the law of the excluded middle governs how a particularity is extended to a general or universal principle, how the function is turned into the general form of the problem. To understand Brouwer’s objection, in which the generality of mathematical foundations are refuted, one must ask to what purpose the relation is put, how it establishes a principle of identity, how it grasps what is beyond change and remains the same. It is precisely because the identical relation must be computed and set into operation that even the most profoundly abstract mathematical relation cannot resolve its reliance upon dynamic functionality.
Moreover, the irreducibility of the dynamic function is greatly amplified where the ideal model presents itself as adequate to the world of immanent beings. For it is thought that it is via the relation that ideas produce their consistency and which are put to work in the production of universal principles. This is because the relation is how a fragment of immanent processing is assigned an abstract form. But despite what we are often invited to believe, this is not a singular flow from immanent processes to ideas, because as we have seen in establishing the series of natural numbers with its infinite proposition, the relation must be established recursively by testing it against other immanent processes. That is, via a circulation or return to the dynamic process which, as such, insists within the abstract particle or ideal-object. But this is not in itself sufficient to establish a ‘true’, that is, a universal, principle: for the model’s resolution relies upon whether the relation captures a purely repetitious process, that is, *something that will repeat without change*, in every immanent instance, that will remain identical across every active iteration. And it is only insofar as an identical repetition of process is there assumed, that a functional operation can be reduced or fixed between the two binding terms of the relation, the pair domain/codomain.

This reduction of the function to the two terms of the relation seeks to turn it into a problem of the general problem-solution kind, coupling it between two determinations in order to secure it and to cancel its immanent activity. It is the dynamism of the function that is excluded in the law that makes this simple operation sufficient to a universal principle. That is, in each juncture of the resultant universal series, every appeal to the relation requires this dynamic cancellation, assuming in its place an identical operation will be performed.
Brouwer’s objection may not seem overly significant, if it only succeeds in pointing out again that immanent activity cannot predictably correspond to ideal modelling. Additionally, it’s no surprise that abstract thought is predicated upon bracketing out the messiness of immanent experience, for its power surely concerns selecting particular immanent processes and harnessing them into new capacities – this is the very power of abstract relations. But if the general form of the problem is again prolonged here, it is insofar as the lived experience is thought resolved into the idea so that the relation is thought to become independent from the dynamic, functional operation. It is only if the relation can effect this clean break, that the abstraction of epistémê can be sealed as something in itself, exclusively concerning the composition between relations, establishing the foundations of internal consistency adequate to universal principles.

But Brouwer rejects this epistemological resolution. This is because the relation cannot stand in for, replace, nor reduce to itself the function. This objection is demonstrated by the Church-Turing conjecture, where the fundamental limit of computability indicates how relations are not free of the function’s indetermination.\textsuperscript{14} This is not only because the dynamic function is stratified by its capture when immanent processes are abstracted into relations, but also because the function persists \textit{within} the ideal relation. As such, even in the most abstract of cases, the

\textsuperscript{14} This is discussed in Turing’s paper \textit{On Computable Numbers, with an Application to the Entscheidungsproblem}. Moreover, in the elaboration of the Church-Turing thesis or conjecture, debates seem to continue on precisely what is indicated by the central notion of ‘effective calculability’. Nevertheless, despite the technicalities of the argument, the problem converges upon the broader context in which we have placed them, because they continue to circulate about various properties inseparable from the \textit{computor} – not the properties of abstract machines and calculations but about their veracity to model computing or immanent agents, who carry out the task of computation. That is why they have been posed here in the context of the discussion about technê.
relation’s identical repetition cannot be assured, such that it can be certifiably predicted in advance.\textsuperscript{15}

Brouwer will therefore clarify something critical about functions. Functions are not simply processes of pure repetition. They are a heteroclite mixture of two irreducible properties – repetition and \textit{creative transformation}. Functions are like an unpredictable tussle or struggle between the two, the pattern of which is only revealed when they are \textit{put into action}, that is set into operation.

Moreover, mathematics has forced us to radically re-evaluate what we understand by the function. For if the model can no longer assure an interior resemblance to the encounter which precipitates it, this returns us to the problematic encounter itself. When the problem is no longer viewed as already coupled to an inevitable resolution, it is possible to apprehend that what the ‘real’ mathematics deals with is the function itself. However, the function does not ‘belong’ to mathematics, either inherently or by virtue of its superior capacity to make the function presentable. The function – which is to say, the dynamic activity generative of transformations – suggests it is an order of nature, itself.

What mathematics succeeds in showing us is that we have mistaken the locus and nature of creative transformation; it does not reside \textit{with} nature as the origin or foundation of axiomatic principles but concerns the immanent irruptive application of local affect. What it suggests to us is that \textit{poiesis} will not ultimately be a problem of the general form resolving identically to produce particular beings, but is rather a

\textsuperscript{15} A vivid example of the incommensurability of computing comes to us via the Mandelbrot Set ($Z = Z^2 + C$). There is no way from the mathematical expression of the formula to predict how the patterns of ‘self-similarity’ – that is the complex tussle between repetition and transformation – plays out, without carrying out the computation; that is, without setting it into action. Turing’s work on computability seeks to formalise this incapacity, which in this context identifies that despite the best strictures of epistemological abstraction, the immanent affectation of \textit{technē} is precisely what remains inexpressible in the abstraction.
functional problem, so that a third element intervenes in the process of becoming. It is possible then to see that the particular has an additional element that is not donated from the universal. And moreover, no matter how minute, this is the locus for a genuinely creative power with consequences for natural processes.

1.2.6. Functions in the creation of models

The recalibration around creative functions in pure mathematics has important implications outside of the discipline. If the function is something eminently creative, and the scientific procedure advances itself by the experimental application of abstract principles into functional operations, then might not the entire enterprise be itself something essentially emergent, something creative, rather than a labour of the confirmation and refinement of already occulted truths?

This is to assign a very different role for the model than it acquires through Platonism. The model, which assembles together those ideal unifications abstracted from immanent functional operations, no longer apprehends the underlying reality of things, giving expression to hitherto hidden laws; rather, the method of ‘pure’ mathematics does not resolve into ideal unities. The model is not judged by its adequacy to eternal and unchanging principles but rather as a projective set of abstract constructs, a series of synthetic creations. Thus, the power of the model does not derive from its equivalence or identity to the living world, but through its multiplication of affective powers to carry out various transformations upon it. That is to say, to not only transform the functional operations carried over from the immanent world, but to return these functions back upon it.
Pure mathematics establishes a very different relationship to being, that has important implications for how the mind-body aporia fractures experience. For it is no longer the problem of determining a unidirectional resolution from one relation to another, but to consider workflows across a reflexive, dialectical or circuitous scheme. In some prescient analysis, Albert Lautman can be understood to have argued that the field of mathematics reoriented itself from a resolute foundationalism toward creative synthesis.

Lautman emphasises a synthetic perception, ready to determine the value of complex networks of mathematical interaction, beyond a stifling search for 'primary' notions. The unity of mathematics is expressed, not in a common base to rebuild the whole, but in the convergence of its methods and in the passage of ideas between its various networks: logical, arithmetic, algebraic, analytic, topological, geometric, etc...these are all examples studied in detail by Lautman, in which, in the local fragment, the global unity of mathematics is reflected. It happens to be a real unity, at the interior of the synthetic universe of effective mathematics that disappears when the plurality of mathematical knowledge is reduced to its fictional analytic reconstruction. After all, the set theoretical presentation provides convenient layers of relative consistency, but in practice, it is increasingly evident that mathematics develops far from its so-called fundamentals. An epistemological inversion shows how, contrary to what one might think in the first instance, a practical observation of diversity can then reinstate the multiplicity in the unity.'\textsuperscript{16}

What Zalamea emphasises is that Lautman proposes a very different conception of the epistemological progression and organisation of the mathematical paradigm. In noting the primacy of experimentation and emergence ('effective mathematics'), he indicates that mathematical labour does not progressively resolve into axiomatic certitudes, somehow equivalent to hidden universal laws. This somewhat contravenes the orthodox expectation prolonged from the Platonic model, where mathematics gives expression to the form of universal laws.\textsuperscript{17} For when a mathematical theorem is less the apprehension of a fundamental order, than an organisation of ideal relations making new experimental powers possible, it becomes

\textsuperscript{16} F. Zalamea, \textit{Albert Lautman and the Creative Dialectic of Modern Mathematics}, pp. xxvii-xxviii

\textsuperscript{17} That is, the so-called Platonic existence of numbers.
evident that mathematics is an essentially creative activity. This does not lead to a
collapse of unity: Lautman remains Platonic insofar as unity remains a critical
function for the ideal, however, this ideal dimension is no longer intrinsic and given,
it is rather constructed from the activity of immanent, abstract experimentations into
relative frameworks and relations. In short, the fundamental idea is no longer
understood to be the cause of functions, beings and manifestations of the real. Ideas
rather have a new role to play – to facilitate the creation of new orders and beings,
new dimensions of the real. Everything now turns around the emergence of the
function, because the construction and creation of ideal unities is characterised as a
particularly powerful procedure for intensifying the creative affects of functions.

What remains prescient in Lautman’s reconfiguration of synthetic unity
becomes explicitly elaborated in category theory, when it reformulates how the
mathematical discipline is structured. Category theory emphasises how synthetic
unifications (that is, areas in which a set of axiomatic theorems have been
synthesised) are not universal but local regions of order linked by functional
transformations. But because these local regions of synthetic unity ‘acquire their

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18 A category consists of arrows and point-objects that acquire their properties only from the various
arrow relations in which they are configured. Unlike the intrinsic dimension of Set Theory, the notion
of category was not perceived as most fundamental. Instead, the functor was.

The arrow in a transformation thus became more important than the objects the latter links or maps.
As Eilenberg and Mac Lane wrote: “it should be observed that the whole concept of a category is
essentially an auxiliary one. Our basic concepts are essentially those of a functor and of a natural
transformation.” This is why a category is in fact nothing without its criteria. It is a collection of
“objects” satisfying three basic conditions: that any pair of “objects” a, b, are linked by a collection of
arrows or “morphisms”; for every triple a, b, and c of objects, the operation of arrows from a to b, and
b to c is called the “composition” of a to c; finally, every object a has an arrow linking it to itself called
the “identity morphism.”

In a nutshell, elementary category theory shows that there is no object prior to the relations
constituting it. The theoretical apparatus literally illustrates this by using a geometric presentation
combined with its equational transcription. It is not merely a matter here of delving further into the
question of the meaning of a multiple being transversal and open-ended. This is enough to ward off any
claims of essentialism going on behind the scenes. It is not even just a matter of taking Aristotle’s
typological rebuttal of Plato’s numerology as a path by which to undermine the claims emerging from

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properties only from the various arrow relations in which they are configured’, the
functors or transformative processes provide the fundamental insights into how
mathematics operates and is structured.\footnote{What it is in fact is a metaontological theory, very Deleuzian at that, of showing and analyzing the emergence of (mathematical) objects qua forms, that is, structures, in possible worlds. This sense of emergence provides an altogether unexpected necessity to the notion of existence, albeit within the realm of the possible. As J. Bell writes:
Set theory strips away structure from the ontology of mathematics leaving pluralities of structureless individuals open to the imposition of new structure. Category theory, on the other hand, transcends particular structure, not by doing away with it, but by generating it, that is, by producing an axiomatic general theory of structure.}

As Norman Madarasz surmises, what is emphasised here is the emergent properties of these functional operations in generating or creating structures.

But this does more than emphasise that pure mathematics works to overcome the ‘extra-mathematical’ constraint on its encounter with problems. It is certainly remarkable that category theory shows that unity is a local ordering, offering a striking new conception of the contest between epistemological or ontological models; that is, they are not a historical superseding of one axiomatic proposition for another, but groupings of local or particular unities, linked by functional transformations.

It also tells us something very important about our relation to these models of local synthetic unities; they are not the resolution of immanent, experiential problems but highly productive areas in a circulation or feedback of functional operations. This is not to describe another general resolute approach to the problem, but how dynamic, immanent experiments generate theoretical syntheses that make possible new orders of creative experimentation. Colin McLarty emphasises this point in his discussion of category theory in the history of meta-mathematical theorisation:

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\footnote{Ibid., pp. 13.}
This new conception certainly did not come from some timeless nature of mathematics, nor from meditation on set theoretic foundations. Rather, like set theory itself in its time, category theory arose from the heart of mathematical practice and offered foundational insights. It might become common sense that foundations come out of practice, and will change as practice develops, and will lose contact with the subject if they do not change with the practice. As Lawvere has put it, 'pure foundations of mathematics are no foundations of mathematics at all.'

This contingency between processes of practical and creative experimentation and synthesising ideal unifications describes a radically different reality to that presented through the classical model: unity is not the discovery of axiomatic principles, but rather the functional operation that brings models of unity into being. Models are not the resolute proposals of eternal orders, but a particular, even singular kind of process necessary for evolution and experimentation. Thus unification may appear not as an essence or property, but rather as a function. Mathematical consistency is no longer paradoxical to the experience of its differential, experimental becomings; these are now understood as the continually fluctuating series of constructed arrangements that comprise the field of mathematical ideas.

As such, a very different topology or epistemological arrangement of the discipline is evident. No longer the gathering of eternal solidification or foundations, mathematical unity is synthetic, not foundational; it is created in a supplementary, abstract dimension; not discovered already existent, commensurate to that governing the heavens, the centre of the universe, the earth or the absolute interior of hidden, concrete essences.

In the Platonic model, the expectation that epistêmê discovers the array of eternal, unchanging principles is what guarantees the ideal’s intimate proximity with the real. But in Lautman we learn that unity is not a singular reality, but a differential property, specific to multiple synthetic unifications and also, and in another way, to

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the immanent praxis of creative experimentation. And in category theory, we locate the distributor of this differentiation of reals; it is the process of functional transformations, where the immanence of experimental praxis gives rise to regions of synthetic unification, which in turn gives rise to new experimental praxes and so on. Most importantly, everywhere these processes of functional transformations are creative, a creativity no longer tied to an origin or a cause, but as something ‘emergent’ within the transformative operation, to the particular kind of calculation in effect. Although the axiom, in assembling a maximal number of convergent functions and series, remains the ‘highest’ expression of the ideal, this could never displace or supersede the reality of functional experimentation. No longer manifest within the model to be partially distributed and degraded into the Copy (the poiesis of the craftsman, which in this context indicates the mathematician labouring away at their desk), it rather apprehends another order of poiesis: the creative experimentation the Copy undertakes, which makes possible the construction of ideas and models.

In the project that follows, in which a reconsideration of the function of art is undertaken, mathematics offers us not only a new paradigm from the domination or constraint within epistemological models but also a radical new conception of what constitutes a genuinely creative principle.
1.3. Functions in art

1.3.1. The contention that a creative principle is necessary for art has not been exhausted

Since pure mathematics establishes with the function the possible terms for a genuinely creative praxis, these details require a carrying over into the field of art. This is because of the way mathematics reinvigorates the understanding of creation by detaching it from a transcendent property of the model to an independently operating property of particular functional operations. Thus, despite those post-representational critiques that deeply problematise the philosophical idea of creation, this differential approach via the function opens the possibility that the relationship between art and creation may be restored.

Indeed, the discussion of mathematics has indicated how a creative principle becomes occulted in art via its theoretical analysis – that is, insofar as it would not appear in the series of representative terms through which art tends to be thought about. It will not appear in either the domain or ‘inputs’ (the history of works; the relation between an ideal or natural world it is assumed to take as its subject; the materials it arrogates and upon which it imposes various methods of construction; and the status of the ontological and subjective natures of the artists themselves) nor its codomain, what is produced by it as a series of related affects (the historical series of works produced; the knowledge systems which arrange these works into sensible series, critical, theoretical, historical, and so on; the series of affects between works and viewers; the systems of value, economic, cultural, historical, spiritual in which works are assembled).
What this brings to our attention is that ‘the work of art’, may not constitute a problem of the general form, but rather a functional problem that escapes a possible reduction between these sorts of terms. In order to better demonstrate that it is not an essence, axiom, model, ideal or material basis that informs the specificity of art, but rather a function, let us return to the mathematical developments discussed in relation to the field of art.

1.3.2. The function is occulted by the division between theory and practice

The mathematical redefinition of function is particularly useful because the appeal to ‘function’ is overwrought in thinking about art. This general, orthodox utility of the term differs sharply from the mathematical account undertaken here, where in the context of art ‘function’ is a synonym of purpose. Historically, this addresses its material and cultural utility, finally becoming clarified into problems of meaning in our contemporary period. As such, whatever constitutes the functional problem of art is thought to play out between the ‘completed work’ (artefact or art ‘object’) and the milieu in which it operates. The advantage of treating the function of art as an analogue of purpose, is that a certain ideal accounting or unification of its disparate products may be approached, and its emergence from a certain utilitarianism might be brought into view. This utilitarianism remains profoundly implicated with craft, and is

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21 This has a distinctly Platonic precedent where the more generalised translation of ergon (work) is interpreted as function in the context of art; this is to differentiate the work of art by the intentional outcome it produces (The Republic, pp. 26). Most commonly, ergon explicitly refers to the ‘end of the work’, that is to say, to production. It might be argued, that the mathematical recalibration of the term, lends a rigour to these disparate interpretations by showing they are properties of the function: work is calculation and production is the outcome of this calculation, the codomain produced by the function’s dynamic transformation.
intimately related to a period in which the field of art cannot yet be understood to be differentiated from the broader activity of *poiesis*, or making.

To clarify how this orthodox sense of the function emerges, let us return to *The Republic* – not to the conclusions it finally proposes but rather to its production of the model via the dialectical method. Socrates’ famous pronouncement upon art is the culmination of a progressive meditation, distinguishing between two different kinds or orders of knowledge: *technê* and *epistêmê*. Rather than a strict, initial determination of either term, *The Republic* precedes with a speculative positing and experimentation, in which the distinction between *technê* and *epistêmê* seems to express a certain complexity and inter-penetration. Thus, before the instantiation of *epistêmê* where *technê* will be finally subordinated, the initial positing of *technê* begins with the craftsman’s primary encounter with the function (*ergon*).\(^\text{22}\) That is to say, the basis of the craftsman’s knowledge, and the pivot of its usefulness, is an immanent grasping of causal processes; the function of farming is to produce food, the function of medicine, is to heal; ‘Are not the separate arts different, by reason of their each having a separate function?’\(^\text{23}\)

*Technê* thus appears to consist of at least two quite separate operations: the capacity to immanently *apprehend* the function which involves a certain immanence to the causal order and a more specific materialist know-how (*epistasthai*) whose task is to *put into effect* a change in the causal mechanism precipitated via the function. Thus *ergon* – function *and* production – is linked fundamentally to *poiesis* – and indicates how making or creating operates.

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\(^ {22}\) Ibid., pp. 26.  
\(^ {23}\) Plato, *The Republic*, pp. 26. Of course art (*technê*) here is implied in the general sense and is closer to the contemporary meaning of ‘discipline’ or ‘area of study’. But that is precisely why the re-problematising of ‘function’ requires an engagement with the form of the model and the general problem-solution coupling that issues from it.
But for Plato, this immanent activity could never be adequate to epistêmê, the contemplation of those eternal, unchanging forms that drive poïesis and the intentional deviations, technê affects upon it. And this final resolution, although profoundly differentiated, will not change in Aristotle, for although the value of the craftsman (technite) will extend to a higher kind of understanding this will remain excluded from the highest partition of knowledge which apprehends the unchanging nature of cause – knowledge of a theoretical or scientific kind: epistêmê.\(^\text{24}\)

All that remains to arrive at the orthodox understanding of the function that still persists in the field of art today, is to allow the orthodox model to unfold: the immanent, experiential activity of technê, in apprehending and setting to work the dynamic function, requires a unification within epistêmê, whereby its apprehensions and actions may be judged. That is, the engagement with immanent functions must be submitted to a selective process governed by the forms: the ‘good’, the ‘just’ and the ‘beautiful’. That is why, to this day, art will be treated as an essentially aesthetic problem.

If it has been valuable to return to the dialectical play that produces the simulacrum, it is to emphasise that epistêmê is not discovered ‘ready-made’ but generated by an encounter with the problem of functions (ergon). Once the model has been completed, the order of dialectical production is turned around so that its unity is presented as sufficient to the cause; they will be argued to be necessary to organising the vague, diffuse apprehensions of experience (praxis) into the know-how of the craftsman. But the unity the model synthesises is itself only possible because of its

\(^{24}\) ‘Hence we think that the master-workers in each craft are more honorable and know in a truer sense and are wiser than the manual workers, because they know the causes of the things to be done.’ Aristotle, Metaphysics, pp. 1553. But we will see later that precisely because Aristotle brackets off this kind of knowledge strictly from praxis, that the function is split off from knowledge insofar as it constitutes a kind of evolutionary progression from a natural form of experience (that is to say, sufficient to see praxis, technê and logistikós all as evidence of the function).
initial encounter with the function. Moreover, when *technê* is made a sort of medial resolution between experience and *epistêmê*, the path is laid for the formal division between theory and practice which will continue to echo into the present: *technê* remains subordinate to the judgment of *epistêmê*. Thus, the intelligibility immanent to and concerning the function, becomes dissolved and obscured through this division between practical actions and pure, formal knowledge.

Thus, despite the much-critiqued Platonic judgement, which degrades the work of art in the order of reality, there persists a far less commented upon effect within art’s relationship to knowledge. The superiority of *epistêmê* persists in the general form of the problem, where art must be resolved within and judged by a sufficient ideal model. Art remains effectively reduced to a material know-how (*epistasthai*) to which formal and categorical distinctions continue to be traced. Artistic intelligibility concerns a technical mastery specific to the playing of violins or turntables, of brush strokes or turns of phrase. As such, what is lost in the solidification of *technê* and *epistêmê* into the more familiar practice/theory aporia is art’s *own kind of intelligibility*, which arguably concerns its immanent, experiential encounter with the function. Moreover, there is no guarantee that the kinds of divisions possible within the ideal model are sustainably present in this encounter; that is, those differentiating between practical, technical, productive and formal phenomena. For art, this is a particular concern because what constitutes its work (that which is immanent to *ergon*) is snapped up into the completed work or object. Thus what is missed is the opportunity to pursue whether the function’s work upon *poiesis* might constitute something fundamentally *creative*; a fundamentally different kind of work, not simply arrested or co-opted to the primary process through which all comes into being.
Where art’s intelligibility remains restricted to material engagements, the task of defining its meaning, significance and purpose are abdicated toward more theoretically capable epistémê – predominantly philosophy and history, but also to communication, anthropological or social sciences and cultural theories. Thus, although the overturning of representation recalibrates art’s formal distancing from the real, it continues to be felt in the divisiveness about what constitutes different kinds of knowledge. This division will be explored more thoroughly in Chapter Three, but this has a more immediate consequence because this division, albeit in a subtle way, distorts our thinking about art’s immanent proximity to the function.

There is a final issue that must be emphasised, by way of Aristotle. Technê is precluded from knowledge that apprehends the unchanging nature of cause, rather apprehending immanent causation (material cause). But it is rendered particular by an affective power of intentional deviation that can differently shape what is brought forward (efficient cause). That is to say, technê is the faculty for functional operations. Yet it is because technê has an additional property, evident in its highest practitioners (technites) that demonstrate it is a form of knowledge, properly speaking. The defining measure of artistic mastery is not simply the apprehension of material causes or the ability to put efficient causes into affect, but rather concerns its capacity for communication.25 As such, it is because the knowledge of material and efficient causes can be transmitted between practitioners, which demonstrates its access to ideal abstraction and its superiority to experience.

The implications of this distinction are ramified, overwhelmingly, into the current period. Art communicates invaluable apprehensions about material, utilitarian

25 ‘And in general it is a sign of the man who knows, that he can teach, and therefore we think art more truly knowledge than experience is; for artists can teach, and men of mere experience cannot.’ Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, pp. 1553.
functions and processes, but upon a given lack, disinterest or disengagement with a sufficient epistemological capacity, it is for other disciplines to resolve the questions about its function and value. Consequently, it always falls to various theoretical interests to carry out the interpretative work of its various praxes and arrange the works produced into sensible series. As always, it is then ultimately for these ideal models in which the works of art are arranged, to distribute judgments of value upon the formal principles they have determined.

Although it will take much of this thesis to demonstrate, this preliminary sketch maps out how the domination of the model breaks the immanent encounter with the function of art and the reality of creative praxis. Without an encounter, unencumbered by these divisions between knowledge and praxis, the function cannot be approached in its independence, which, following from mathematics, is only approachable in the mode of its creative praxis. Creativity unsettles the division between techné and epistêmê, because in the encounter with the function, they are no longer categories or stages upon a grand abscissa of knowledge, separated by the causes they apprehend. Rather, techné engages the nature of the ‘cause’ to act upon it – this is not a failure to discover an idea adequate to an innate universal, but an intention to contest whatever constitutes its nature.

1.3.3. The conflation of function and purpose in art history

Let us return to examine the orthodox deployment of ‘function’ in the field of art, up to the contemporary milieu. It has become the province of textbooks to find these

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26 It may sound disingenuous to suggest that contemporary art is denied an epistemological dimension because artists clearly have profound and complicated epistemological engagements. This problem will be taken up in more detail across the following discussion.
conventional categories explicating the function of art, upon divisions that reflect the ideal structure of the model, and generally flow from distinctions of the theoretical/practical type. There are any number of conventional divisions, but the following account will attempt to organise them into those most commonly encountered: the physical, social and personal. In each case, what must be identified is how these propositions about the function imply subtle transformations or mediations from the immanent encounter with the work of art to the communications or series of effects this work produces.

The physical function relates directly to the utilitarian sense of function in art or its material know how (epistasthai) and dominates the art historical account of early art practices, particularly where art remains indistinguishable from toolmaking and craft. This approach contemplates the function of the object or artefact, tied to its utilitarian purpose – a weapon of war or a cooking utensil. This sense of a physical function persists in the current period, although in a supplementary way: it might describe a particularly ‘artful’ piece of craft or furniture, or it might assist in the classification of hybridised or bordering disciplines which merge with art (such as design or architecture).

However, what is emphasised in the development from a purely utilitarian function (tool) is that additional dimensions appear which pertain to other functional properties. Dominant within pre-modern artefacts one encounters spiritual and cultural functions; for example, an 11th century Scandinavian war hammer, may contain decorative elements (braided or interwoven knot-work) that invoke supernatural functions (like the fury of Thor) and may serve as a cultural marker of

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27 A. de Botton’s *Art as Therapy* provides a contemporary example of this approach.
the bearer’s social standing (a warrior or soldier). We are invited to recognise that something distinctive about art emerges with these secondary functions, which distinguishes the tool or object as an artefact; that is to say, co-present with the utilitarian function of the first type, there emerges additional functional operations, where the ‘art’ becomes implicitly tied up with transmissions of meaning.

From a modelling of historical analysis, the artefact’s centrality in the long emergence of semiotics could be argued to come into view here: before the establishment of written dialects, artefacts are already performing symbolic functions. Thus, whether it is in the transmission of spiritual or cultural significance, this communicational function arguably animates what is added to the tool in the artefact. As such, the function of the 11th century Scandinavian war hammer may have remained essentially of the utilitarian type: it is a weapon of war. It may additionally invoke a kind of restricted production of sense, which remains tied to its materiality: a spiritual or cultural function, invoking a supernatural, exaggerated aggression or marking the social status of its bearer. But most importantly, it may come to perform or at least anticipate a ‘purely’ symbolic function, further abstracted by its transformation into a sign (icon): the hammer, symbol of Mjöllnir, whose various inverted T or cross shaped stylisations are incorporated into a multitude of artefacts.

29 For example, the Tărtăria tablets, from 5500-5300 BC, which arguably record a pre- or proto-linguistic symbolism, excavated with figurines and jewellery in a possible cremation site (A. Whittle, *Europe in the Neolithic: The Creation of New Worlds*).
30 R. Cavendish, *Mythology*, pp. 180-181. It should be noted that such a model of a historical emergence of symbolic communication would not necessarily be compatible with Saussurean semiotics, but it would certainly not be antithetical to the work of Charles Peirce. In a rather baroque complex of categorical divisions, Peirce offers a typological set, adequate for precisely this kind of historical emergence, with the triadic division of icon, symbol and index. It may well be added, that a project of linking the irreducible dynamism of functions from their static, symbolic expression, might profitably draw on Peirce’s semiotic distinctions (which addresses the progression between natural and abstract).
Arguably, these secondary developments both precede and become characterised under the *social function of art*. Moreover, as theorisation of art becomes progressively sophisticated, a closely associated communicative function features far more overtly in discussions of art. Where *social* functions are understood to symbolise individuals within a milieu, this might always be enveloped within a general theory of communication, transmitting cultural and sociological information between subjects. That is to say, the social function of art becomes increasingly emphasised in the more sophisticated cultures of modernity, when art history details for us the role art plays in the capture and transmission of the zeitgeist. If this seems to amplify how the social and communicative functions are wedded in art, it is because art appears to both express and potentiate the specific moments of political and cultural upheaval, and also to record or represent them for future analysis. Yet, because art’s communication is aestheticised and its knowledgeable engagement remains at best an *epistasthai*, these incursions retain a kind of acephalousness of an imitative, affective or emotive type. That is to say, this outpouring of artistic activity remains in need of ideal interpretation or context in which its inherent value is determined. Indeed, in certain quarters, the explanatory power of this social function of art is carried so far as to overwhelm the more nebulous aesthetic value of the work entirely. The institutional theory of art proposes that art is entirely reducible to the socio-economics of the art gallery network and manages to eschew the question of artistic production and creation in its entirety.31

31 This theory was pioneered by Arthur Danto in *The Artworld* and also by George Dickie (who developed a more comprehensive approach to the theory in *Art and the Aesthetic: An Institutional Analysis*). Although the theory is the subject of much derision in the world of art, it has not stopped a contemporary revival of the project in cultural theory, which does not at all debate whether art is reducible or comprehensible in this light, but rather just puts this assumption to work, as one of the primary pillars of urban renewal. The central tenet of this project is to see in art production a sort of *perpetuum mobile* for reinvigorating environments or urban centres, decaying under the effects of late
Perhaps the most pervasive contemporary utility of function is encapsulated by the *personal*. The personal function concerns the polyvalent interpretations and productions of meaning that encounters with a completed work induces: this ranges across issues of taste and proclivity, value and significance, meaning and interpretation and so on. No doubt, throughout modernism and beyond, this kind of function that concerns the seemingly infinite productions of individual interpretation are thought to be endorsed by the experimentation of artistic *praxis* itself. Here, the physical function, tied to the history of the artefact, and the utilitarian function of material know-how, appear themselves to be overtaken by a kind of affective *epistêmê* – they are made comprehensible by the engagement not with the material experimentation in itself, but rather with the overturning of the system of formal categorisations through which classicism had brought forward the field of art from its historical precedents. Art appears now to anticipate the obsessive individualism of Late Capitalism, and to emblemise the dissipation of political and social structures more generally. However for art, this functions more effectively as a kind of broad recommendation to bypass the encounter with the work itself, in favour of a production of individual significance. This is tantamount to encountering the work of art as a kind of mirror, to reflect and refract back the viewing subject’s own image.

It is worthwhile reiterating once again, that this is not to downplay the significance of all of these *effects*, which adds value to art in the broad milieus in which it resides. Nevertheless, what all these proposals for the function or purpose of art have in common, whether they be physical, social or personal, is that they tend to pass over the encounter with the work of art in favour of the productive communications and effects these works induce for other disciplinary structures. As capitalism.

For a local example, see the Renew Newcastle project that negotiates short-term leases of derelict properties for artist galleries and studios. [http://renewnewcastle.org/about](http://renewnewcastle.org/about).
such, the situation remains in which the work of art becomes reduced to or overwrought by these productive effects at the expense of encountering its own engagement with the function. What will have to be argued is that without the functional, creative labour the work of art brings into being, none of these productive effects would be possible. As such, that the function of art is rather indicated by the generation of productive effects within these disciplines is a far more significant estimation of its kind of work, than any interpretation issuing from them.

If this admittedly out-dated approach to the ‘function’ of art requires emphasis, it is because its only credible relic has become arguably dominant; the assumption that art must be essentially treated as a mode of communication or a kind of semiotic system. This assumption is what implicitly justifies that a system of meaning – an epistemological accounting of one form or another – is sufficient to make arts activities and productions sensible and animates debates around the kinds of predicates appropriate for aesthetic judgments and theorisation (which includes their radical problematising in contemporary, post modern praxis). It is such that the theorisation of various knowledge systems has become the default model through which the function is interrogated, judged and valued on art’s behalf.

1.4. The inaugural Greek topos: art, creation and nature

1.4.1. Aristotle and the apprehension of the topos

The Platonic model does not directly apprehend the unifying, eternal principles upon which art will finally be judged. Rather the model synthetically produces an abstract
principle of unity from its immanent encounter with the function (ergon). Where we have undertaken to approach the problem of the function and its proximity to art, it can no longer proceed through an interrogation of those models that continue to predicate upon the general form of the problem. We must rather return to the encounter with the ergon in its primary apprehension – that is, to engage a different kind of problem.

If the legacy of Platonism (and its overturning or reversal) prolongs the general form, it might be argued that a reinvestigation of Aristotelianism would open for us a very different kind of problem. To begin, Aristotle’s presentation of the problem of art is foundational. It is immediately about nature because techné makes possible the deviation of natural causation from the self-propagating automaticity of phusis. But if this is further emphasized it is because this faculty also distinguishes what comprises human difference – it is the ability to deviate phusis that is thought to be the defining property of the human species. More specifically, techné signals a kind of intelligence linked to the capacity to sense, but that is not all – for to deviate or change the direction of phusis requires a capacity to act. Technè is thus a kind of intelligence coupled to action, and the work thereby produced is art (poiesis).

It is possible to see here in Aristotle’s originary problematisation those elements classically interwoven with the problem of art; that is, a complex problem or topos in which art (technè), creation (poiesis) and nature (phusis) are apprehended in a complicated mixture.³² But because the ideal model is already predicated into a

³² In mathematics, a topos is such a kind of irreducibly complex problem. Luce Irigaray arguably provides a precedent for the idea that the Greek’s philosophical foundations always implied some kind of complex problematic apprehension. She argues that the illusion of transcendental unity (either in the masculinities of an absolute logos or in a singular subjectivity) always occults a feminine other with which it is necessarily co-extensive. In the Beginning, She was, returns to the Pre-Socratics to show how this chaotic, wild untamed feminine nature forms the fertile substrate from which the logos is thrown or distinguishes itself.
general form of the problem, it must be argued that it is inappropriate for investigating art in this irreducibly problematic encounter. That is to say that those methods which attempt to determine this complex, by abstracting out, segmenting and clarifying into separate issues ‘creation’, ‘nature’, and ‘art’, cannot do so without *collapsing* the functional nature of the problem. That is why the complexity of the *topos* must be approached where they are encountered together.

It is when Aristotle transforms the *topos* into a general kind of problem that the otherwise important correctives to its Platonic presentation become obscured. This transformation to the general form is clearest in Aristotle’s reformulation of *mimesis*. For Aristotle, art does not occupy a third order remove from the Real, the wilful degradation of the copy (*icônes*) to the image (*simulacra*). Rather, *mimesis* is the functional operation that makes possible the affectations of *praxis* upon *poiesis*. Because for Aristotle action and production are categorically distinct, artistic *praxis* requires *technê* (the intelligence linking material causation with an intentional deviation), so that art works by *imitating the processes of nature*, the *poiesis* through which beings come forward.33

The profundity of Aristotle's procedure, which remains an important analysis of artistic *praxis*, is revealed in the link to *phusis* itself; because for Aristotle, the forms are a distribution of discrete particulars within *phusis*, it is human action (*praxis*) that is most proximate to them (even though the adequate comprehension of this formal cause is only possible for *epistêmê*). Art is thus not a third order degradation of the real, but the work to intervene in processes of becoming and thus defines human specificity.

33 ...art in some cases completes what nature cannot bring to a finish, and in others imitates nature.’ Aristotle, *Physics*, pp. 340. Also in *Poetics*, Aristotle discusses a sort of primordial evolutionary theory, in which the various arts emerge from the natural propensity human subjects have for imitation.
As such, Aristotle offers a different metaphysical proposition concerning how art operates, than that encountered in Plato’s Republic. Rather than diminishing orders of an ideal reality, mimesis concerns the imitation of actions – the deviation of processes of becoming animate within phusis. In both cases, it remains for epistêmê to determine the function of art with its superior grasp of the nature of causes. However, what is crucial in Aristotle’s treatment, is that the kind of formal interrogation or apprehension which art carries out, is linked directly to artistic praxis, rather than to the objects it produces (artefact), in which the formal relation resides in Plato.\textsuperscript{34}

Moreover, it is clear in Aristotle that the work of art is fundamentally about the dynamism at work with immanent functions.

Notwithstanding, the solidification and further schematisation of the theory and practice divide that Aristotle instantiates makes the function no less fragmented and dissolved within a now tripartite division between knowledge (including technê, but of which epistêmê remains the most elevated) and the two orders of practice (poiesis and praxis).\textsuperscript{35} For what is effectuated herein is a further distancing between poiesis and the possibility that ‘making’ might rather constitute something genuinely creative. That is to say, where praxis deviates poiesis, ‘to make’ is to introduce a supplementary efficient cause into the flow of natural causation, quite at odds with the proposition that art imitates natural production. This is never to encounter the nature or origin of causes, insofar as this efficient, artistic activity remains immanent and has no impact upon the ‘formal’ and ‘final’, governing what is eternal or self-propagating in nature. For Aristotle, this is a domain beyond the ambit of human intervention, which is why praxis and poiesis are always subordinate to the contemplative powers.

\textsuperscript{34} It is enough to recall that it is the intentionality inscribed in artistic praxis by Plato – to deceive, to distance from truth – which is the grounds for the artists’ expulsion from the Republic.

\textsuperscript{35} Aristotle carries out this famous discussion of the divisions of knowledge in Nicomachean Ethics, Book IV.
of *epistêmê*. That is why, the only possible encounter with the fundamental nature of the cause is the contemplation of its eternal, unchanging principles. As such, it is to make ideal contemplation adequate to the formal and final cause that the general form of the problem is re-instantiated in the Aristotelian model.

Thus, even though Aristotle in a certain sense overcomes the model of veracity in which Plato degrades art objects through the orders of model, copy and simulacra, the attempt to clarify artistic *praxis* as the intelligible imitation of natural actions leaves it answerable to the final causal order within *epistêmê*.\(^{36}\)

1.4.2. Actions cannot be imitated

All that is required, to re-orient the Aristotelian procedure back toward uncovering the function is to clarify that it is impossible for *mimesis* to characterise the transferences of actions between artistic *praxis* and *phusis*. Art does not stage a mediated or medial encounter with the formal cause, because the form is nothing originary, but a theoretical, synthetic proposition deduced by the Aristotelian model. Thus despite those theoretical distinctions about the nature of cause, nothing detracts from the reality that it is the function that encounters *poiesis*, remaining the most proximate and sensitive to the process of becoming.

But if actions (*praxis*) are to be clarified as functional operations, there would seem to be no way that this could comprise anything like *mimesis*. As a third and independent element, functions operate upon the series upon which they go to work; they do not belong or inhere within this original series nor do they resolve into that

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\(^{36}\) That this constitutes splitting the function, into the efficient and the final (the subjective origination or solicitation of the cause and the purpose or completion of what is brought into being) will be returned to later. Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, pp. 1555, *Physics* 324-5, 332.
which has been transformed. As a specific, transformational process functions are not capable of being represented, because representation and similitude are comparative judgements carried out between differing series. That is to say, representation might prove itself to be a functional operation, but it is not an adequate idea for functional operations. For its part, the function either operates upon a series or upon an entity to produce its effect, or it does not.

As such, the problem of praxis and epistêmê would not be resolved by mimesis between ideal hierarchies (from technê to episteme), but constitutes a more complex problem between two orders of events, two discrete dimensional orders that are not continuous. Let us consider a classic pedagogical example, whereby a child learns, through imitation, to speak.\(^\text{37}\) The child pays attention to the performative action of other bodies; it hears the sounds produced through speech, it watches the ways the lips move and part, perhaps the way the tongue rises and falls. All this is transmitted through the dimension of effects: the material surfaces of bodies or more precisely, the transferences of signs. This is the circuit of mimetic transmission, upon which the world of effects and representations flow. However, as Saussure has argued, there is no inherent value, or interior content to these representative transmissions; they are arbitrary and abstract. As such, the mimetic activity enables the child to select between the arbitrariness of this sign or that such that they may assemble these disparate signs and struggle to unify them with an action which is not transmitted by this representation, but serves as the model upon which to judge an action with which it may be ideally matched. This affective dimension of experimentation and performativity is where the direct engagement with the dimension of cause takes place; through this performative experimentation, the child wills various actions into

\(^{37}\) Aristotle forwards this case of the natural pedagogy of imitation in human subjects, linking it to the origins of poetry. Poetics, pp. 2318-9.
being. An affirmation or corrective – that is a representational assessment – judges the similitude between the communicated sign and the experimental action, thus putting into effect a repetition or feedback loop, even though these remain radically discreet processes.

There is thus something misleading in the Aristotelian formula that describes the mimetic transmission of actions, by dint of linking artistic *praxis* to the broad function of *phusis*. Nevertheless, in returning to the apprehension of the *topos* before the model is deployed, one might see in this explication of artistic *praxis* a striking accord with what was discovered in mathematical *praxis*. In both cases, there is a feedback loop between two kinds of processes, here elaborated into a series: there is the process of creative irruption and experimental praxis and there is the process of unification within an abstract ideal across which representational and mimetic relations flow. This refutes the division between *praxis* and *poiesis*, which requires the governance and intervention of *epistêmê*, in arrogating all but the most mechanistic and debased sense of *technê*: rather, *technê* – the kind of knowledge which emerges with the causal encounter – is that which links *poiesis* and *praxis* in a way irreducible to the ideal formalisations of *epistêmê*. What this implies is that the two processes found irreducible in mathematical *praxis* – a creative apprehension and experimentation with functions and an assemblage and analysis of these functions into unified series, is arguably operating in the inaugural encounter with the problem of art.

If then, the mimetic logic springing from the representational model locates the source of obscurity within Aristotle’s formulation, it then reopens for consideration the Aristotelian *topos*, concerning the proximity of art, creation and nature; that is, a return to the site of effective experimentation in which their
functional activity may be apprehended. This is to return to the original encounter with *technē* before the elaboration of a hierarchical *epistêmê*, in which the pathway to a theoretical seizure of the function is established.

1.5. Meaning and Creation

1.5.1. *Structural sense making and the problem of creation*

There is immediately, a more contemporary complication. The way to the function has a new obstacle, which gradually solidifies through a particular effort to secularise philosophy throughout modernity. This does not derive from those methods earlier exemplified in Deleuze’s procedure, where depositing the model as the source of the transcendent conflict reopens for us the Aristotelian *topos* through which the problematising of art, creation and nature, might be brought forward. Rather, the possibility that art concerns a genuinely creative principle becomes a casualty of the efforts to de-theologise philosophical sense making.

What is of particular interest is an important consequence: the focus upon the ‘death of God’ leads to an abandonment of the function’s creative properties and natural relations, and suggests in a more persuasive way, that the function of art is not differentiated from, but rather emblematises the way sense is everywhere produced.

Nietzsche’s re-problematisation of the Greeks arguably sets the terms of this debate. But Nietzsche had already identified the source of the confrontation, beyond
the ‘death of God’, would be between knowledge and creation.\(^{38}\) For the limit of logical certainty and the desire for a knowledgeable mastery were everywhere confronted by the *untimely* – the irruption of creative forces which could never be traced to the form of beings nor the distribution of the knowable. Moreover, that the immanence of creative disruption occurs in the midst of things and does not constrain itself safely at the non-sensible, chaotic limits, directly threatens the order of the model, the organisation of all knowledge. Thus for Nietzsche, creation and knowledge remained two irreducible series which could not be collapsed into a final synthesis – a single, unifying ground – but rather constituted a circulation of rival processes.

Let us continue the discussion by returning once more to the *topos*, in which Aristotle apprehends there what might make the difference: how the field of art specifically concerns a certain deviation of immanent causes, by way of the faculty that gives human action its particularity – *techné*. *Techné* introduced the problem of nature in a general way when Aristotle linked artistic *praxis* to its work upon *phusis*. It was argued this relation could not be technically mimetic, because *techné* governs the functional operations that *directly* encounter *phusis*: the function never inheres in what it goes to work upon and moreover, it can never be abstracted or reduced to an abstract relation. As such, the discussion now turns explicitly to the re-problematisation of creation and the obstacles that stand against it.

Tracing quickly back to the *topos* from which the philosophical elaboration proceeds, is instructive: ‘creation’ or ‘to create’ directly derives from the Latin *creāre*, ‘to produce, make, create’ – most certainly from the Greek, *poiesis*, from which its

\(^{38}\) Nietzsche pioneers this distinction in *The Birth of Tragedy*, particularly in the rival circulations between the Apolline and Dionysiac processes. But it will be an enduring motif that is arguably clarified into *eternal recurrence* and the irreducibility of becoming into being, more generally. ‘Very early in my life I took the question of the relation of *art to truth* seriously; and even now I stand in holy dread in the face of this discordance.’ F. Nietzsche (quoted in M. Heidegger. *Nietzsche I*, pp. 142).
long association with the field of art is derived.\(^{39}\) What comes to unsettle the concept of creation is its lingering association with an agent, that is, a creator. Thus, if it is thought to be inseparably metaphysical, it is because creation implies more than merely the process of making, but an intelligible, selective or constructive principle: for Plato this donator is the demiurge, for Aristotle an admixture within the material (concrete universal). It is precisely because creation is thought irredeemably tied up with this problem of donation or causes, that those denouncing a transcendent authority have tended to retire the concept of creation with its transcendent namesake. But we will have to argue this is not at all, in itself, sufficient, where poiesis – making or creating – is made to bear the demand of the model. For as the certitude of establishing universal causes and donators diminishes, it will be poiesis – the process which brings all from non-being to being – that will be called upon to carry out the unifying principle sufficient for ontological modelling.

The most overt example, which deploys these conceptual modifications into the field of art, is Barthes’ provocative essay, *Death of the Author*. Barthes famously criticises those literary theories that attempt to determine the meaning of a text by grounding it within an authorial personage: the writing subject. However, what is differentiated here from a line of critique emergent with the New Critics, is that Barthes radicalises this finding through a structuralist theory of sense-production, that leads to a denunciation of originality:

We know now that a text is not a line of words releasing a single ‘theological’ meaning (the ‘message’ of the Author-God) but a multi-dimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and clash. The text is a

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\(^{39}\) ‘Creat’\(\text{\`e}\), pl. a. Also 4 6 cre’at. [ad. L. cre\(\text{\`e}\)us, pa. pple. of cre\(\text{\`a}\)re to produce, make, create.]…1. trans. Said of the divine agent ; To bring into being, cause to exist; esp. to produce where nothing was before, “to form out of nothing”.’ V, Ridler (ed.) *The Compact Edition of the Oxford English Dictionary*, pp. 1151. And for art, ‘Creation [a. F. création (14\text{th} c. in Littré) or ad. L. creātōn-em, n. of action f. creāre to CREATE.] … 5. An original production of human intelligence or power ; esp. of imagination or imaginative art.’ Ibid., pp. 1152.
tissue of quotations drawn from the innumerable centres of culture. Similar to Bouvard and Pecuchet, those eternal copyists, at once sublime and comic and whose profound ridiculousness indicates precisely the truth of writing, the writer can only imitate a gesture that is always anterior, never original. His only power is to mix writings, to counter the ones with the others, in such a way as never to rest on any one of them. Did he wish to express himself, he ought at least to know that the inner ‘thing’ he thinks to ‘translate’ is itself only a ready-formed dictionary, its words only explainable through other words, and so on indefinitely...Succeeding the Author, the scriptor no longer bears within him passions, humours, feelings, impressions, but rather this immense dictionary from which he draws a writing that can know no halt: life never does more than imitate the book, and the book itself is only a tissue of signs imitation that is lost, infinitely deferred.\textsuperscript{40}

First, in the equivocation between authors and God (‘Author-God’), it appears necessary to depose the authorial personage: the equivalence makes it a \textit{fait accompli}, flowing directly from the central insight that God’s primary function is to perform a \textit{transcendent fixation of the signifier}. What links the subject here to the function of creation, is that God’s creativity is the model of how the author is thought to work: as a kind of master signifier, strictly determining the kinds of meaning or sense the work of art produces.

What evidences the absence of such a transcendent subject is the analysis that meaning is not at all eternal, essential or fixed; ‘We know now that a text is not a line of words releasing a single ‘theological’ meaning (the ‘message’ of the Author-God).’\textsuperscript{41} This is not to detract from the significance of this observation (aptly demonstrated by Derrida and others), which on the one hand, is right to emphasise the plurality of interpretations that the work of art produces. But it remains to be demonstrated whether this in anyway apprehends the function of art itself, how it operates and what it works to do.

If we remain suspicious of its apprehension of art, it is simply because methods of deconstruction do not break with the general form of the problem, but
operate upon variations of the structuralist model of sense-production. The
determining agencies of cause (nature or Gods) and the possibility of a genuinely
creative functionality are argued to be products of the same structural mechanism, in
which all sense is produced together. An equality for immanent affective powers is
thought achieved, in what is presented as a stripping of *epistêmê* of its transcendent
powers. In place of a vertical, transcendent hierarchy distributing the difference
between cause and effect and also kinds of knowledge and experiential praxes, there
is proposed an immanent, flat, ‘horizontal’ machinery, an abstract process producing
all that is sensible. That is, even the sense of being defers to the series of seemingly
infinite combinations, performed by the identical relations governing the structure.

Thus, although the model of Platonism is argued to be ‘overturned’ to art’s
advantage, this does not mean that artistic *praxis* is no longer degraded in the ordering
of the real: it is rather that all sensible production, from ‘transcendent’ ideas to the
nature of ontology have become indistinguishably *simulacra*. Thus although the cause
has been deferred, the general form of the problem is reinscribed in the structure of
the signifying regime. And while truth values are conceived as equally debased,
*epistêmê retains its superiority in this new proposition of the model*: now the
signifying regime constitutes the generative problem, which in an identical processual
operation, resolves the appearance of human subjectivity and worlds as so many
possible combinations. Thus, as we encountered with Barthes, writing therefore
performs as a kind of bastardised unity, threading the disparate traces, echoes and
phantasms which compromise the ‘real’: ‘life never does more than imitate the book,
and the book itself is only a tissue of signs, imitation that is lost, infinitely deferred.’\(^{42}\)

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\(^{42}\) Ibid., pp. 170.
1.5.2. Creation and originality

If we are to argue there is a certain lack of necessity in this procedure, it is because of certain assumptions that must be called into question. First, in the process of de-theologising thought, there is a conflation between originality and creation. This conflation is not prima facie, because it rather founds the unity of the model – the ‘always, already’ character of the signifying regime. This atemporal basis for thought is supposed to follow from the discovery that ideas cannot with any certainty establish originary causes. But, the consolation of the ‘always, already’ does not necessarily follow this discovery, but is proposed to reinscribe into the process of production a new semblance of the model.

It must be argued that the conflation between originality and creation is not at all legitimate. Indeed, originality and creation cannot be in themselves synonyms or analogous determinations, because they fundamentally differ in kind. They can only be brought together as the common properties of the cause, which the premise of structuralism and post-representational philosophy, has already explicitly rejected. That is to say, the rejection of certifiable causes should consequently decouple them, but their conflation is retained for other purposes.

Originality is not a temporal, but more precisely, an ordinal distinction.\(^{43}\) It is always the inaugural point in a series that indicates an emergence into being (marking then an appearance into time, and so on). The origin remains fundamentally differentiated from all the other elements of the set, whose order and appearance remain relative to it. Moreover, in addition to this inaugural appearance into being,

\(^{43}\) Ordinal numbering is distinct from cardinality, in that it describes the order or sequence of a given series. That is to say, the cardinal set (1, 2, 3, 4, …) would be composed in ordinal terms as (1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, …). Ordinality might be argued for this reason to have a special significance for ontology (that is, for the effort to identify a unity or universal predicate for the appearance of all beings).
origination also implies singularity or uniqueness. It is a paradox to have two origination events within a given series – one will always be more original, more primordial than another. And insofar as disparate sets and series might be thought to be otherwise discreet, the inaugural order of appearance makes the origin something universal; that is the origin, absolutely, would pertain to a universal singularity. That is why the origin is thought to have a well-defined limit in either non-being or void. And because set theory prohibits that any One can precede or encapsulate the appearance of the set theoretic itself (i.e. there cannot be a set of all sets), origination cannot precede its own emergence into being. Thus, originality has an essential relation to a limit, where it converges toward a radical singularity, One or inaugural event.

But this does not necessitate a denunciation of creation per se, cancelling the possibility that it might bear upon poiesis – whether it is a making or creating. For arguably, creation is dissolved with the origin, in order to save a model of ontological unity, so that poiesis is everywhere an identical process of becoming in which all comes from non-being to being.44 Thus what is common to ontological models from Plato to our current period, is that they all secure the unity of the model, by characterising poiesis as a problem of the general form, so that becoming is not a complex dynamic problem, but an identical relation. To determine poiesis – to make or create – as an identical process between a problem-solution coupling is to secure for the model its claim to comprehend a fundamentally existent unity. Moreover, because the process is identical, it is to justify the means in which this unity is apprehended. That is the reversibility of the deductive method, so that from the series of solutions – the diversity of beings – various propositions about the origin of their production may be put forward. But this conflation between poiesis and the origin,

44 A full discussion of poiesis, characterised in this way as an identical relation or unidirectional workflow, is carried out in Chapter Four.
has not even encountered the problem of the function or creation. It has been to indenture them in the production of the model.

1.5.3. Creation and temporality

From this perspective, one can distinguish the effort to overcome the model from that of overcoming the Gods. For the doubt that falls upon a creator God does not undo the conflation between the origin and creation. It simply works to erase the authority issuing from the origin by displacing it to its bounding limit or negative – non-being, non-sense or void. And because thought can no longer with certainty resolve the nature of its origin – to establish its pre-eminence in the ordinal appearance of beings – the determination of its atemporal character provides a new way to restore its universalising pretensions.

Thus, although an origin in the Gods or nature is successfully deposed, it does not at all transform what is most at issue for re-problematising art. That is, a return to the complex problematic topos, before the institution of the problem’s general form directed it inexorably toward the model. As a consequence poiesis – the problem of what constitutes making or creating – remains identically composed, a problem-solution coupling, which carries on in the absence of cause or origin. Rather than the form \((a \rightarrow b)\) where \(a\) is a singular, original cause, there is now the form, \((\{} \rightarrow b)\), where in the absence, excess or indetermination of the origin (where {} is void, non-sense, non-being, chance, and so on), poiesis \((\rightarrow)\) carries out the universal proposition as an identical process though which all comes to being.\(^{45}\)

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\(^{45}\) In our contemporary milieu, this abstract determination of the model – this transition from a ‘vertical’ transcendent (God/Nature), to a horizontal or ‘flat’ ontological model – dominates how art is understood to operate; we will recognise the explicit form of this argument in Heidegger, but it will variously appear
But if the proposition of the *a-temporal*, is proposed only to save the form of the model, then there is no reason to persist with its expedient reduction of *poiesis*, when our goal is to encounter the functional problem of art. For it is in the name of the ‘always-already’ that creation is deemed an illusory or illegitimate transcendent principle predicated upon an indifferent or purely abstract process of production. It is only insofar as this critique is sustained, that it follows that the task of clarifying *poiesis* is simply to determine whether it is ‘to make’ or ‘to create’, as though the task was only to resolve this point of ambiguity persisting from the Greeks. That is how artistic *praxis* is determined as the problem of the ‘Author-God’, who does not ‘create’ but ‘makes’, which is to say, *produces* – art is the process that mixes and combines, it *appropriates*, already existent elements. The activity of art is saved from throughout Continental thought’s thinking about art, from semiotics and structuralism to its post-structural ‘crisis’. For a decisive, formative example, see Heidegger’s *The Origin of the Work of Art*, pp. 56-58, 60.

It is arguably the ‘always, already’ that is critical in Heidegger’s fundamental distinction between Being and *Dasein*, and that is profoundly influential for twentieth century thought. But it is in Derrida’s elaboration and unfolding of the consequences of this model, which arguably begins to show its particular assumptions. Derrida reformulates the ‘always, already’ away from the ontological limit to a contingency of structure, the gap which inheres within the very structure of signification. Here, the general form of the problem no longer brackets the system from its limit, but inheres within all of its elements; the *trace* or dialectical mixture, in which antimonies are always implicated, or present in one another. ‘The trace is not only the disappearance of origin,...it means that the origin did not even disappear, that it was never constituted except reciprocally by a non-origin, the trace, which thus becomes the origin of the origin.’ Of *Grammatology*. pp. 61. All that is left to secure the unity of the model (the inescapable nature of all as *text*) is to assume this identical operation, proliferates everywhere, infinitely and unilaterally. That is how one generates the certitude of *infinite regress* from the immanent apprehension of a particular *tracing*. Although there is no space to do justice to the complexity of Derrida’s argument, the functional objection might be summarised, thus. First, the trace is not an identical relation, but a *dynamic function*, whose behaviour is illegitimately reduced. Second, (after Brouwer) there is no infinite proliferation of the *regress*, outside of a particular process of calculation that *produces* it. That is why meaning does not collapse at once, and why the proposition that all creative acts are *pastiche*, that is, already ‘written’ does not address the problem; ‘The interweaving results in each “element” – *phoneme* or *grapheme* – being constituted on the basis of the trace within it of the other elements of the chain or system. This interweaving, this textile, is the text produced only in the transformation of another text.’ *Positions*, pp. 387-88. But creation does not simply pertain to the origin of the structural relations, it is *endemic to the processes of calculation*. This is what we learn from Brouwer and Turing. Derrida’s vertiginous tracing of the *pharmakon* (*Plato’s Pharmacy*) does not unravel the structure of sense making because the trace is a functional operation he puts there to work – the production of sense is a functional operation that cannot be anticipated by or reduced to the potential field of structural relations.
its Platonic debasement, but only insofar as it expresses that ‘to be’, is always to be debased, for the abstract, horizontal structure, makes a simulacrum of all being.

But the purported pluralities of meaning, the endless ‘play’ of signifying structure confining poiesis, does not pertain to anything like the original encounter with techné, of the functional, problematising kind. From a functional perspective, creation appears radically differentiated from the idea of originality. If creation remains indifferent to categorical determinations (same/different, production/reproduction, original/copy, etc.) it is because it is not of the order of ideas – it is a property of the function, that responsible for its distinctive affect of dynamic transformation. Together with repetition (that is, the calculative or ordinal process, in which the function proceeds from one iteration to another), creation and repetition are the irreducible and different properties, mixed together in the function.

Where creation is dynamic transformation, the origin is the absolute, inaugural position – it is the ‘first’, to be established over and again, as sets or series are composed, brought, or shown to exist together. We may deduce a prior existence of an origin, like the universal singularity in cosmology. But this does not make creation collapse into the original, but rather establishes the inverse; that is to say, our speculative search for the origin is derived from our immanent experience of creative transformations. Insofar as a universal singularity may be thought original, it is only so as the first irruptive event, setting a process of becoming into operation. But this generative event sufficient to establish universal laws does not yet oppose itself to the particular: the singularity remains a particular event, through which its dynamic transformation establishes itself into being. Thus if origins are universal, creation is particular. And if there really was a universally original event where creation and
origin coincided, then what is singular about this event, is that they will forever after enter into conflict.

Let us extrapolate from this a further observation. Far from a synonym of originality (and very far from its highest expression), the function of creation works to overcome origination. If origination is the inaugural event where a primary flow of causation is put into effect, then the function of creation is that which goes to work upon this causal flow, transforming it into something other than what the cause intended. This is the essential nature of the function; for the function is what grasps a particular series (domain) and transforms it into another (co-domain). It is the nature of the function itself, which here makes the difference, by working upon, adding to, or in some way transforming existing order.

But how do we account for this third element, the ‘non-ontological’ status of the function? We have said in the elaboration with Brouwer that functions do not operate ex nihilo, but are carried over into the abstract ideal from the immanent transformative dynamism, animating living bodies. Let us add, neither are functions original or foundational (that is, ‘always, already’). Functions are irruptive events; in the midst of poiesis, they are the emergence of something new, precisely insofar as they deviate the productive order. Maturana and Varela propose the term autopoiesis, to describe how certain closed biological systems concretise or actualise the processes that bring them into being, introducing an emergent element that is irreducible to the given set from which the entity is ‘caused’.47 The autopoietic element is not derived from a pre-existing relationship between parts and wholes (such that the problem-

47 ‘I am speaking of how a living system is constituted operationally as discrete singular molecular system that arises as a dynamic architecture which is the spontaneous unintended result of the interactions of molecules that operate in relation to their immediate locality, without any reference to the totality that they compose.’ H. Maturana. Autopoiesis, Structural Coupling and Cognition: A history of these and other notions in the biology of cognition. pp. 9.
solution coupling surreptitiously deploys), it responds to a more foundational, evolutionary problem of how higher orders of complexity emerge, *in the absence of a donation or prior existence*. This supplementary, spontaneous emergence of a higher organisation is what makes possible the transformation in *poiesis*.

Let us summarise how the function re-problematises what constitutes creation. Creation is not a synonym for the origin; it challenges the metaphysical dominion of any possible origin. If it is no longer a case of discovering the first principle, it is because creative functions work upon existing processes of production. The function, therefore, does not operate upon a foundation or deeper law or predicate in which differences ground upon a primordial unity; functions operate by generating a supplemental or additional dimension. Where the task of ontological modelling remains to determine the identical relation constituting *poiesis* – that is to apprehend how *all* comes to being from non-being – the functional problematisation of art concerns a deviation or transformation upon *poiesis*, itself.

If science and mathematics demonstrate that an irreducibly different workflow is required, in which immanent, practical experimentation gives rise to epistemological productions and a *counter-operation*, in which theoretical models become the workflows for new modes of experimentation, it is because there is no simple reductive relation for *poiesis*. *Poiesis* is not the singular flow from an original cause, void or chance, which in a unilateral way determines all into appearance. There is a general or productive *poiesis*, which works to bring particulars into being, and there is another, counter-oriented workflow, *in which particular beings go to work upon the ‘general’ or primary poiesis that determines them*.

If this is no longer an identical process, it is because the ordinal flow of becoming has been counter-oriented, flowing from particular beings back toward the
given, primary flow. This is in effect, to ultimately confront the very form of the model: for creative functions precipitate a counter-cause through which the process of becoming will be affected.

1.6. The overwhelming excess of insuperable indigence

There are important implications for those epistemological models that, in skipping over the function of creation, wish to tie art explicitly, and in the first instance, to the production of meaning. First, collapsing the distinction between processes of becoming and series of beings confounds what constitutes the work of art. The work of art is never exchangeable with what it produces, the abstract relation into which it is resolved (artefact, object, being, performance and so on). This is not because the theoretical analysis necessarily ignores the problem of work (praxis), but rather because the general form of the problem collapses processes of becoming into what it judges to be produced.

Creation does not appear in this series, because as a functional operation, it is not present in either term of the problem-solution coupling; either within the cause (intellectual, material, socio-cultural, aesthetic or meaningful production) or the product (the completed work, artefact, object or performance) in which its work is thought resolved. Rather, in the epistemological estimation of art, creation has been put elsewhere to work; it has been turned toward the construction of a series of abstract relations, to the calculative process driving sense production within the model. Aesthetics is not a model for analysing art, so much as the series of representative relations and judgements produced by a sustained encounter with the
work. Thus if the model cannot judge or apprehend this creative potentiation it is because it has participated in the construction of the model.

The work of art is functional; it does not appear in the domain of elements upon which it goes to work, nor in the series (codomain) of effects it produces; it is a ‘third’ element, a particular, autopoietic emergence, that irrupts into the unidirectional flow of poiesis. Thus, irrespective of the problem of origins (including their inverse or lack) the work of art is the problem of what goes to work upon poiesis even where it is argued to be an identical process of bringing all to being. In short, the problem of creation is not resolved by a determination about origins, nor about the identity of a consistent, determinable relation governing the process of becoming, common to all beings. The problem of art concerns how the particular – techné – comes to affect poiesis, the process becoming into being. Creation is thus a problem about an emergent, secondary kind of work or causal flow, which begins with particular beings and concerns its powers to affect. Nothing in the general form of the problem, which makes of poiesis a unidirectional, identical relation, addresses this in the problem art presents.

This distinction within poiesis, where the creative process is a differently oriented and distinct workflow, does not contradict, but rather differently affirms those contemporary revelations about artistic praxis thought to discredit creation. There is no question that the network of transmissible and communicative series the completed work enters into and in which innumerable productions of sense and meaning are produced, remains radically divorced from the artist as subject. The artistic subject certainly cannot determine, govern or control this meaningful production. But, this is only because the processes of production – the materials from which the work is wrought, the historical and social context of works, the
psychological make-up of the artist, and the artist’s subjective identity – comprise the series of inputs that the function of art will transform in the process of its work. It is therefore not a case of tracing the consequences of these processes of production to their respective, synthetic or composite outcomes, because what constitutes the art does not appear in either of these series.

Further, there is no objection to those arguments highlighting the lack of originality within the work of art. Even in the canonical examples of the High Modernist or Classical ‘master’ as a stand alone or singularly ‘creative genius’, it has been for historical and critical analysis to comprehensively show, in each case, the irrefutable traces and lineages of appropriation, pastiche and assemblage, in which the series of works can be seen to proceed from one to another in various ways. As both Barthes and Derrida have shown, it is always possible to analytically extract these residues of constructive similitude, which determines that poiesis appears as merely re-productive; that is, it is not a poiesis of the type that involves something truly creative.

But this reduction requires that creativity be conflated with originality. This is to assert that creativity must be judged between a particular completed work of art, and the entire set of all completed works, which constitutes the history of art. In this way, poiesis is already bracketed or contained within a governing ontological series, whose interactions, comparisons and values the analysis intends to measure. Thus, when a network of already extant traces is ‘found’ between an emergent work and the historical series of works with which it is counter posed, this is thought to confirm that creation is merely the illusory envelope of a poiesis of translation: the play of those ontological agents which have always been in play, and whose random interactions produce only surface and superficial differentiations. This is to say that
creation is judged only to be demonstrably evident if it brings forward an ontological singularity, sufficient to oppose the totality of the entire ontological series. Moreover, the discovery of such a work would be tantamount to issuing a fundamental challenge to the model of deconstruction itself, and specifically, to the organisational abscissa of the eternal and unchanging, the ‘always, already’ tissue of texts, in their endless, interchangeable indifference.

Where the domination of *poiesis* and *technē* by *epistêmē* (as either ideal or abstract) particularly occults the function, is in the reversible homogenisation within it, of the *causal*. Aristotle’s procedure here remains decisive, so long as between the formal and final cause all the possibilities within the field of immanent experimentations and apprehensions are arrogated and assembled (that is, those pertaining to efficient and material causes). Thus the artist does not offer a direct apprehension of causal relations of an irreducible and unique type: *poiesis* is never the production of something new, something that has no precedence in being, but a kind of combinatory of what must have always, already been, no matter how obscured in a different form or configuration.

Yet, an alternative procedure has been elaborated upon, in order to suggest the function of creation cannot be deduced from the model. Whenever one searches for it in the ontological series of beings and in the orders of logical determinations of these beings, it is everywhere absent. This is to recompose the problem of creation in the work of art, for this implies it can no longer be deduced from aesthetic judgements upon the categorisations of art objects nor upon the ideal reconstruction of processes thought inherent to them. Artistic *praxis* and the nature of *poiesis* are not the *fait accompli* of an analytic enterprise, be it aesthetic, historic, theoretical, and so on. They are irreducibly complex problems, requiring their own unique engagements. An
epistêmê that does not regard these problems as foundational does so at the price of missing the function of art entirely. Rather the conclusions that will be reached will no longer pertain to the problem of art, but rather the productive effects this work generates for other disciplinary epistêmê.

Only in picking up the thread of what is happening in the affective, immanent event can the function of creative praxis that specifies the field of art be restored to its significance. Once this indifference to the contest of values and meanings taken up in competing epistêmê is acknowledged, the specificity of the work of art may be apprehended as a prolonged solicitation of creative emergence. This is a subtle work, to operate upon the processes of production in order to deviate what there becomes.

Perhaps it is Beckett, who underlines for us this specific character of the work, when he sets the creative function upon a systematic erasure of all supporting ontological productions. In the subsidence of bodies and the progressive collapse of the semiotic series, what remains edifying in this ‘insuperable indigence’, is not an inevitable, annihilating void, but the irreducibility at the heart of artistic praxis – the inextinguishable force of creative emergence, an irruptive autopoietic mechanism from which poiesis can never be inoculated. Yet this is not to recover in the artistic subject a power adequate to overcome production; for this inexhaustibility is not exalted because its locus of power intensifies as the subject declines. It rather points us to the particularisation of the body reverting back to its fragments and the dissolution of consciousness into the individuations that precede it.

In the following chapters with Freud and Lacan, it will be necessary to examine what Beckett here demonstrates: namely, that authorial intentionality precedes the subject. This will be to argue that to denounce the idea of creativity in

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48 S. Beckett and G. Duthuit, Three Dialogues, pp. 118.
conflating the ego-unifications of the artist with the figure of an Author-God, turns upon the denial of an affective kind of intelligibility within the living, complex body. This will require us to think techné again, and to show how differently it approaches the specificity of art, via the significance of artistic praxis. Creation does not stand and fall upon the affective potential of human subjects, because human subjectivity is autopoietic – it emerges from a creative poiesis long operating in complex living bodies: that is, it is a particularly sophisticated deviation of those productive flows of poiesis, governing bodies.

Thus, the characterisation of art in its ‘insuperable indigence’ has nothing to do with an existential nihilism or exhaustion: it is a direct affront to the myth of Sisyphus, which settled over post war Europe with a deadening pall. It rather works to bring forward the excessive, overwhelming force of creation with its functional, causal dimensionality, by showing its absolute indifference to even the most extreme ontological impoverishments. It is inexhaustible, because it has no contingency. Because it comes into being by virtue of its own occasion it may emerge anywhere. It is not answerable to an ontological ordinance, because its functional becoming allows its effects to overflow anywhere within the ontological series, while remaining radically indifferent to it. It cannot be reached by following or tracing back the path of ontological emergence; only the solicitation of forceful becoming shows its activity. It cannot be represented. It must be put into operation. All this ensures why the study of functions and the strange intelligibilities they precipitate comprises the necessary method for approaching what is specific in artistic praxis.

Albert Camus’ The Myth of Sisyphus encapsulates this stoic intellectual posture in the face of a world quickly devoid of gods, reason and morality, uniquely emergent in the cultural, political and intellectual upheavals of the first half of the twentieth century. Although it is conventional to conceive Beckett as a significant exemplar in these movements, it is rather contended that his work presents an antidote to this heroic resignation in the face of nihilism.
It is enough to recall that for Nietzsche the overcoming of the Gods comprised a reclamation of powers into the immanent sphere away from the models of ideal eternity – it is not the Gods who fixated them there, but those thinking subjects, who in striving for eternal principles rather exhaust themselves of their creative potentialities.

Then it is possible to suggest that it is not simply an end or result to have been created – ‘to be’ is not the solution of a generative problem, it is to be animate within a functionally creative process. Freedom is inscribed in a counter-orientation, where beings may intervene in whatever causes them, even though, as the traversal of the work of art will show us, there is a price for this process, to be paid with one's own being. That is, this requires that unity must itself become a force, and that it meet the causal realm on its own terms; force to force.

All this is what the function of art and its very possibility, forces us to confront.
Chapter 2

The re-problematisation of techné
Subjects and praxis
2.1. Techné I: Immanence, praxis and intelligibility

2.1.1. Epistemological resolutions and practical methods in philosophy

In returning to the topos, it is not the universal principles produced by philosophical models that inform us about techné. Rather, the methodological process philosophy undertakes provides an insight into the kind of problem techné presents. This is because philosophy cannot identify techné, it can only demonstrate where and how it has been put to work.

This persistence of techné indicates something very important about epistemological models, which is worth re-emphasising: no matter what ultimate reality or truth they ascribe to the universal laws or principles there discovered, they never absolve themselves from the requirement of immanent certification. This is to raise the not insignificant contingency of the abstract-ideal upon lived, immanent beings, which not only generate abstract models but sustain and power them. If this is a particularly important qualification for art, it is not only because techné remains its most immanent problematic apprehension, but it also explicates why the increasing specification of epistemological model making has arguably diminished the kind of work art affects.

In the previous chapter, the irreducibility between praxis and epistêmê was introduced via the structure of scientific and mathematical disciplines, but this has an obvious philosophical precedent. Aristotle is not only credited with proposing a ‘scientific’ character for poiesis: that is, the proposition that a primary, bottom up, generative process, is responsible for the appearance of all beings. For, in contradistinction to Plato, the appearance of subjects – of distinctive human beings –
is less a donation from the Gods, than a resolution of this unidirectional poiesis into the epistemological faculty. The body remains divorced from the mind but in an ascending line, so that praxis and epistêmê are not fundamentally at odds, but rather anticipate how one might be progressively resolved into the other.

Nevertheless, whether as a divine donation from above, or from a formal precedent below, it is the unidirectional flow that reduces technê, caught between praxis and epistêmê or bodies and thinking subjects. One way or the other, technê appears as a sort of identical relation resolving a degradation of ideas into the body or an elevation of sensation into ideas.

Thus the general form of the problem, in which praxis and epistêmê are exchanged about in a problem-solution coupling does not apprehend the problem technê presents to us. This is not simply to misapprehend art as a discipline, but to insufficiently acknowledge the importance of technê in philosophical work. To begin with, technê is tasked with philosophy’s establishing of certitude – how it tests its ideal modelling of the immanent world. Ideal certitude is not conferred from the ‘cause’ (be it the Gods, Nature or chance), to be simply realised in an idea of universal adequacy. That is, there is nothing philosophical about such a conferral, which could only generate articles of faith, or statements of belief. Of course, it is not that philosophy is less reliant upon faith and expressions of belief, but that it is distinguished by rigorous methods to test its assumptions. Thus, as it was found for the mathematical and scientific disciplines, philosophy requires a counter movement, through which technê does not simply beget epistemological constructs: it requires that these ideal relations be submitted again to technê and put into immanent action.

The inseparability of philosophy from this demonstrable praxis is already evident, if not emphasised, in the presentation of Platonic ideas. That is, does not the
very form of the Socratic dialogues emphasise what in philosophy is so idiosyncratic from other kinds of work thought had performed, namely the pedagogical effort to stage the working of the argument; to present, in short, the distinction of the method? That is, despite its rhetorical deployment the dialectical form ‘stages’ the immanent contest of ideas, the constructive philosophical labour from which the completed model only appears at the end. And where with Deleuze, we might query the necessity of this ideal resolution or proposition at the end, one can always re-problematise about the empirical methodology.\textsuperscript{50}

As such, what characterises the Socratic dialogues as a ‘staged event’, is not that they take place within abstract ideas, but because it returns to the problematic – the certification through techné – only to demonstrate how this problem has been already resolved. But in practise, the philosophical method requires a doubled workflow, one in which propositions and synthetic unities are posited, yet only to be tested by the activity of thought, and the verification of phenomena in the world of living bodies. Yet, the theoretical presentation works to smooth over this circulation of workflows presenting the unity it synthesises as the problem it fundamentally apprehends.

As such, we are no longer assured that praxis and epistêmê are radically differentiated so that immanent experience simply resolves into abstract ideas. There must be a counter-oriented operation where thought precipitates new kinds of immanent actions. This is not to collapse ideal abstractions together with the living body or to blur the irreducible distinction between bodies and minds. But it is incumbent upon us to make account of how transformative processes cross from one

\textsuperscript{50} Indeed, the historical developments of philosophy might be re-characterised after Colin McLarty’s observation of mathematics; that is, developing far from their axioms or foundations, insofar as the history of philosophical contest clearly concerns a return to the methods of their forebears and a re-problematisation of the complex issues there encountered.
irreducible series to the other. And where philosophy has greatly aided us in this task, is in the identification of the medial role that *technē* plays. Moreover, it requires us to reconsider what concerns the nature of *praxis*, because we can no longer conceive of actions differentiated simply across bodies and rational faculties: that is, because we now understand that thought is also a *praxis*. And because we have recovered in the *topos* that *technē* is the most proximate to functional operations, we will argue that *technē* is not simply the identical processual relation which carries immanent experience into ideas, but is rather the dynamic functionality operating discrete workflows from one to the other. For if functional operations (natural, dynamic transformations) are carried into the abstract from the living body, and thought is also a *praxis*, we will have to enquire whether the problematising functionality of *technē* is the faculty *operating within bodies and the abstract-ideal*. This is profoundly implicated with subjective theory, because if *technē* in these movements thus defines human difference, it does so in a certain confrontation with existing models.

And finally, if there has been an insufficient philosophical necessity to interrogate the medial activity of *technē*, there is no such concession for art. Artistic *praxis* must traverse movements from the sensitivity of bodies to thinking subjects and from the contemplations of thinking subjects into immanent, material workflows. As such, *technē* remains the definitive, complex problem necessary to approach the work of art.

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51 That thought is a *praxis* is a perennial theme for Deleuze, (and there is some explicit discussion of it in Deleuze and Guattari’s *A Thousand Plateaus*). Moreover, in a critique of Heidegger’s unification of philosophy and poetry, Alain Badiou raises the issue of the activity of thought (‘thought *in actu*’) as the basis for an irreducible conflict between philosophy and poetry, not entirely incompatible with the point elaborated here. *Language, Thought, Poetry*. pp. 247.
2.1.2. Descartes and the function of doubt

It is arguably with Descartes that the tension between the production of ideal models and the immanent methodology of philosophical *praxis*, relocates what had become occulted in the problem *techné* originally poses; that is, the centrality of immanent being for the production of philosophical sense-making. The *cogito* famously problematises thinking subjects, no longer as a historical proposition, but as an immanent, affective agent. Moreover, even though the discovery of this agent will be resolved again into the ideal, it will no longer disappear into the ontology produced. It is in this sense that Descartes is important for a re-problematising of *techné*: it will be argued he emphasises a role for *techné* that will not be entirely epistemologically resolved, because a functional operation remains irreducible to the *method*. This *function of doubt* will be prolonged to condition and test the production of ideal certitudes informing the model.

In the preliminaries outlined in *The Discourse on Method*, what is of significance is that an autonomous irruption of *techné* affects a profound, if brief, disruption of *epistêmê*. Descartes’ approach is revolutionary, but arguably the problem he approaches remains close to philosophy’s foundations: how is it, and by what mechanisms, do ideas and thoughts relate to the world? What is of interest here is not the conclusive form the *cogito* theoretically attains, but the constructive process of the method itself. Descartes does not begin with the proposition of the *cogito*, but rather by the deployment of the *function of doubt*, which works between the set of historical ideas and his own, experiential presence.\(^5\) This immediately presents us

\[^5\] The first three parts of *The Discourse on Method* recount these preliminaries, but of particular significance is Descartes’ renunciation of ‘the great book of the world’ in order ‘to study also within myself’ (pp. 11); and more explicitly in the emphasis upon practising the method (pp. 22-23).
with a new question: how is Descartes’ doubt possible, how is its function of resistance to all the preconceived paradigms of the ideal model effected, if the function – its kind of intelligibility and affect – cannot operate independently of epistêmê? Thus, in the development of the method, Descartes returns to an immanent, intelligible field, that performs intentional, selective operations, through which the function of doubt dismantles all ties between immanent presence and epistêmê. It is true that this immanent apprehensiveness is later made dependent upon an ideal donation, in the formalisation of the cogito. However, techné, as the immanent apprehension that puts doubt to use, is arguably never fully subsumed in the re-assemblage of epistêmê; it remains ‘outside’ the closure of the cogito, where it continues to perform the function of certification.

In Descartes, there is a precedent for techné as the irreducible functional operation responsible for ideal organisation – the active intelligibility of a philosophical praxis that cannot be subsumed by the formalisation of the cogito. Arguably, this precedent remains decisive, even though what supports this complex agency has since become disputed – we are no longer convinced the cogito demonstrates the existence of a clock-maker God, but rather how subjective being establishes its identity through language (what Lacan will call the subject of enunciation, upon which all epistemological models depend).\(^{53}\) Yet what Descartes arguably succeeds in showing is that an immanent, sensitive intelligibility with an affective power (a putting into work) remains the necessary conditions for thought.

Thus in returning to Descartes, two very different paths appear. On the one hand, the resolution of the cogito ramifies into the enquiry of subjectivity. On the

other, the Cartesian method endures to re-problematise techné. The former and general problem, upon what brings subjects into being has been thoroughly discussed in contemporary debates. But it is arguably the latter problem that must be again pursued – the agency prior to subjective formations, that sensitive activity that deviates the primary process in its becoming. In this return to the problem, while the functional activity of techné may certainly resolve into a subjective formation like that the cogito describes, it is quite another proposition whether a definitive resolution is necessary – that is to say, whether various kinds of subjective formation are the only solutions to the problem of techné.

This will be to prepare a new line of inquiry. For thinking the proximity of art to the re-problematisation of techné – of an agency independent of a particular subjective form – is to question whether art is encountered by a subjective determination at all. And in our contemporary milieu, where the field of art is so tied up with various philosophical speculations about the nature of subjectivity, it is pertinent to enquire whether the re-problematising of techné might offer a very different kind of approach.

2.2. Techné II: Functional properties

2.2.1. Techné governs transformations from bodies to ideas and from ideas to bodies

It is not only that the function of doubt makes Descartes’ cogito possible – it cannot be resolved and persists to establish again the model’s certitude. If this opens up the problem of techné in the midst of the Cartesian method, it is because techné is the
faculty immanent to functions, the agency operating prior to the cogito. In the preliminaries of the method – Descartes’ travels and his roaming across the countryside – it is the function of doubt that dismantles the history of epistêmê, before the constructive principles of the cogito are formalised. This is to locate not only the function of doubt, but also the immanent operations of techné, in the foundations of subjectivity. Certitude makes use of epistemological methods, but what remains implicit in Descartes method is that they do not seem to quite wrest away the task of judgment from immanent experience. Thus, while existence will be conferred to a necessary God, there remains a tension within the immanence techné governs, concerning a real encounter that is never quite secured by the ideal model’s assurance of veracity. That is why, where the methodological and functional problem remains irreducible, it matters far less that Descartes turns the innovation of the cogito toward the model’s desire for absolute truth. The task of certitude continues to depend upon techné shuttling back and forth between the formalisation and refinement of propositions and the crucible of immanent praxis: ‘For – as can be seen from what I say about it – it consists in practice more than in theory, and I call the treatises which follow it Tests of this Method, because I claim that the things included in them could not have been discovered without it...’.

Insofar as Descartes’ procedure remains reliant upon the function of doubt and its independence from the model, this returns us to a critical point: if techné transforms or transmits immanent apprehensions for ideal contemplation, does it then not also follow, that the setting of ideas into praxis would also require techné’s active functionality? That is, a counter-operation where epistemological constructs (the arrangements of findings, solutions, objects and subjects) are no longer teleological,

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but become transformed into experimental actions. In this operation there is no
resolution to techné’s problematic nature, it rather transforms into powers of affect.
Ideas do not terminate into epistemological resolutions, but are taken as a set of inputs
(a domain), for a different kind of problem directed to actualise immanent, productive
praxes. And moreover, this is not simply to control the movements of bodies because
Descartes’ procedure emphasises, these counter-directional movements are necessary
to test the veracity of ideas. In practise, the problems of immanent agency, its
qualities and differences are never singularly or unidirectionally resolved into an
adequate idea – they are always established through complex, active recursions or
feedback. Only in this way can certitude be continually established.

Techné is not simply the perfunctory process through which immanent
sensations and actions are unidirectionally conferred into ideal governance. Techné
has a double articulation providing another flow of work through which ideas become
active, including a counter-actualisation process where ideas inform different kinds of
actions. That is simply to say, that there is a great deal more to the problem techné
presents than determining its mediating role between the appearance of beings and
their resolution into abstract ideas.

2.2.2. Techné in the living body

The problem of immanent agency has not been adequately resolved; not only does the
cogito fail to determine it, but it remains necessarily outside the model, testing its
certitude. If this returns to techné prior to thinking subjects then it is because of what
Aristotle has already shown; it is located at the topos in the emergence of immanent
agency. This is to describe a sensitivity and activity, with which the work of art is
broadly indicated. In a more contemporary way, this inaugural encounter describes that immanent agency must be tied up with the body’s innate or resting kind of sensitivity, before its active organisation or specification into the sense organs (and possibly, as psychoanalytic theory testifies, this continues apace into the rims and surfaces of the body's apertures, where it is further complicated and specified). Yet, it also concerns the class of vague, haptic sensations that diffuse into the body’s depths.

Thus techné cannot simply be a mental or purely ‘rational’ faculty that excludes the physical; rather it emerges from an immersive state in the living body. This differentiation must be understood to predicate two very different orientations available to techné, which profoundly effect how its apprehensive or intelligible property functions. In the orthodox movement, techné would move towards the surfaces of the body where its sensitivity becomes progressively differentiated into the activity of making sense. But in the opposite direction, diffusing into the depths of bodies, it moves toward the ‘problematic’ – which is to say, toward the conditions of its own emergence. Techné is thus not only the capacity to ‘make’ or produce sense but the rather more general property, ‘to sense’. This capacity to sense must be one of the primary properties that belong to techné; and moreover, this particular property to sense arguably brings to bodies a capacitive, pre-epistemological intelligibility that is not abstract but calculative in nature.

55 '[A] margin or border: lips, “the enclosure of the teeth”, the rim of the anus, the penile groove, the vagina, and the slit formed by the eyelids, not to mention the hollow of the ear.’ J. Lacan. The Subversion of the Subject and the Dialectic of Desire, pp. 817.
56 This contests Aristotle’s distinction that techné is restricted to the rational faculty that apprehends the transitive (material and efficient) causes.
57 Deleuze has a particularly edifying discussion of two orders of sense and non-sense, which on the one hand pertains to the construction or making of sense within the structuralist or semiotic regime and on the other, with a sort of encounter with sense, itself – the Untersinn encountered in the depths of the body. The Logic of Sense (in particular ‘Series 13: The Schizophrenic and the Little Girl’ pp. 104).
Let us attempt a brief elaboration of these observations before a more detailed explication in the ongoing terms of the discussion. *Techné* has a resting or innate position, a mobile sensitivity that emerges as co-present with the body. From this resting state, it has two different ‘directions’ in which this sensitivity can move that become increasingly differentiated from one another. In one direction, sense becomes more organised and specified within the sense organs, the rims and anterior extensions of the body. In this direction sense is *productive*: the pleasurable sensations of the sex organs; eating and defecating; the suite of broad constructive, mechanical functionalities at the bodies extremities (the grasping and shaping of the hands, the locomotive acts of movement); finally, the productions of speech or sense impressions, sounds and images. Thus this direction of progressive sense production and articulation importantly concerns the baroque foldings and curvatures of the brain, where the complex, organised strata of ideas are made possible.

In the other direction, moving interior to the body, sense becomes *less* differentiated or more diffused. Sense determinations or impressions mix together and tend toward a sort of indetermination. In these depths other kinds of apprehensions are encountered – visceral sensations and the sense of depth itself. There is also a common, though rationally discredited suite of sensitive phenomena attributed to these depth sensations, including a quasi-intelligible suite of ‘gut’ feelings – a diffuse, haptic, processing functionality, conventionally opposed to the organised idealisations of *epistêmê*. This is not to take up the task of judgement, in which the veracity of these vague sensations would be determined against rational criteria. It is to acknowledge this functionality with a few remarks that seem significant, by picking up the earlier observation about mathematical praxis; namely, that calculation has a dynamic, ‘natural’ precedent at work about living bodies.
First, *certitude as a sensitive experience* perhaps belongs to this class of depth sensations. That is why the search for certitude driving the Cartesian method, cannot resolve into an ideal proposition, because certitude is not ideal. Arguably, there is rather an ‘anexact, yet rigorous’ quality to certitude approachable through the experimentations of *praxis*.\(^{58}\) This is not to raise the issue of certitude in-itself, but rather to point toward another kind of sophisticated processing functionality, that has priority in the body. This would be distinguished from an intuitive mechanism, where it concerns a primordial, primitive or sensitive property belonging to *thought*. It is rather to identify that a sensitive, active *calculability* animates complex bodies, such as those that ‘automate’ complex systems (circulatory, nervous, muscular-skeletal, and so on), to indicate what kind of mechanism certitude might be predicated upon.\(^{59}\)

If we are not at liberty to discount the admittedly vague and indeterminate nature of this experiential evidence, it is because of the frequency with which ‘depth’ and ‘gut’ processes are reported in artists’ own account of *praxes*. These experiences are often characterised as intuitive, impulsive, sense-driven, and depersonalised, but

\(^{58}\) Husserl coins ‘anexact and rigorous’ to describe those pre-critical intuitive apprehensions that underlie the more explicit or overt geometric theorems (see Husserl’s *Origin of Geometry*). This idea appears to be somewhat influential in Deleuze’s analysis of the irreducible complexity of problems, particularly concerning how the immanent encounter with the ‘being of the problematic’ is never explicable or reducible to the formulation of ideal models (in *Difference and Repetition*).

\(^{59}\) To reiterate, this sensitive activity must be argued to be radically independent of any conventionally ‘ideal’ properties. Rather, a real computational apparatus may well correspond to this functionality – the complex neuronal matrix of the gastrointestinal structure. The enteric nervous system comprises of highly sophisticated functional operations, where a sensitive reflexive intelligibility is linked to a flexible and powerful suite of affective powers; that is to say, precisely those properties found belonging to *techné*. Moreover, current research suggests a suite of ‘higher’ autopoietic phenomena emerge from this functional activity and carry out additional processing for conscious subjects; ‘Recent neurobiological insights into this gut-brain crosstalk have revealed a complex, bidirectional communication system that not only ensures the proper maintenance of gastrointestinal homeostasis and digestion but is likely to have multiple effects on affect, motivation and higher cognitive functions, including intuitive decision making.’ E. Mayer, *Gut feelings: the emerging biology of gut-brain communication*. pp. 453. Clearly this diffuse, subject-less intelligibility and affectation requires adequate investigation, but what should be emphasised is that an independent form of sense-intelligibility linked to affective power does not appear to be the exclusive property of the brain, but rather is emergent in the computational operations of living bodies.
in lieu of judging them against rational criteria, let their complex, calculative sensitivity be emphasised. It might then appear that this diverse accounting specific to artistic praxis, records how a distinct functionality can be put to use, and moreover, to indicate an activity whose problematic nature cannot be easily deduced via epistemological modelling – that is, without necessarily transforming the kind of problem encountered. It would be to find in the body a functional precedence for re-problematising techné that radically redefined its difference and irreducibility to epistêmê. That is to say, it would be to discover in the body an intelligibility that is not abstract but calculative in nature, and moreover, the principle of an immanent agency capable of carrying this functional intelligibility into the epistemological domain.

If this will require a transformation of the Aristotelian topos, it will be because the problem of techné no longer pertains to a diminished capacity to apprehend ‘causes’ – it would rather be clarified into a capacity for the apprehension and activation of functions, that emerging in the body, would be carried over into the abstractions of thought. Moreover, this would also imply an inverse operation, where what is constructed in thought, will be carried back into living bodies. As we will come to see, this will redefine what constitutes art’s work – a highly sophisticated manipulation of techné’s functionality turned to radically new purposes.

2.2.3. Techné has two directions available to it

Let us revise this preliminary sketch of the functional dynamics of techné. From the immanence of its resting state, techné has available to it two very different directional movements through which its primary sensitivity becomes increasingly differentiated
and in very different kinds of ways: in one direction, toward the surface, it becomes increasingly specified and distinct, and in the other it becomes progressively diffused and indistinct. As such, the function of techné appears in a kind of triadic schema. First, there is an immanent, resting state, co-present with the body that composes the problem of human agency. Additionally, this agency has available to it two broad directions, two distinctly different operational movements. In one direction, moving toward the surfaces and rims of the body, sensitivity is broadly resolved into the production or making of sense. And in the other direction, moving towards the interior of the body, sensitivity diffuses into the conditions of its own emergence; that is, in encountering the ‘problem’ of sense, itself.

If this requires special emphasis, it is because techné remains contingent upon directionality. But ‘directionality’ is not here spatial or temporal (that is, extensive) but rather ordinal because techné deals with functional operations. Techné cannot overcome the directional limit that ordinality inveighs, in directing the flow of calculation from one series to another. Thus, the two ‘directions’ available to techné concern the flow of transformations and repetitions put into affect, but these can never be simultaneously calculated, they must flow from one to the other – be it from depth to surface or from surface to depth, which is to say from body to mind or from mind to body.

It may be the case that the exclusion of these immanent dynamisms of lived, sensual bodies is a sufficient strategy to ideally model general flows of cause. But arguably this strategy cannot generate a sufficiently universal principle, to justify encountering these immanent, lived functional differences, when the problem proposed implicates techné. It is rather the case that this linking to the body’s sensitivity provides an opportunity, indeed a suitably immanent, flexible grounding,
sufficient to encounter *techné* upon its own terms. Additionally, this implies a very different perspective upon the problem set that has thus far been encountered. Arguably, what has occupied thinking about *techné* from the perspective of *epistêmê*, almost exclusively concerns the first kind of direction available to *techné*, between its resting or passive, immanent function, *to sense*, and its progressive movements toward the surface where it is increasingly specified. That is, where the task of *techné* is simply to resolve immanent experiences for ideal contemplation. This effectively homogenises the process of abstracting immanent events into repetitive relations in order to model them. But the price of this generation of clear and distinct propositions is the reduction of the complex functional problem that cannot be assured to operate predictably nor in a simple, determinate direction. Moreover, this resolution into abstract ideas, does not account for how the activity of thought makes possible the actualisation of experimental praxis and new affective powers.

What must be emphasised in the Cartesian procedure is thus not a proposition about what kind of being a thinking subject is, but rather the re-emergence of the irresolvable problem of *techné*. Even when ideal unity is pursued at the price of reducing *epistêmê* to the status of simulacra, this still occults the difference; that functional activity – active experiential processes – do not simply follow from how things are brought to being, but rather concern an emergent power to deviate from the processes which produce them. *Techné* prolongs this problematic issue at the heart of immanent agency, because unlike the *cogito* or those theories of subjectivity following from it, *techné* does not resolve its active, generative capacities by considering them to follow from whatever brings them into existence. *Techné* grasps a power that belongs or rather emerges with the particular; this is the source of its distinctiveness, these deviations from the natural order, whether this order is
constituted by a universal law, the decree of Gods, a chaos of noise or the silence of the abyss.

2.3. Techné and the function of subjectivity

2.3.1. The problem of techné is recorded in the etymology of ‘subject’

What the cogito arguably grasps is not an ideal certitude for being but its contingency upon a process of immanent calculation; in the case of conscious subjectivity, this kind of calculation is thinking. Moreover, Descartes’ procedure might be argued to show that rather than immanent agency being predicated upon thought, it is precisely what ideal models remain unable to certify. As such, the problem of subjectivity must be argued to instantiate a re-problematisation of techné.

Contemporary theories of subjectivity grapple with the same problematic complex the cogito attempted to resolve: that which in the Aristotelian topos apprehends an emergence or deviation in the automaticity of phusis and thus announces the agency that differentiates what kind of being we are. Thus it is perhaps not surprising that techné’s problematic terms remain well preserved in the etymological structure of the term, ‘subject’.

The contemporary sense of subject most clearly relates to the 14th century Latin, subjectus, from the passive past participle of subjicere, ‘to place under’, ‘to subdue, subordinate’. This unambiguously indicates the distinct directionality that

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60 The following is a more detailed etymological extract from Le Robert: ‘SUJET, ETTE adj. et n. est la réfection (v. 1138) de suget (v. 1120), emprunt au latin subjectus «soumis», «assujetti», «exposé» et «voisin, proche», participe passé passif de subjicere «placer dessous», «amener à proximité de»,
characterises this donation – ‘sub’, *under*, and ‘to place’, or elsewhere, ‘sovereign’. 61
This is conjoined with ‘-jet’ (later ‘-ject’), from Latin, ‘*jacere*’ *(jeter)* ‘to throw’ (*to lie* *(gésir)*, to throw *(jeter))* 62 Thus, *subject*, infers the presence of a superior, causal agent, a direction and also the act or action which carries out the demand or donation of this agent: hence, ‘*to place* under’, ‘*one under domination*’. 63

If the subject – like *techné* – continues to be viewed as a problem of the orthodox kind, then individual existence remains solely determined as a *product*, or as a result of a generative, unidirectional flow of causation. What is unidirectional about this flow is that the resulting immanent agency is a kind of ready-made, insofar as its sensitivity and activity has no effect on the kind of entity it is. It is a measure of the confidence in the general form of problems, that the debates about subjectivity almost exclusively revolve around identifying whatever is responsible for *bringing it into being* – thus a broad causality persists insofar as whatever characterises the nature of the cause, directly corresponds to the nature of what is brought into being. Here the problem-solution coupling presides over a simple causal assumption: whatever counts as the source of donation and precipitates the process of causation, directly determines what kind of being the ‘subject’ is.

«*soumettre, subordonner*». Le verbe est composé de *sub*- marquant la position inférieure (*→ sub*) et de *jacere* *(jeter)* (*→ gésir, jeter*), qui se rattache à la même base indo-européenne que le grec *hienai* *(lancer)* (*→ dièse*). [with many thanks to A. Ling and A. Uhlmann, although the translation and its contentions, are my own.]

61 This sense, is derived from the English, possibly lesser tracing: ‘subject sfvbdgékt A. one who is under the dominion of a sovereign, etc. XIV (Rolle, Shoreham); B. (philos.) †subject XIV (Ch., Wycl.); matter operated upon XVI; (gi-am.) XVII; thinking agent XVIII. ME. *sugut* *(sujet)*, *sujet*, later *subject* (XVI) - OF. *sugut*, *sujet*, subj(i)et (mod. *sujet*) = Pr. *suget-z*, Sp. *sugetto*, It. *soggetto* - L. *subjectus* m., *subjectum* n. pp. of *subicere*, f. *subject* SUB- *jacere* throw, cast; so *su*ject adj. that is under the rule of a power.’ *Oxford Etymological Dictionary.*


63 Italicised emphasis has been added.
When subjectivity is thought as the resolved product of an occulted process (even if this process is thought to be divorced from an explicit cause; an inert or random determination or that emerging from an essential lack or void), it continues to determine the nature of immanent agency, because it withholds from beings the power to problematise. It is not enough to determine the nature of primary or even secondary causal flows, to debate whether they are vertical, ‘strong’ determinations (a transcendent God or universal laws of nature), horizontal ‘weak’ determinations (a socio-cultural strata or the semiotic regime) or combinations thereof. The functional re-problematising of technē must be carried over so that subjective emergence is seen to problematise the determining flows which inaugurate its coming into being. Without this, either way, the nature of subjectivity – what kind of entity comes into being – is solely determined by the process that precipitates it.

Moreover, where an essential, formal or innate determination is rejected in favour of an immanent, relative or collective process, what brings the subject into being continues to define how this subject will act, what it will do, what comprises its limits, and so on. Thus, whether a ‘vertical’ or ‘horizontal’ direction, a ‘strong’ or ‘weak’ determination or an essential or relative causation is posited, there is a near total exclusion of the subject’s power to intervene in the unidirectionality of whatever counts as its given causal flows.

2.3.2. The functional approach to the subjective problem

Let us attempt then a functional approach to thinking about subjectivity, re-stating that this functional problematisation of subjects remains arguably recorded in the etymology of the term: sub– (to place under) and –jet (to throw). Where subjects are
thought determined by the general form of problems, the task remains to correctly
determine sub–: what kind of donation or cause brings the subject into being. But in
more contemporary approaches, the problem of sub– is either erased or conferred
within the problem of –jet, because ‘to throw’ becomes the new determination of the
kind of process bringing the subject into being. Thus, in both cases the process
precipitating subjective appearance remains an identical and simple relation, and as
such, supports the key ontological idea that what is produced (what kind of being a
subject is) can be deduced through an accurate apprehension of the processes bringing
it into being.

In contradistinction, the broad re-problematisation of techné offers another
interpretation of the structural arrangement the term ‘subject’ records. In the
functional version, immanent agency cannot be directly determined by establishing
the identity of the processual operation, because it is dynamic, and admits of
deviations. Consequently, what comes into being is no longer necessarily fixed to, or
determined by these inaugural processual operations.

In order to elucidate the functional re-problematisation of subjectivity, it is
necessary to distinguish the prior operation and work of techné. First, there is no
requirement to strike out sub– because the autopoietic function of techné is not
contingent upon that from which it emerges. That is to say, the problem of immanent
agency does not rest upon a clear determination of sub–; it is sufficient that this
‘primary process’ or general flow of causation indicates the direction of becoming
that brings bodies into being. The task is rather to detach the unidirectional
conjugation implied in the term subject sufficiently so that sub– (what counts as
primary causation) no longer simply determines –jet (the process which brings
forward what comes into being). It is then possible to see that the subject is composed
of two distinctly different processes: there is a primary process (which remains ‘cause’ in a general way) and a secondary emergence of affective powers now decoupled from the primary process. In this complex functional operation, immanent agency is not produced but is an autopoietic phenomena, emerging between sub– and –jet. Subjectivity is thus not the resolution of an ontological problem; rather, subjective formation is a particular affect that techné makes possible.

In functional terms, sub– has a very different implication than in its treatment within the general form of problems. Sub– continues to indicate a certain submission to a primary process, but this flow of becoming predominantly brings bodies into being. As such, the functional approach to subjective appearance does not trace its emergence to a purely ‘horizontal’ determination that clearly distinguishes it from living bodies. Subjects remain purely abstract, ideal formations, but they are predicated upon techné where it is prolonged within the dimension of minds. As such, techné performs the same functional tasks for minds as it does for living bodies; that is, those necessary for immanent sensitivity and also dynamic activity. Where in the living body techné calculates sensitive apprehensions, producing from them intentional, physical actions, in the abstract dimension of ideas, techné sets into operation logistikós, the calculative faculty of thinking.64

The functional difference lies elsewhere in the midst of the term, where the etymological recording indicates that ‘subject’ remains constructed upon an irreducible difference or mix of properties. It is less a division than a complexity, a complex functional arrangement. It is no revelation that the form of subjectivity is not directly determined by the primary process that brings into being living bodies. But this process does precipitate the conditions for techné – that is, the resting state, the

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64 This is to depart from the categorical divisions Aristotle defines within rational souls. This will be more explicitly addressed in Chapter Four.
immanent sensitivity coupled with the power of intentional activity, which animates the body.

It is to the latter, second functionality that the defining properties of subjectivity must be traced. This second functionality allows techné to become decoupled from the living body from whence it emerges. These follow from the properties of the function, outlined in the previous chapter. For sub– is not the identity of a relation that signifies the cause or primary process, it is the functional operation that engages it. Sub– is the function ‘to sense’. And because functions govern a transformation between series, ‘to sense’ is never passive or a direct transmission of one thing to another. As such, when sub– goes to work upon the primary process, it produces an autopoietic, ‘higher’ emergence, that is not at all present in this primary flow. This autopoietic emergence is techné.

Moreover, because sub– transforms the primary process, what the second functional operation (–jet) goes to work upon, is not a prolongation or identical series to that entering the first. Sub– and –jet cannot be reduced to a general, identical problem, because they do not operate on the same ‘cause’, or rather, the same set of inputs. That is why –jet (to throw), indicates the emergence of a power that is not precipitated within the flows of determination which bring the living body into being – intentional activity is thus a specific emergence of the second functionality at techné, a power that is distinctive from the primary processes which precipitate bodies. As we will see, it is a particular deployment of this intentional power at –jet, the power to throw, that is responsible for bringing subjects into being.

The consequence of –jet’s independence in the subjective mechanism is twofold. First, it brings into question where along the unidirectional flow between sub– and –jet, the subject becomes differentiated from the primary process – where it
derives its distinctive or properly, ‘autonomous’ agency. This is distinguished from the general form of the problem where subjects remain products of the process, so that what determines agency will determine its nature and capabilities.

But in a functional sense, problems do not transmit or prolong a given ‘nature’ across the pair (domain/codomain) through which they operate. It is the creative, transformative property belonging to the function that differentiates domains/codomains from producers/produced. Thus the functional re-problematisation of subjects eschews the task of deducing a determining nature (or process) so as to rather indicate how dynamic processes affect a change in nature. That is to say, the kind of problem subjects present belongs to the class of unresolvable complex functions indicated at techné: this ensemble considers generative problems of sense and intelligibility in composition with a second problem in which intentionality (action and creative transformation) is computed. It is across this complex functionality that techné indicates how the generation of human sensitivity and intelligence brings about powers to act, which are sufficient to deviate causes. Thus techné must resuscitate the problem of subjects, beyond the expectation that an understanding of its generative causes will directly determine what kind of entity it is.
2.4. Freud, Lacan and the re-orientation of *epistêmê*

2.4.1. *Freud establishes that subjects are functional problems*

We have endeavoured to re-problematise *technê* at the kernel of thinking about subjectivity. This will imply approaching subjectivity as a functional problem about various dynamic, generative processes, both primary (bringing bodies) and secondary (bringing language or signification). But that is not all; these processes are not identical in kind, resolving into a general form or problem-solution coupling. They are rather processed by separate functional operations that intervene upon each, transforming and deviating their ‘causal’ flows.

It has been argued that the functional re-problematisation of *technê* remains recorded in the etymological trace of the term *subject*, but we perhaps owe the apprehension of this occulted arrangement most explicitly to Freud. Freud fundamentally reorganises our expectations of the kind of problem subjectivity presents, by bringing the function of doubt to bear upon thinking subjects. This is not simply to denounce a transcendent source of donation to the appearance of immanent being. This is to query whether immanent consciousness is the exclusive property of abstract ideas, by inquiring into how the immanent agency that is co-located with living bodies, itself comes into being.

From a theoretical perspective, Freud’s discovery of the unconscious implies a quite radical modification of the *cogito*: within the crucible of experimental *praxis*, Freud submits the certitude Descartes establishes between the thinking subject and immanent being, still further to the function of doubt. That is, for Freud Descartes’ method does not strike out all the extant epistemological unities to terminate in the
foundation of immanent being, or locate the moment of the subject’s immanent appearance. Arguably, Freud pushes the process further into the problem of immanent being to encounter the unresolved problems techné continues to pose there.

Freud rejects the idea that consciousness derives its transcendental peculiarity from any kind of donation from without: he will search for the generative causes of thinking subjects in the same direction as those processes that generate living bodies. This will not be to simply trace techné to the distinctive appearance of an immanent, human agent: for agency and intentional activity will be found operating in the depths of bodies, before it emerges more decisively in subjective beings.

The significance of this is captured when Freud suggests that the discovery of the unconscious deals a third Copernican blow to the centrality of the subject.65 This refutes that the self-conscious subject, the subject who is supposed to know, goes about its acquisition of knowledgeable mastery, from the certitude of its own intentional autonomy.

Rather the ‘unconscious’ designates something that precedes not only the self-conscious I, but also the sensitivity collocated with immanent being. So as Copernicus calculates that the Earth is no longer the centre of the celestial universe, and Darwin proposes that the human species is produced by the incremental transitions of animal-material bodies rather than through a divine donation, psychoanalysis performs a final blow in showing that immanent subjectivity does not certify or grasp what is essential in human entities. It is, rather, another kind of evolutionary problem, where consciousness and immanent being seem to emerge along a parallel generative process alongside living bodies. Subjects do not appear by virtue of the definitive

65 S. Freud, A Difficulty on the Path of Psycho-analysis, pp. 138-9.
donation of an epistemological principle; it is rather a sort of emergent division from the functional operations, animating living bodies.

2.4.2. *Freud contra Aristotle: techné is not a rational faculty but operates independently in living bodies*

If Descartes’ method returns us to the immanent affective event where *techné* was encountered again, Freud pursues it further into the depths of living bodies. But his refusal to arbitrarily assign there a newly definitive epistemological division carries a particular price: it does not afford him a clear theoretical foundation, such that the problem of the unconscious is phrased in a general problematic form. This is to raise a central criticism of the ‘unconscious’ because it is not a clearly defined concept, possessing an elegant and clearly determinable resolution. Rather, Freud denotes the unconscious as something irreducibly complex, only evidenced by the effects produced in various ‘autonomic’ affective mechanisms: dreams and the somewhat secondary *fehlleistungen* (often translated as *parapraxes*, but literally ‘faulty functions’—slips of the tongue, misplacing objects and so on), which he composes against an experimental, theoretical structuring. However, unlike the *cogito*, Freud does not restore a higher unity sufficiently to resolve a thinking subject – for even as he posits the idea of the ego, this remains a fragile and contingent epistemological emergence.

What is found detailed in Freud is not a definitive location of *techné*’s emergence, but rather the patterns or operations of the complex or coupled functional properties that arguably indicate *techné*’s distinctive activities; that is, evidence of a

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sensitive, affectively potent agent, operating independently and prior to the emergence of a ‘higher’ subjective formation. Freud postulated that unconscious mechanisms might operate analogously to the behaviour of forces hypothesised by the scientific experimentations of his time: that is, as ‘packets’ or vectors of forces, he termed *cathexes*. Cathexes suffer a certain agitation or dynamism, insofar as they are always partial and fragmentary and tend toward a lower energy state or equilibrium (much like other energetic-mechanical systems, like air-pressure differentiations in determining weather systems and electric potentials underlying molecular structuring).  

Thus, the significance of this pre-subjective field of forces, is that it generates the intentional *donation* upon which subjective being rests: that is to say, this foment is what sets off the cascade of productions – object-relations, language, emotions but also ultimately knowledge and self-consciousness – which come into being as the elaborate mechanisms for achieving this neutralisation or balancing of forces.

This location of sensitive and intelligible functionalities together with their peculiar intentional affects re-problematises the place when *techné* appears, because Freud finds these properties evidently operating *prior* to subjective appearance. This does not only decentre consciousness; it arguably refutes that *techné* must be the *singularly* determining property of human difference, because *techné* not only animates immanent agency *prior* to the thinking subject, but as a *population* of discrete, rudimentary ‘*techné*-like’ agents (cathexes) within the living body. Thus for Freud, the general direction through which subjects come into being no longer locates

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67 'Sensations of a pleasurable nature have not anything inherently impelling about them, whereas unpleasurable ones have it in the highest degree. The latter impel towards change, towards discharge, and that is why we interpret unpleasure as implying a heightening and pleasure a lowering of energetic cathexis.' S. Freud, *The Ego and the Id*, pp. 15.

68 'The ego, which to begin with is still feeble, becomes aware of the object-cathexes and either acquiesces in them or tries to fend them off by the process of repression.' Ibid., pp. 23.
a clear bifurcation between the living body and the mind, but proceeds through the living body that is already animated by a progressive movement of sensitive and affective functional operations. Consciousness and subjective appearance do not appear then as a donation from without or else from a disconnected process; they are the final emergences at the apex of a ‘phylogenetic’ series. 69 That is to say, it is the activity of these pre-subjective techné-like cathexes that both underlie subjective being and establish the conditions for the world of ideas.

This is a very different arrangement for techné than the one Aristotle defines for us. Techné is not the rational property of the soul that gathers intelligence about functions so that they might be resolved into higher epistêmé, nor is it the singularly distinct agency that defines human difference. The evidence of techné are to be found in a granular, distributed series of operations within the living body, series of sensitive processes coupled with powers to affect. 70

2.4.3. Techné carries into epistêmé functional processes acquired in living bodies

Let us proceed directly to what has not been possible thus far; that is to consider how the re-problematisation of techné bears upon the nature of epistêmé. Following from Freud, epistêmé would be the final attainment of a phylogenetic process, emerging from or alongside those primary processes that bring bodies into being. To put this another way, epistêmé is constituted without an in kind, abstract or transcendent donation that distinguishes the nature of subjective being.

69 Ibid., pp. 33-36.
70 ‘We can only suppose that later on object-cathexes proceed from the id, which feels erotic trends as needs.’ Ibid., pp. 23.
It is Lacan who strongly emphasises the functional problems at work in Freud, and in greatly elaborating upon them, carries their consequences into the field of knowledge. We might then locate technê in how Lacan addresses the process of formative functionality in his theory of the mirror stage. From the complex of the embryonic or infantile body, technê would be the immanent, sensitive agency immersed within and undifferentiated from the living body, prior to any determination of subjective being. Lacan defines or designates this primordial immersive experience as the Real. Technê emerges here amidst a certain ontological indetermination, insofar as all the defining markers of subjective or particular being are not yet differentiated along the divisions between figure and ground or self and other. For Lacan, this undifferentiated immersion leaves the sensitive being incapable of fulfilling its satisfactory requirements: in this pre-subjective immersion the entity possesses sensitivity but it is over-coded by compulsive activity, which is to say, the various intentional demands circulating in the body. Freud earlier located the source of these demands from the population of cathexes in the id – the foment of charged drives and desires circulating through embryonic and infantile bodies, seeking to exhaust or satiate themselves. What remains latent here, or not yet emergent, is a properly affective power, wielded by this ‘higher’ order emergence; that is, whilst the autopoietic immanent agent or technê has appeared, it remains incapable of generating its own suite of direct, intentional activities.

For Lacan, this precipitates a crucial event: the sensitive agent must perform an inaugural, decisive action, namely, to eject itself from this undifferentiated, immersive state. But that is not all; for in order for it to begin the process of subjective

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71 A summation of this formative complex of functional operations can be found in, J. Lacan. The Mirror Stage as Formative of the I Function as Revealed in Psychoanalytic Experience, pp. 75-82. 72 Ibid., pp. 77.
formation, it must institute a bar upon returning to this immersive state, in order that its burgeoning particularity will not sink again, becoming once more indistinguishably diffused within the body. As such, this ‘bar to the Real’ is originally instituted as a shelter, behind which it flees the chaotic tumult of its undifferentiated presence. And all that rests in the ambit of knowledge – speech, subjectivity, identity, and so on, are for Lacan the mechanisms which the subject constructs in order to have those drives and desires (by which it is riven and which constitute it, below the level of its ideal-abstract projection, within the Symbolic), satisfied.73

Across this generative flow, the relationships between *techné*, *epistêmê* and subjectivity are thus radically redrawn. The burden of doubt comes to rest heavily against the subject who is supposed to know (whether this is a thinking or onto-phenomenological subject), because subjects form within symbolic and ideal dimensions that are no longer immanent to, but now distanced from the Real. Along this pathway of generative processes, *techné* appears as the sensitive immanent agent within the Real; that is, it emerges prior to that subjective form only possible within the sheltered dimension of *epistêmê*. And moreover, this is not simply a priority in the ordering of generative processes in which *techné* is exalted in the order of appearance, it is rather because the epistemological subject, whose being was thought to be secured by the reality of its essentially ideal foundation, must now as a condition of coming into being at all, be fundamentally barred from the Real. This is quite a radical inversion of the Platonic model, in which ideas are the highest reality and the theatre of the sensual is a debased copy. It is rather now that *techné* – its sensitivity and the activation of functions – indicates the encounter with the primary reality. Moreover, subjects are *compelled* to generate unifying productions of knowledge and

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73 A more detailed discussion of this mechanism takes place in *The Instance of the Letter in the Unconscious*.
epistemological models, in order to stave off re-encountering the Real. This is a radical reappraisal of the Platonic *doxa*, because knowledge is no longer the desire for the ‘good’ and the ‘beautiful’ but a symptom of a ‘paranoiac’ foundation, through which Lacan analyses the history of philosophy.\(^{74}\)

This reflects significantly on the problem of subjectivity itself, insofar as its nature is assumed to be certified by the source of its donation. For psychoanalysis here tells us that a sort of primary chaos or difference indicates the nature of *sub*–; that is, the primary process establishing the causal conditions from which this diffused, pre-subjective agent emerges. But this pre-subjective dimension of forces does not *act* to bring the subject into being (\(-jet\)); rather, as a consequence of its overwhelming sensory immersion (at *sub*–), this pre-subjective entity *throws itself*, thus precipitating the immanent subject into being and providing the conditions from which the thinking or knowing subject will derive its organisational character. For Lacan, this is analysable in philosophy’s historical development: that is to say, this accounts for why the subject of knowledge desires above all else consistency and unity, such that its ideal manifestation will come to perfectly model the seemingly chaotic patterns of the Real, sufficient for it to attain a mastery over them, and thus, its own desires. The fact that the entire enterprise from knowledge’s point of view is arse-backwards, is predicated upon the fact that once we have instituted ourselves projectively into the field of knowledge and language, we exert tremendous energy fixating ourselves there upon the model of a sovereign unity, ostensibly forgetting and even working against the conditions of our generative emergence: that is, the

\[^{74}\text{This is a perennial theme for Lacan, but he ties it to the formative function of the mirror stage; ‘In my view, this activity has a specific meaning up to the age of eighteen months, and reveals both a libidinal dynamism that has hitherto remained problematic and an ontological structure of the human World that fits in with my reflections on paranoiac knowledge.’ J. Lacan. *The Mirror Stage as Formative of the I Function as Revealed in Psychoanalytic Experience*, pp. 76.}^\]
profundely diffuse, heterogeneous problematic complex, in which little more than patterns or flows of repetition and creative transformations are discernible.

2.4.4. The nature of subjectivity is not determined by the primary process (at sub–) but by techné (at –jet)

In the passage from Freud to Lacan, a new approach to the problem of the subject’s appearance is elaborated. In this re-problematisation, we no longer search for the nature of subjectivity in a transcendent, abstract donation – not in the perfection of Platonic ideas, nor else in the abstract universals of Aristotelian phusis. Additionally, to denounce these strongly determining, ‘vertical’ donations is not enough, if we only look to an orthogonal donation, from which an abstract ‘horizontal’ principle issues (that is, from the terms of a negative, void, chance, non-being, non-sense and so on). For what is recorded in the etymology of the term ‘subject’, is a complex functional mechanism in which sub– (the nature or kind of cause precipitating the primary, generative processes) does not precipitate or reduce to the process bringing being (–jet, that which is thrown). We have rather refuted the nature of the problem: for sub– and –jet are not deductions reducible to a problem-solution coupling, but dynamic, individual functional operations. As such, one cannot deduce the nature of subjectivity by determining its original cause (at sub–) thus establishing what is produced (at –jet). And moreover, one does not recalibrate the nature of the problem.

75 In geometry, an orthogonal is the intersection of lines or planes that are perpendicular or at right angles to one another. This is a critical distinction for space, where orthogonality defines the relations between the three spatial dimensions famously indicated by the x, y and z axes or abscissas that formalise Euclidian geometry. Orthogonality is the progressive movement of the right, 90 degree or perpendicular relations to one another, to encapsulate how different dimensions can intersect but remain radically distinct.
by arguing that subjects have no original cause (negating sub--) if one simply posits an identical relation as its process of ontological appearance (at –jet). Rather sub-- and –jet are conjoined functional operations, but each functional operation performs its own transformation or deviation upon the process on which it goes to work.

The subject does not devolve from a general form of the problem; it rather emerges from the complex functional problem of techné. In the embryonic, infantile body, this emergence from the Lacanian Real indicates that the functionality at sub-- has brought its undifferentiated sensitivity to bear upon the chaos of over-determining forces, bringing a higher order autopoietic emergence – immanent agency, into being.

But the nature of the subject is not determined by this functional operation; it is not brought to being by this generative, primary ‘chaos’, even though these forces will continue to work their determinations upon it. What will rather directly determine the subject’s nature is rather the act of its escape, the inauguration of its own intentional activity to project itself beyond this sensitive immersion. This is possible because the second function at –jet – that which brings intentional action – operates upon a different set of inputs than sub-. It is not the immersive chaos of the real that flows into –jet, but rather that which immanent sensitivity has already transformed so that the co-domain of sub-- becomes the domain at –jet. The subject is not brought to being by an identical donation or process from sub-- through –jet, directly. Techné throws itself as its first intentional act, the act that forges sub-- to –jet in a complex functional arrangement, across which the nature of subjectivity is not prolonged from a process or cause, but across which it is deviated.

It is the functional arrangement of techné that thus governs the transformation of primary, generative processes into those precipitating subjective appearance. Techné turns the body’s sensitivities, from which it emerges, toward the apprehension
of the over-determining forces of the drives and cathexes that beset it. It was earlier suggested that this sensitivity of bodily processes is *acquisitive*, which is to say *intelligent* – this is not a rational faculty but rather the intelligible acquisition specific to *calculation*. It is distinct from intelligence involving abstract relations and representations because within the living body it collates this sensitive information specific to affect *functional operations*.

Thus in the moment, which directly precipitates the subject’s coming into being, *techné* puts all of this intelligibility to use by affecting its own inaugural, intentional act. The subject is born from this act, in which the series of functional sensitivities are operated upon by –jet and transformed into an intentional action: it ejects itself from its resting, immersive state within the living body. That is to say, insofar as the problem of subjectivity can be understood within the broader functional arrangement of *techné*, a subject might be defined as that which comes into being, by deviating the primary process which precipitates it: as such, regardless of what constitutes its cause or original conditions, it remains that entity which comes into being by *processing itself*.

### 2.5. *Techné* and the agency of art

#### 2.5.3. The subjective obstruction for the problem of art

We are perhaps only now in a position to indicate what precisely is at stake for the field of art when *techné* is not functionally recovered – that is, when art is approached via the various subjective formations that abstract and fragment the functions of
sensitivity, activity and intentional agency, which are together critical for artistic praxis. If there has been a specific necessity to examine again how technē is precisely differentiated from epistêmē, it is because it has been obscured by the attempt to resolve immanent agency through abstract, general or universal clarifications, whether it has been the cogito or the complex subject-centred theories of contemporary continental thought. These approaches are often distinguished by how radically they differentiate what constitutes epistêmē. But what they have in common is to break up the complex conjugated problem of technē into its sensitive and affective properties.

On the one hand –jet (affective power) will be determined by the devolution of epistêmē and technē as a theory/praxis divide, where technē will be stripped of its distinctive intelligibility. Technē performs here more like Aristotelian praxis, a property of living bodies, divorced from the rational faculties of minds. 76

On the other hand, technē’s function of sensitivity pertaining to intelligence (sub–), which additionally designates immanent agency, will now solely pertain to the problem of human difference, in the appearance of the subject. Thus the sensible function of technē will be resolved into a renewed epistêmē, dethroned of transcendent significance. Technē will here recover the contemporary sense of ‘art’, but art will now serve to exemplify the reality of all beings: as empty, combinatory processes, productions without creation.

76 This is perhaps most clearly the case with Brian Massumi’s The Autonomy of Affect, which carries out an important discussion of technological power, but for the present purposes, remains too beholden to the subject-epistemological view where agency remains relative to a thinking subject. This is a difference of perspectivism. The re-problematisation of technē has already indicated that agency is produced by the functional operation in which affective powers are realized. This is not a theoretical dispute with Massumi’s characterisation, for agency remains evident in the distributed individuations composing bodies. Massumi’s preoccupation with centralized assemblages of political power works to emphasise ‘autonomy’ as a diminution, lack or distancing from self-conscious agency. This is misleading for the problem of technē, where agency must be emphasised through an evolutionary ascent, developing alongside the transformation of particular bodies.
But this division is not precipitated by an interrogation of technê, or of trying to understand the problem art presents, but rather in the effort to find a new unity for the model after the end of its transcendent fixation; which is to say, *it is a division for the benefit of epistêmê*. It is only epistêmê that is divisible upon an orthodox theory/praxis type, upon the spatio-temporal dimensions of material and abstract worlds. Thus this division does not only illegitimately fragment technê, it fails to apprehend its very problematic nature. Technê is only restricted by the distinctive limitation of epistêmê when its functional arrangement, thrown into the founding substrates of the abstract-ideal, works to precipitate the *subject’s appearance* – that is, where it manifests as the sensitive, active agency animating various subjective forms.

However, it is rather the subject’s contingency upon technê that might be demonstrated by the very instability of subjective appearance. For it is the mobility or dynamism of technê, crossing back and forth between the living body and epistêmê that gives to consciousness its fragility, its febrile, flickering quality. For what makes theory and immanent experimentation opposable or irreducible processes, is the ordinal restriction of calculation, earlier identified as a limit for technê; whether putting a theoretical premise into experimentation or assembling experimental findings into theoretical unities, *technê cannot perform these movements simultaneously, but may only calculate or compute across one direction or another*. Thus when Lacan tells us that subjects remain ‘barred from the Real’ we understand why crossing this bar necessitates *aphanisis*: when technê prepares itself to act it can no longer process itself as a subjective being so that all its centring, elevating, opening and enlightening effects, unravel. This is the very limitation of all conscious coming to presence, the precariousness of the ‘I’, which cannot exist beyond the rarefied atmosphere contained by the limits of epistêmê.
2.5.2. Techné and the work of art

Another approach has been forwarded. It has been argued that techné rather performs a generative role in subjective formation, where it remains recorded in the etymological structure of the term ‘subject’. It brings first the property of sensitivity (\textit{sub}–) from which the \textit{autopoietic} ‘higher’ order of immanent agency emerges and thus conjoins to the second property of action (–\textit{jet}). Thus immanent agency is not an emergence \textit{ex nihilo}, nor a pre-existent donation carried over by inaugural conditions; it emerges by \textit{deviating} the flows across one functional operation (\textit{sub}– bringing sense to the primary, generative process) so that a different series is processed by the second functional operation (–\textit{jet}, the power to act). These are not separable properties (sense and action) because the emergence of immanent agency couples them together; that is why techné remains an irreducibly complex functional problem, in which these properties emerge through successive iterations comprising its complex processing.

It is thus that the complex functional arrangement of techné transforms the primary generative conditions, so that subjective being becomes possible. But that is not all; it has further been argued while subjective formation requires the strict division of \textit{epistêmê}, techné is not excluded from this new dimension, in which the fragility of the subject will be kindled. Techné is thus not only instrumental in the production of subjectivity, it is prolonged everywhere within the foundations of the abstract-ideal and additionally, animates subjective formations from within. More specifically, techné carries out this task because it is the active computational process without which thought as a dynamic activity would not be possible. Subjects would have no sensitivity or power to act, much less their distinctive, \textit{self-conscious} form of immanent agency, were not the functional properties of techné prolonged there.
Most importantly, the location of an agency adequate to art, must not only be capable of assembling the praxes of the body into ideal speculations; it must be capable of the reciprocal process, in which ideas transform into immanent acts. If this limitation does not present itself in the search for a subject proper to artistic praxis, it is because the subject is the patient of this dissolution. No form of subjectivity, no determination of immanent agency derived from abstract principles can encounter this other scene, dissolving into the depths of living bodies. For finally, the issue is not whether subjective theorisation is sufficient for its primary task – of organising immanent agency into a suitably philosophical form, capable of assembling a radically broadened ontological model. It is rather that immanent agency restricted to the subjective form is not capable of navigating the breadth of artistic praxis, which must traverse the heights of abstraction as masterfully as the absolute depths of living and material bodies.

If epistemological interrogation cannot lead us to techné it is because it is not encountered by analysing the series of effects it has produced. This is not in the least because techné no longer simply responds to whatever problem brings it into being – techné is, above all, the power to problematise, inseparable from a real power to create. Functions have been argued to radically differentiate from the general form of problems because they work upon the flows of cause; they deviate the processes of becoming, which is to deviate the nature of problems that might otherwise flow from ‘natural’, determining laws. That is why the creative power of the function works against or rather upon original, natural powers. This creative kind of power is not foretold, nor given in the general or universal origin – it is a power that both emerges with and belongs to the particular.
These, immanent, particular, creative powers are not problems requiring a solution. They are the active powers with which human subjects are differentiated, not as a product of their being (the forces which comprise them and which bring them to appearance) but as a problematic field in which powers to affect are generated. This work is indistinguishable from art, which from the first, indicates the particular powers agents have in their complicated proximity to nature, considered in its Greek sense of *phusis* – the flows of forces that bring them and all else to being. But art is not defined by this bringing to being. Through the creative power of functions art is defined in a labour that deviates, which works against this primary *phusis* and its determinations. Art does not imitate; art improves nature.

Against the general form of the problem, over-determining this primary flow into resolved epistemological ideas stands the emergence of the function. And with the generative problematisation of the function all these hitherto fragmented moments of creative productions, of immanent acts and sensitivities, of partial processes and dynamic differentiations thread together, to indicate what can only be a sort of rival circulation. And if there has been no adequate epistemological approach, no adequate idea, no clear and distinct solution to the problem art presents, then as we shall see, it is because the field of art plays out in the moments of this rival, counter-causal flow.

2.5.3. Recapitulation of the functional problem

The re-problematisation of *technê* has been necessitated because a subject-epistemological approach to the field of art fails to engage the kind of immanent agency necessary to sensibilise artistic praxis. This failure is two-fold; first, while the status of *epistêmê* has tended to be degraded where subjects are implicated in the
production of knowledge, this does not lead to a re-problematisation of techné, but solidifies its division further into living bodies. While universal foundations for thought are destabilised by their reliance upon subjective being, immanent agency remains radically divorced from the generative process through which bodies come into being. Here, at the price of acknowledging the limitations of epistêmê and thinking subjects, the division between ideas and bodies, between praxis and epistêmê, becomes more intractable. If philosophy and theory are less troubled by this renewed division it is because immanent agency is drawn decisively on the side of thought, sufficiently to re-legitimise intellectual labour.

But art, which addresses itself to the abstract and the concept as much as it does the material and the body, is impossibly rent by this configuration, so that the field becomes fractured with each fragment bringing to bear its own expository theory. The issue is not one of theoretical pluralism, but rather that this obscures an analysis of work and the question of praxis upon which epistemological subjects have little authority left to pronounce. This leads to questionable divisions within the contemporary discipline of art, fragmented by categorical divisions about the nature of its products: the conceptual and the affective; intellectualism and expressionism; representational and processual; abstraction and impressionism; romanticism and realism, and so on. Rather this result of resolving the nature of subjectivity in exchange for the encounter art presents becomes the de facto signification for art; it will exemplify epistêmê by standing as the emblem or symbol of all within it that cannot be made explicable, whose dissemblance communicates its discredited ‘nature’. Yet this symbolic dissemblance perhaps obscures a more significant failure; to adequately encounter and analyse what art is working to do. As such, a case has
been presented that this problem cannot be approached wherever the praxis of work – poiesis – is abstracted or made exchangeable with a product of this work.

Consequently, artistic praxis is by default a sort of improper problem for thought. And the price is paid in the stratification of the work of art, such that it resolves into an abstract relation, ready-made for thought or into an irreducibly material process, radically divorced from intelligibility and agency. Artistic praxis is the casualty of this concession to subjective epistemological perspectives that can only apprehend art by a stratification in which its work is obliterated. Thus the second failure is that the effort to make sense of work, to render it meaningful, loses the thread of techné, so it is broken apart, its properties are reallocated and its operation becomes inexplicable.

But in returning to the Greeks, techné continues to present a complex topos – a complex, functional problem. It is the problem of intelligence and intentional action together with immanent agency. In this chapter, these problems where drawn forward to argue that techné indicates the immanent agency capable of approaching artistic praxis and to encounter how art operates by carefully distinguishing it from thinking subjects. But this was only to reconsider the role techné plays across the flows of generative causes and how it potentialises the work that will distinguish it. This is to only arrive at the work of art, poiesis, which concerns another workflow entirely – the transformation of these flows into a particular power to act. What our attention must turn to now is a discussion of this work of deviation. That is, an engagement with Aristotle’s primary apprehension, in which techné deviates the generative process thus distinguishing itself from the flows of phusis.
Chapter 3:

Deviant *techné*

*Phusis and –jet*
3.1. *Techné* and technology: agency and artifice

3.1.1. The ‘other’ problem of *techné*

The functional re-problematisation attempts to restore the splitting up of *techné*’s functional properties across theory/praxis and mind/body divides. In the problem of subjective formation, –*jet* (‘to throw’, the power of immanent action) required a special emphasis to draw attention to how *techné* is there prolonged. Subjects were argued to be precipitated by *techné*’s intentional act, throwing itself into the abstract strata (the Symbolic or signifying regime). Here it was further argued that the productions of sense and meaning, the *activity* of producing knowledge, was only possible because *techné* carries out *logistikós*, the calculative operation of thinking.

Thus, to recover *techné* as a functional problem is to prohibit cleaving apart its functional properties. But this is not only necessary where *techné* precipitates the subject’s form; it also concerns its power to *affect*. On the one hand, this is the affective *praxis* animating thought. But on the other, this is the process of directing powers around living bodies. If this returns us back to the Aristotelian *topos*, it is because this is to address the ‘other’ problem of *techné*, concerning its relationship to *phusis*.

In subjective formation, *techné*’s affective power (at –*jet*) or dynamic *praxis* required emphasis because it was prolonged within the ideal. This was to discover first an intelligible property in bodies, the dynamic functionality of calculation as the precedence for thinking subjects. But if *techné* is not a problem of the general form, it is because the formative precipitation of the subject does not *resolve* this calculative
power, claiming it exclusively for the work of thought (*logistikós*). For *technē* is not bound by this mind/body distinction, but rather by the ordinal restriction where its calculation is limited across one direction or another. And because *technē* is the complex functional conjugation of sense coupled to action, as it moves one way or another, it *progressively complicates the intelligible and affective properties present in both minds and bodies*. Thus, when in the process of subjective formation *technē* applies its intentional power (at *–jet*) to produce new kinds of sensitive intelligence, so it re-processes this intelligence back into living bodies to potentiate within them *new affective powers*. That is to say, where the complex conjugation of *technē* was found to deviate the process of production to bring an unprecedented subject into being, so its return to the body must potentialise within it *unprecedented powers*. If this is a crucial step for our re-problematisation of art, it is because this is the mechanism through which a genuinely emergent, creative power enervates its kind of work.

But, before the problem of art can be adequately pursued, the broader context in which *technē* works to deviate *phusis* must first be established. This returns to the other aspects of *technē*: the problems of its experiential affects and its experimental praxes. In our contemporary period, the most rigorous accounting of this aspect of *technē* is addressed in the problem of *technology*. That is because, of all human activity, it is arguably technology that leverages the most significant power to work upon or deviate the natural world. But, where *technē* is thought to be resolved into thinking subjects, there seems no way for its intentional or affective powers to influence the generative forces at work in *phusis*. That is to say, where the subject’s coming to being is thought to be the outcome of a general ontological problem, this determines what kind of affective powers it may wield. What thus carries over in the
general problem’s resolution of techné is this limitation or illegitimacy about the affective powers exerted by technology upon the generative processes of phusis.

Arguably, it is the advent of modern technology that calls into question this impoverishment of techné’s affective powers. Modern technology challenges these assumptions because the local deviations human beings put into affect are patently multiplied by machinery. Even with the first waves of industrial technology, it becomes evident that the technical apparatus works in a sort of contravention to the flows of phusis, to the ordering power of primary processes. First, technology confronts, works upon and even alters the conditions or limits of being, the space-time dimensions that are overwhelmingly determinate (the telegraph moves communication across vast distances in an instant, industrial manufacturing processes multiply the transformative affect of labour upon earth and material). Moreover, the orientation of technology is pointedly aimed at overcoming these limitations that have been placed upon particular beings by all manner of natural laws (this is exemplified by the aeroplane, which combines the force of combustion with material manipulation to overcome the force of gravitation).

At what point will technological sophistication empower the affective attributes of particular beings in such a way as to re-problematise our very thinking about what constitutes phusis? Such a proposition is patently absurd from the orthodox perspective of the general form of problems, which are posed between the generative powers of universal laws and their resolution in the appearance of beings. However, where the realisation of technological power rests in mathematical foundations, does it not follow that this is not merely to mitigate universals but to

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77 Marshall McLuhan presents a sustained version of this argument; ‘It is a persistent theme of this book that all technologies are extensions of our physical and nervous systems to increase power and speed.’ Understanding Media. pp. 98.
pursue the exercise of an emergent creative power? This will be to re-problematise technê in the work of the particular. For it must be argued that the contemporary suspicion about universals and their transcendent donators must find a new consequence through empowering the particular, even if this is not yet in ascendancy.

3.1.2. Aristotle’s resolution of the topos: the general problem of formal and final causes

For Aristotle, the fundamental kind of deviation technê affects from phusis not only works to signify human difference but also explains the relative impoverishment of its immanent, particular being. This weakness in the deviations beings put into affect, is compensated for by the superior ambit of epistêmê; for despite the degraded imitation of forces affected by immanent bodies, this impoverishment is partly overcome by the capacity of abstract thought to model the nature of generative causes. This judgement works to legitimise why so much emphasis is placed upon understanding how thinking subjects come into being and precisely what constitutes the nature of thought. But this will not assist in recovering the functional problem at technê if contemporary thought only reduces the stature and certitude of epistêmê, but does not lead to a renaissance of how the powers of particular beings might re-problematise generative processes.

Thus, it is arguably not until the advent of modern technology that these assumptions about the impoverishment of technê’s immanent, affective deviations become adequately problematised. This is because modern technology multiplies the powers exerted by particular beings so that the deviation of the ‘natural’ can no longer
be interpreted as something trivial or inconsequential, which is to say, something that is merely derivative of universal forces.

Technology thus confronts what arguably remains the most orthodox and pervasive assumption about *techné* established by the Greeks – what is prolonged in the contemporary terms *artifice* and *artificial*, where to effect a particular deviation implies a local aberration of the natural.\(^78\) That is to say, even when the divine, natural and universal orders are largely overthrown, this does not unseat the judgement about the *artificial quality of human activity and work*. This is a significant issue because it is arguably this judgement that continues to dominate *techné*; it undermines the legitimacy about technology and animates the suspicion of superfluity about contemporary art.

It will again be instructive to return to the inaugural *topos*, for the judgement between *nature* and *artifice* remains arguably predicated upon how Aristotle characterises *techné*’s deviations from *phusis*. We know *techné* gives to immanent beings a power to act, but this deviation is locally restricted; that is to say, it only propagates between particular beings, by either working upon local materials (material elements immanent to the subject, such as the crafting of wood or stone) or other subjects (such as ‘doctoring’ in the case of medicine).\(^79\) What must be emphasised is that while immanent beings propagate affective powers, these remain restricted to local and derivative effects with no consequences for the primary flow of *phusis* – the strong, ‘vertical’ flows comprising whatever constitutes universal laws.

\(^{78}\) ‘*Artificial* [a. F. *artificial* ad. L. *artificial-is* f. *artificium*] A. adj. I. Opposed to *natural*. 1. Made by or resulting from art or artifice; contrived, compassed, or brought about by constructive skill, and not spontaneously; not natural. A. Artificial in result, as well as in process…2. Made by art in imitation of, or as substitute for, what is natural or real. (These are not *real.*)’ V, Ridler (ed.) *The Compact Edition of the Oxford English Dictionary*, pp. 466.

\(^{79}\) Aristotle, *Physics*, pp. 332. Aristotle develops the comparison between the material arts and medicine throughout the discussion.
For Aristotle, what differentiates techné and phusis, and carries over in our contemporary sense of artifice and artificiality, is predicated upon the doctrine of four causes. The work of art that techné puts into affect is propagated locally, so that it only precipitates efficient causes that work upon the material. That is not only why techné cannot act upon the nature of phusis (formal and final causes) but also why épistêmé is tasked with resolving techné; for only épistêmé can engender a sufficiency to the eternal and unchanging in thought, in which formal and final causes may be grasped. This was the crucial distinction grasped earlier between the Platonic and Aristotelian senses of art, where Aristotle resituates mimesis as a function of immanent action – thus the work of art with its deployment of immanent affects, imitates the generative processes of phusis.

If this confers a more primary role to affect it is because the mimetic, intentional activity of art may work in accordance with phusis to bring about a proper, final form. For what impoverishes the work of art is that it deviates from the progression to the final cause through the intervention of an efficient cause upon the material. There is no prohibition here, for techné is precisely potentialised, insofar as it deviates these forces into the efficient and the material, for the benefit of immanent beings. In the classical example, the work of art deviates the generative progression of the tree so that its materiality may be fashioned into a bed. But this will not be to engage the power of the formal or the final cause; for the work of art, in affecting the material and efficient causes of the bed, will not lead to a reconfiguration of the formal, so that the immanent deviation works back upon phusis. No amount of cutting and carving of timber, no repetition of technical assembly, will cause the following

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80 This is introduced in the famous discussion of the bronze sculpture leading into the division of the four causes. Aristotle, Physics, pp. 333.
81 ‘…art in some cases completes what nature cannot bring to a finish, and in others imitates nature.’ Ibid., pp. 340.
generation of plants to produce a bed. That is why the work of art in precipitating material and efficient causes only *imitates* the productivity of *phusis*.

What must be clarified, is precisely what is differentiated and what is lacking in the work of art, such that it stops short of actualising formal causes. What specifies art and enacts the deviation at *techné*, was argued in the analysis of subjectivity to concern –*jet*: for where the function at *sub*– (to sense) already implies the functional transformation or deviation of *phusis*, the resulting series carries into the second function –*jet*: the power to direct *intentional* actions.

As such, the functional re-problematisation accords with Aristotle’s complex apprehension of the *topos*: art is the central problem of human difference announced by deviation, where deviation was always intended to indicate the act and expression of *intentional* agency. Thus, although for Aristotle, art’s deviation falls short of comprehending the formal and realising the final, it works by deviating the flow of causes: that is, the ‘shape’ or final cause, the end to which *phusis* is automatically directed.

What thus precisely differentiates *techné*, its intentional power of deviating cause, is that this remains an inferior imitation of the final cause that *phusis* mandates – what Aristotle calls ‘purpose’ (*telos*). Not only is *techné* impoverished in the order

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82. *As an indication of this Antiphon points out that if you planted a bed and the rotting wood acquired the power of sending up a shoot, it would not be a bed that would come up, but wood which shows the arrangement in accordance with the rules of the art is merely an accidental attribute, whereas the substance is the other, which, further, persists continuously through the process.’ Ibid., pp. 329-330.

83. ‘The form indeed is nature rather than the matter; for a thing is more properly said to be what it is when it exists in actuality than when it exists potentially. Again man is born from man but not bed from bed. That is why people say that the shape is not the nature of a bed, but the wood is - if the bed sprouted, not a bed but wood would come up. But even if the shape is art (*techné*) then on the same principle the shape of man is his nature. For man is born from man.’ Ibid., pp. 330.

84. ‘It is absurd to suppose that purpose is not present because we do not observe the agent deliberating. Art does not deliberate. If the ship-building art were in the wood, it would produce the same results by nature. If, therefore, purpose is present in art, it is present also in nature. The best illustration is a doctor doctoring himself: nature is like that. It is plain then that nature is a cause, a cause that operates for a purpose.’ Ibid., pp. 341.
of causation available to it and by the magnitude of its affective power relative to *phusis*, its finite intentionality (efficient cause) is also enfeebled against the eternal nature of final causes, the *purpose* animating *phusis*. Where *phusis* produces the entire series of formal causes into the finality of being, art works through immanent agency (efficient causes) to deviate a fragment of this affective power into the actualisation of a material cause; this is a *local* deviation of material or subjective conditions, with no impact upon the nature of the universal.

Arguably, the judgement upon how well the deviations of immanent *technē* harmonise with the purpose of *phusis* have nothing to do with *technē* and its primary relation to *phusis*; rather, it has everything to do with ensuring the deviation *technē* affects unilaterally works toward a unified perspective within *epistêmê*. There is no meaningful uncovering of truths between the immanent affective powers of *technē* and an epistemological apprehension of a universal nature; rather, there is in effect, a process of abstracting immanent functional operations into formal relations, speculatively extended to universal ambitions. And if this evokes a certain Lacanian precedent, it is because the existence and consistency of the subjective form *requires* that *technē*’s active calculation continues to compute its form within *epistêmê*; where it turns about to actualise affective power this subject and its knowledge necessarily dissolve.

It might then be the case that the perceived impoverishment of *technē* is that it fails to legitimise the speculative proposition that *simple, determinable and unchanging laws should govern phusis*. Thus, despite *technē* evidently deviating *phusis* through an application of efficient causes upon the material, a general form of the problem brackets this functional activity into the problem-solution coupling of formal and final causes. This is not because the formal and final are necessitated by
the affective power of techné; it is rather to secure the identity of the model against this reality.

3.1.3. Heidegger on the illegitimacy of techné in its mode of challenging phusis

If techné remains a fragmented problem of irreducible elements for modern theory, the necessity to return them to a more inaugural, complex problem was not lost upon Heidegger. Having resolved to his satisfaction techné’s relationship to epistêmê, Heidegger turned to this other scene, concerning techné deviating phusis.\(^\text{85}\)

In The Question Concerning Technology, Heidegger characterises techné’s deviation as a mode of challenging to be contrasted with its harmonious activity in The Origin of the Work of Art. The problem at the essence of technology finds techné no longer working toward the unveiling or deconcealing of truth, but rather engaged in a contest with the nature of phusis. Heidegger contrasts the original harmony between techné and phusis to the discord that comes to dominate in modern technology, where techné enacts a dangerous, inauthentic challenging of nature. The original and authentic work of techné would be exemplified in the way art emblematises the task of Dasein; a putting to work in the unveiling of truth, which in accordance with the flow of phusis, brings all from Being to particular being.

Although for Heidegger, the potential for the inauthentic challenging of techné is already anticipated by Plato, the consequences are fully realised in the degeneration of techné into its modern, industrial form, that is, technology – a challenging or forcing of phusis that Heidegger calls Ge-stell (Enframing).\(^\text{86}\) Here techné no longer

\(^{85}\) Heidegger analyses this in The Origin of the Work of Art, where techné exemplifies the mode of unveiling specific to Dasein (pp. 56-8).

facilitates *phusis* (the task of unveiling beings) but rather sets upon, divides, stores and re-deploys *phusis*, treating it as an abstract, material repository or 'standing reserve' (*Bestand*).\(^{87}\)

Heidegger draws out this poetical and technological distinction in his discussion of the Rhine.\(^{88}\) *Technê* does not facilitate the poetic, ‘natural’ dwelling of the river or the Earth, but fractures and transforms it in a contest of power. *Technê* is judged harshly in this redistribution of its intentional powers, from its proper allotted work of unveiling truth or the unfolding of the essential nature of Being.

Despite the fact that Heidegger grants that *technê* possesses a genuine counter-causal mechanism which contests or operates upon *phusis*, this activity remains judged by a transcendent principle. The danger, identified in *Enframing*, is precisely to displace *Dasein* from the process, so that what is set to work is a circulation of *phusis* that no longer has human being as its shepherding centre.

Thus when Heidegger fixes his gaze upon the deviation of modern technology, working to challenge or ‘counter’ *phusis*, this stands opposed to his characterisation of *poiesis* which was uncovered at the origin of the work of art. For the ‘countering’ or challenging of *technê* does not express a legitimate immanent power, but a covering over of the natural process of onto-phenomenological unveiling. We are reminded that, at the origin of the work, *technê* is never a making but always an unveiling – *technê*’s proper task is not to deviate from but participate in the unidirectionality of *poiesis*, and is oriented so as to facilitate the coming to presence, that is already at work with *phusis*. Heidegger conceives that this coming to presence has already been established by *Being*; and where *phusis* brings forth what is already

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\(^{87}\) Ibid., pp. 17.

\(^{88}\) Ibid., pp. 15-16. The example here is purposively limited, but Heidegger had a sustained engagement with the problem of *technê* in the context of art and technology (a theme taken up again in a discussion of *Antigone* in the *Introduction to Metaphysics*).
established there, so techné takes its place as the medial process bringing this from phusis to Dasein. That is why any deviation from this medial task is perceived by Heidegger to be a kind of violation.\(^8\)

Let us elaborate here on the distinction coming into focus. It is the particularity of techné that must be distinguished from the partiality of Dasein; the complex functionality of techné in locating an unprecedented creative power belonging to particular beings must be contrasted to the process of onto-phenomenological revelation, where Dasein is a partial unveiling of an occulted and forever distant greater Being. For a functional re-problematisation of techné, deviation characterises the very nature of its intentional power; for Dasein, deviation is an impediment to its essential purpose.

Thus despite Heidegger’s undeniable innovation, what is problematised in techné by the emergence of technology is itself occulted when approached through the centrality of the subject’s formal presence; its fixated perspective within the model. Techné must be re-problematised in a primary deviation from phusis, which contrasts with the judgment that it has left behind its essential vocation in the setting of technological machinery against nature.\(^9\) It is only to save the identity of the model

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\(^8\) ‘On the one hand, Enframing challenges forth into the frenzied-ness of ordering that blocks every view into the coming-to-pass of revealing and so radically endangers the relation to the essence of truth. On the other hand, Enframing comes to pass for its part in the granting that lets man endure - as yet unexperienced, but perhaps more experienced in the future - that he may be the one who is needed and used for the safekeeping of the coming to presence of truth. Thus does the arising of the saving power appear.’ M. Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology*. pp. 33.

\(^9\) Bernard Steigler, summarises Heidegger’s position on this very clearly; ‘Modern technics inflicts violence upon phusis; technics is no longer a modality of disclosure in accordance with the growing of being as phusis. Technics becomes modern when metaphysics expresses and completes it-self as the project of calculative reason with a view to the mastery and possession of nature, itself no longer understood as phusis. And yet the being that we ourselves are is much less placed in a situation of mastery over nature by technics than it is subjected, as an entity belonging to the realm of nature, to the imperatives of technics.’ B. Steigler *Technics and Time, 1*, pp. 10. Nevertheless, as Steigler points out, Heidegger’s reading of Ge-stell strikingly anticipates the highly problematic way modern technology transforms Earth’s eco-system into a ‘planetary industrial technics – the systematic and
that *poiesis* insistently concerns a unidirectional process that brings all to being identically. Where *technē* is re-problematised as functionally creative, its encounter deviates *poiesis* into a completely separate workflow. This change in the direction of the workflow constitutes a genuine ‘counter-causal’ affect belonging to particular beings, with consequences for an adequate ontological modelling of *phasis*.

3.1.4. Simondon’s machinic evolution: dissolution of the formal and final for the material and efficient

It has been argued that the particularity of *technē* is not resolved into a thinking subject, whose very appearance or formation signifies the terminus of a partial universal. Rather, the problem of technology returns us to the analysis undertaken in Chapter One, where the distinction of mathematical *praxis* was found to be predicated upon two irreducible operations; here, active experimentation did not resolve into final epistemological predicates, but initiated a new counter-oriented process where ideas engendered new immanent acts. Epistemological abstractions do not resolve the activity of *technē*; the contest of ideas synthesise new kinds of functions (unification and assemblage) enabling a more complex or potent circulation of forces back into the dimension of material and living bodies.

It is the demonstration of these powers in modern technology, operating upon the ‘lesser’ material and efficient causes, that returns us to the ‘other’ aspect of *technē*, and its deviations of *phasis*. Thus, in contradistinction to Heidegger, another theorisation of technology finding little taste for transcendent principles, fundamentally re-problematises *technē*. Here, the influence of scientific *praxis* is global exploitation of resources, which implies a worldwide economic, political, cultural, social, and military interdependence.’ pp. 31. This issue will be addressed later in the chapter.
further expressed in the pragmatic view that technological objects do not necessarily provoke questions of formal or final causes; rather, a sort of *prima facie* return to the technological object’s *affects* makes it relatively evident that whatever functions as ‘purpose’, whatever ‘essence’ or ‘design’ participates in bringing technological objects into being, precedes only from the *praxis* of human agents.

Gilbert Simondon pioneers this approach leading to an entirely new way of conceiving of the affective powers generated by the *particular*. This will not only bring forward a radically revised assessment of technological objects but will have far reaching implications for art and the re-problematisation of *technê*.

For Simondon, human subjects do not create the machine through an *intentional donation* where this implies a formal structure or design; that is, the subject does not bring the machine into being by modelling for it a suitable *telos* or final purpose. Rather, the machine already possesses a complex, primary ensemble, specific to the material composition of its elements. Yet, what is common to natural and machinic processes is the functional dynamics or *genetic processes*, which drive their respective evolutionary behaviours. Unlike the utensil or the tool (which is determined by its use and the completion of its form), Simondon argues that the machine is only comprehensible as a series of dynamic genetic processes, which makes the evolutionary process specific to each case.  

But this is not a simple reiteration of Aristotelian causation. By arguing that technical evolution circulates between material and efficient causes, Simondon attempts to show that formal and final causes do not bracket and contain immanent processes, *but are made redundant by them*. And this is only possible, because of how

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91 Simondon’s distinction between tool and machine, which are differentiated by the causal ordering relative to conscious intentionality, might be fruitfully brought to bear upon Heidegger’s clarification of ‘to-handedness’ in the proximity of tools, which links *technê* to *Dasein*.
Simondon clarifies what the human donates to the machine – not a final 'shape', but an *efficient donation* into the material assemblage. We will go a step further and suggest that what is precisely donated here is a *complex functional operation*, a calculative process that will go to work upon the more rudimentary functionality of material processes, from which the machine comes into being.

Simondon is at pains to show that the evolution of the machine is not generated by an epistemological design and development, such as we would expect from the subject in the image of Descartes’ Clock-maker God. Rather, Simondon emphasises a distinction between the *abstract* and *concrete*, in order to argue that the ideal ‘intentionality’ or conscious desire of thinking subjects remains irreducible to the affective experimentations they put into operation through concrete, material flows.\(^2\)

But despite this irreducibility between the abstract and the concrete, the human subject nevertheless has a critical role to play in the evolution of the machine. Rather than an ideal donation there is an *affective donation* or *praxis* through which additional elements of a genetic process are transmitted or induced. On the one hand, this is the task of assembling together material conditions sufficient for the ‘autonomic’ evolutionary process to be kindled. On the other, for the machine to come into being, it requires an application of an *efficient cause* to work upon and deviate the material’s own causal interactivity. Simondon provides innumerable

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\(^2\) Simondon’s conceptual repertoire is not easy to define, because it is conceived around dynamic processes rather than essential principles. Nevertheless, in the current context, abstract and concrete is a measure of the functional integration of efficient causation into a material flow; that is, the degree to which abstract or design elements have been made to repeat or reinforce themselves within a process of material evolution. ‘The technical object exists, then, as a specific type that is arrived at the end of a convergent series. This series goes from the abstract mode to the concrete mode: it tends towards a state at which the technical being becomes a system that is entirely coherent with itself and entirely unified.’ G. Simondon. *On the Mode of Existence of Technical Objects*. pp. 16.
examples of this: in the case of the combustion engine as power output increases a cooling mechanism is necessitated by the physical properties of the mechanical system. As such, it is not introduced by a subject’s intentional design; ‘Each component in the concrete object is no longer one whose essence is to correspond to the accomplishment of a function intended by the constructor, but a part of a system in which a multitude of forces operates and produces effects independently of the fabricating intention.’ The evolution of the engine is not driven by an idealised human design, but by a circulation of forces between concrete and abstract, between material evolutions abstracted into ideal models and ideas made to deviate material processes. Moreover, if the machine can never constitute a product, a completed or final object, it is because it is incomprehensible outside of this circulation of particular forces, which only ‘defines’ it as the workflow of material evolutionary forces and the efficient causes that progressively deviate it.

Thus, Simondon’s procedure locates a functional independence in the arrangement of bodies that remains completely independent of epistêmê. This would seem to make somewhat superfluous the task allotted to epistêmê, to establish the unchanging nature of formal and final causes, because machinic evolution does not seem to require them. In contrast, technê is re-problematised precisely for such a

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93 Ibid., pp. 35.
94 It is true that Simondon explicitly retains the universal insofar as the synthesis of functions performed by the concrete converges toward the clarification of scientific knowledge. But if this is no longer an Aristotelian epistêmê it is because scientific knowledge will remain always deficient to the task of apprehending the functional nature of material causation; ‘The ultimate goal of the design can only be perfectly realized in the construction of the object if it identified with universal scientific knowledge. One must insist that the knowledge in question must be universal, because the fact that the technical object belongs to the class of artefacts which meet a certain specific human need in no way limits or defines the type of physicochemical actions which can occur in this object or between this object and the outside world. Whatever difference exists between a technical object and a physicochemical system studied as an object exists only in the imperfection of science. The kinds of scientific knowledge that serve as a guide to predict the universality of mutual actions taking place in a technical system are by no means free of imperfection. They do not make possible an absolute and rigorously precise forecast of all effects. This is why there is a certain gap between the system of
task; *technê* is the functional operator through the ‘abstract’ and the ‘concrete’, because through thinking and material bodies, there is no resolution between a formal and final, a bottom-up or top-down flow of cause. These are, rather, circulations between distinctly separate workflows where material causes precipitate efficient affects and efficient causes complicate material affects.

As Simondon reminds us, it is not a matter of collapsing together the technical object with the natural object, but of seeing across them a circulation of differential causal operations that re-problematise our assumptions about what constitutes the artificial and the natural: a ‘machine is a result of organization and information; it resembles life and cooperates with life in its opposition to disorder and to the levelling out of all things that tend to deprive the world of its powers of change. The machine is something which fights against the death of the universe; it slows down, as life does, the degradation of energy, and becomes a stabilizer of the world.' 95

As such, Simondon returns us to a radically new apprehension of *technê* in the *topos*. This is to query the task taken up by the model of apprehending what is eternal or unchanging, whether it be an essentialism, a formal and final causation, or whether it is in apprehending an identical relation in the processes of becoming, governing how all comes to being. This is a new kind of functional problem, where the task is no longer to apprehend universal forces or causes, but rather to grasp with adequate complexity, the dynamic, differential and transformative character of the forces in technical intentions related to a particular goal and the scientific system of the knowledge of causal interactions that achieve this goal. The scientific object is never completely known. For this very reason, it is never completely concrete either, except in the rarest of chance occurrences. The ultimate assignment of functions to structures and the exact calculation of structures could only be accomplished if scientific knowledge of all phenomena that could possibly occur in the technical object were fully acquired. Since this is not the case, there continues to exist a clear difference between the technical system of the object (comprising the representation of a human goal) and the scientific picture of the phenomena to which it gives rise (comprising only systems of efficient causality, whether mutual or recurrent).’ Ibid., pp. 31.

95 Ibid., pp. 9.
play. Moreover, this is not simply to raise again the aporia between being and becoming, where becoming remains a general form of the problem, a relation between a problem-solution coupling. Rather, a new significance is allotted to particular beings – the power to genuinely affect generative processes in their becoming. That is to say, particular beings introduce *efficient causation* into the system, so that the *telos* is no longer eternal or ‘always, already’, but an emergent, existential power.

Because particular beings in their emergence have a power adequate to the universal, the very character of ‘life’ has elsewhere been hypothesised to constitute a veritable counter-active force upon physical laws. Edwin Schrödinger outlines such a project in *What is Life?*, where the dominant, primary process of the Second Law of Thermodynamics (entropy) is opposed or countered by the negentropic building of order specific to *life*. Schrödinger argues that ‘universal’ laws would themselves be predicated upon local chaotic pockets of disorder, such that primary physical laws emerge in an early counter-position; an ‘order-from-disorder’ (a cosmological proposition that might find some support from Category or Topos Theory). That is to say, the primary process is not conceived of as having a formal nor final cause, but is rather comprised by a statistical or general flow, precipitated by the activity of many occulted or unknown particulars.

Thus from physical laws to the complex assemblage of human beings, there is a certain irreducibility between flows and counter-flows – a body may be precipitated from primary or physical processes but the power to act marks a change in the

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96 ‘We cannot expect that the “laws of physics” derived from it suffice straightaway to explain the behaviour of living matter, whose most striking features are visibly based to a large extent on the “order-from-order” principle [as opposed to the “order-from-disorder” principle, governing the primary process]. You would not expect two entirely different mechanisms to bring about the same type of law – you would not expect your latch-key to open your neighbour’s door as well.’ E. Schrödinger, *What is Life?* pp. 80.
determining flow. This is to participate in an orthogonal causal process which, Schrodinger argues, likely indicates, “‘other laws of physics’, hitherto unknown’.97

3.1.5. The particular is not a product or effect; it precipitates another causal process

Nevertheless, the point is not to overtly engage in metaphysical speculations but rather to draw attention to the operating moments of functional techné in a broader context. This is specifically to emphasise a new role for the particular in the system of evolutionary processes; rather than simply the termination of the primary process, the particular initiates a counter-oriented flow of cause. This restoration of power at the particular diminishes the task of determining the telos (as form, essence or design) in a universal way, even at the limit of its overturning or negation. Techné is not bracketed (as the processual, apprehensive and practical segment of a bottom up workflow), from inert material to a resolution in thinking subjects. For as doubt falls upon and overcomes the authority of the formal and the final, it is the apprehension of the complex problem or topos to which thought must return. That is why techné must be engaged with again, not only to recalibrate its resolution within epistêmê and subjective formation, but in a more fundamental confrontation where it deviates phusis. For deviation has now further problematic implications: we must inquire into a transverse circulation, through which the particular operates upon the old repository of universals.

There are revolutionary implications here for the re-emergence of techné as an agent specific to the field of art. In the least, it unsettles the certitude that epistemological models can determine art and the kind of work it performs. More

97 Ibid., pp. 68.
importantly, it indicates a radically new function for art; where *techné*’s deviation of *phusis* is no longer a medial, localised action to be epistemologically resolved, it arguably participates in a rival circulation, whose activity works to *naturalise* *phusis*. This is to return to the originary *topos* – art, creation, and nature – with a fundamentally different schema; for the proximity of art to nature takes on a constructive, creative role, a rival circulation through which particular, *autopoietic* or individuated differences confront and work upon primary processes.

This broader task for deviation in the inaugural apprehension of *techné* is capable of engaging the complex problem or *topos* in important ways. Thus far, the Greek sense of *techné* – the distinctive quality of that being, captured against the flow of natural causes it both apprehends and works to affect – has been brought forward into the problem field of subjectivity, that has been ramified in the wake of the *cogito*. This has led to certain controversies about the constitution and value of human knowledge – between a practical, active intelligibility and abstract, ideal knowledge. However, it was argued that apprehension or the capacity *to sense* remains the functional operator that is equally productive across this distinction, by virtue of the fact that it is coupled with a power of affective, intentional action. It was thus possible to conceive a kind of affective work immanent and necessary to the production of the ideas – the very labour and production of thinking, the agency of a computational operator with its attendant sensitivities and actions. As such, where *techné* was found to be the functional operation driving the immanent affects of living bodies so too was it necessary for the epistemological strata. Moreover, that it was so instrumental to the living body and thinking subjects adds significance to Aristotle’s apprehension that *techné* locates what specifies the human.
Yet the problem of technology has complicated this configuration by locating the distinctive marks of techné’s functional operations outside of the human (a point that was not lost in Freud’s mechanistic characterisation of the cathexes). This has brought into question whether intentionality belongs to thinking subjects, reserving for them an exclusive capacity to deviate natural processes. It has been already argued that techné’s complex conjugation of functions assures that its action is intentional. Thus a broader ubiquity or distribution of techné beyond human specification would be to reappraise intentionality as an affective property, belonging not to the epistemological strata, but rather to active bodies, more generally.

Moreover, despite the focus upon the technical object, Simondon arguably initiates a more general proposition: the formal cause does not describe what is donated from phusis, insofar as it is the attempt to think a universal in the material; phusis is an assemblage of efficient and material causes, which pertain to universal traits, never as laws, but as a sort of consensus or grand assemblage. This reflects the broader trend in which the universal is no longer thought essential or axiomatic but rather something statistical: the general. But it also markedly differs, because the status of an intelligible, intentional donation is not simply denounced, but arguably becomes re-allocated to the particular. There is no formal essence, no donation of subjective nature to be discovered, not only because the nature of particular processes of individuation are autopoietic (which is to say, not always already present in the universal), but precisely because these emergent differences are how the general (‘universal’) becomes populated with particular difference. That is to say that another, irreducible process to the primary process of phusis is required, a process through which the given is transformed and refolded back upon phusis itself. For the

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98 This concretization within the actual might be thought to be a sort of functional correlate of mathematics’ synthetic unification.
distinction between *techné* and *phusis* remains at heart a question about the autonomy of the particular against the determination of the general. It also involves the degradation of epistemological truth-claims: that is, if the universal may only ever be of the general statistical kind, then the series of higher, supplementary dimensions that abstract and collectivise groups of individuating processes must indicate the properties of intelligibility and intentionality are far more primordial and ubiquitous than we have been led to believe.

3.2. *Techné* III: General functional schematic

3.2.1. *Techné is the general functional arrangement where sense conjugated to action generates the additional emergence of agency: a computor*

![Figure 4. Function 'black-box'.](image)

We are now in a position to bring forward a functional re-problematisation of *techné*, assembling the disparate problematic elements into a more schematic presentation. This will not be to position *techné* as the outcome of this work; rather, it comprises an attempt to re-invigorate the problem itself, so that its generative operations can be more clearly identified.
Let us return to the standard graphical representation of the ‘black box’ functional diagram (figure 4). We have seen that it schematises the transformation between two series: \( x \) is the series of inputs or the domain, fed into the function \( f \) and producing a resultant series \( y \) or co-domain.

What the diagram attempts to draw to our attention is the inscrutability of the function \( f \), which becomes expressible only in the transformation between the series \( x \) and \([y = f(x)]\). What is formally inscrutable about the function is that it is not reducible to an abstract relation between properly determinable epistemological objects (like a series of numbers, names, forms, laws and so on). It appears in the abstract structure only in a denotative way; that is, as a symbolic representation of the processes it will put into operation. What is effectively inscrutable about the function is the process of computation; a function cannot be satisfactorily abstracted or reduced to a series of relations (domains, co-domains) because the affectivity of the function cannot be anticipated from the abstraction of relations alone (that is, something clearly predicable from the conditions and results – the cause-effect couplings of previous iterations). Functions must be put into operation. This highlights an even more fundamental issue about the inscrutability of the function that recalls in a very precise way the problems about subjective formation: functions are inscrutable because their operation is necessary for the appearance of abstract relations and thinking subjects. Thus, the formal limits upon axiomatisation and computation, in Gödel, Church and Turing converge upon the presence of a disciplinary subject – the computor – whose task in the mathematical epistêmê is to carry out the computation.\(^9\) But, this is a very

\(^9\) Turing’s work explicitly concerned ‘effective computability’ – that is to say, the work carried out by ‘human computers’. Wilfried Seig carries these concerns over into the work of Robin Gandy, a student of Turing, who developed more explicitly the differentiation between human and mechanical computers; ‘Gandy made a useful suggestion, namely, calling a human carrying out a computation a “computor” and referring by “computer” to some computing machine or other. In Turing’s paper,
unique disciplinary subject, because what mathematics grasps with exceptional rigour, is not a particular subjective form defined by its perspectival fixation, but rather a functional apprehension of what *animates subjective formation*. And let us immediately assign this ‘comutor’: it is the autopoietic emergence of that kind of *agency* brought about across the complex conjugated functionality of *techné*.

Let us with the fullest, possible resonance contrast this ubiquity of *comutors* with the vertical or horizontal *donator* in bringing about subjective formation. Where donators are unified, eternal singularities, comutors are granular, simple, massively distributed. Where donators are formal and final, first and last, comutors are *efficient* causes; they exert immanent powers operating recursively upon and through material causes. Brouwer precisely clarifies what animates the scepticism in Descartes’ method and which drives the affective mechanism in Simondon’s evolution of technology. It is this: *comutors perform the work that will be attributed to telos*. The functional elaboration of *techné* makes redundant the formal and the final, because it is the process of computation that performs the deviation: that computation is a transformational act is why the function remains independent from the formal and the final, from *x* and *y*, domain and codomain. This is inseparable from a genuinely creative power belonging to the *particular* that does not feature in all the sets upon

“computer” is always used for a human computing agent who proceeds mechanically; his machines, our Turing machines, consistently are just machines. The Oxford English Dictionary gives this meaning of “mechanical” when applied to a person as “resembling (inanimate) machines or their operations; acting or performed without the exercise of thought or volition;...”. When I want to stress strongly the machine-like behaviour of a comutor, I will even speak of a mechanical comutor. The processes such a comutor can carry out are being analysed, and that is exactly Turing’s specific and extraordinary approach: the computing agent is brought into the analysis. The question is thus no longer, “Which number theoretic functions can be calculated?” but rather, “Which number theoretic functions can be calculated by a mechanical comutor?” Let’s address that question with Turing and see, how his analysis proceeds. Gandy emphasizes in his [1988, 83–84], absolutely correctly as we will see, that “Turing’s analysis makes no reference whatsoever to calculating machines. Turing machines appear as a result, as a codification, of his analysis of calculations by humans.” W. Sieg, *On Computability*, pp. 574. This work is to be distinguished from the current proceedings, in which *techné* problematizes computation in proximity to *phusis*, rather than the abstraction and generalization of computation into an axiomatic framework, which preoccupies Seig.
which it operates. What must therefore be brought forward, from the high abstractions of pure mathematics to the emergence of living processes, is that these everywhere invoke the complex functionality of *technê*.

### 3.2.2. The complex functional conjugation of *technê*

Let us elaborate upon how this general schematic for *technê* might be brought forward from the functional arrangement animating subjective formation in the previous chapter (figure 5). There, in living bodies, the first function concerned the capacity ‘to sense’ ($f_1$). This capacity was found inseparable from a measure of intelligibility.

However, this function of sense and intelligence at *technê* should never specify only what is exhibited in the higher faculties of abstract thought and subjective formation demonstrable in *epistêmê*. It is rather something more ubiquitous, closer to what for the Greeks was *epistasthai* (know-how, technical or pragmatic intelligence) but also *logistikós* (calculation). In short, this is to sense, apprehend and gather intelligence about *functions* (*ergon*), which broadly concerns how things operate.

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100 This is again a departure from Aristotle, for both are rational faculties and the argument that is being forwarded is that they are rather more ubiquitous properties.
In the previous chapter, the passivity of sense was brought into question, by the transformation it affects upon the primary process or series of forces precipitating the entity (represented at $x$, above, in figure 5). What was clarified is that ‘to sense’ is a functional operation ($f_1$) that may only be thought of as passive, insofar as it does not, of itself, produce an intentional, affective power.

As such, the function ‘to sense’ ($f_1$) was not enough to distinguish techné, for this apprehensive, intelligible acquisition about functions leaves it thus inactive and techné announces itself by deviating phusis in such a way as to disrupt autonomous, natural production. Thus techné is linked to a second function, which generates intentional action ($f_2$). But, as Aristotle is careful to distinguish, this kind of action must be differentiated from production, because intentional action implies a commensurate intelligibility. The function bringing intentional action ($f_2$) is thus coupled directly to the first property or function of sense ($f_1$).

These properties together form the complex functional operation of techné (figure 5). Sense operates by apprehension upon phusis ($x$), transforming it into a second series [$y = f_1(x)$]. Most importantly, this interior deviation brings an autopoietic phenomenon: a ‘higher’ order emergence, namely, an agent (a computor). Thus, this second series or codomain ($y$) is coupled to the second functional operation bringing action ($f_2$), by serving as its input or domain. Thus, from the flow of phusis ($x$), already transformed by sense ($f_1$) into ($y$), a third series emerges ($z$), of intentional actions. It is this force of intentional affectation that performs the deviation with which the complex functionality of techné is announced at ($z$).\footnote{Thus the series of intentional actions is expressed in figure 5 as [z = $f_2(y)$] but may equally be expressed in terms of the original flow of phusis as [z = $f_2(f_1(x))]$.}

This arrangement completes the functional schematic common to all techné.
Moreover, the functional schematic of techné thereby re-problematises the nature of the deviation, through which techné is distinguished from phusis. Because deviation is the transformative process or computation carried out by techné’s complex functional operations, it is phusis itself that is deviated (x); the complex functional arrangement of sense (f₁) and action (f₂) carry out transformations so that the entity’s particularity – the autopoietic emergence of immanent agency (computor) – cannot belong to, prolong from, nor be donated by the primary process (x). From the general to the particular, a nature is not prolonged in a flow of direct generative causation, but rather it is deviated and transformed. The operation of techné leads to the acquisition of new properties and powers. Thus what emerges from the deviation or transformative operation of techné has no corresponding, original or essential nature, issuing from its primary, generative flows.

3.3. Deviation and evolution

3.3.1. Aristotle’s telos is predicated on an inadequate understanding of natural processes

We have seen in the problem of technology, that the functional operations of techné are not confined to the processes bringing subjective formation and epistêmé into being. The problem of technology indicates that techné not only works in the service of generative processes bringing ever more complex or sophisticated bodies – it also operates in a kind of counter-movement or challenging, in which these generative flows are to various extents contested.
Nevertheless, to challenge or deviate phusis – whether as an intentional action, the work of art or the apparatus of technology – has always been thought the exclusive province of higher self-conscious beings, specifically the human. However, this exclusivity is tempered by the relative paucity attributed to these challenging or counter-affective powers. This is because deviation is assumed to be derivative, so that a degradation of powers characterises particular beings. It is this assumption about technē that is carried over into the epistemological estimation of art and technology.

That is to say, it is the work of art (poiesis) qua particular deviation that simultaneously engenders the technological apparatus and degrades it on the same account. That is why technology is characterised as artifice (a product of art), resonating into the contemporary sense of artificial (human-made and opposed to the natural), because what impoverishes the counter-affective powers of particular, human beings consequently diminishes technology against the order of nature.

We have seen that Aristotle’s primary apprehension, which grasps the inaugural deviation of technē, is hampered by the teleological assumption about phusis, with crucial consequences for particular being. Technē deviates or disrupts the general flow of how phusis self-propagates, but what it does not do is work upon the formal impetus, the ‘shape’ or ‘purpose’ of what phusis brings into being. Nevertheless it has been argued that for Aristotle, the work of art has a far more sophisticated engagement with nature than in the Platonic model, because mimesis happens in the order of action, so technē deviates phusis back toward its ‘rightful’ self-propagation. And this idea informs the orthodoxy we encountered in Heidegger (and almost everywhere else besides), where the deviation technē performs is measured by degrees of consonance with phusis. Where it does so, the specificity of
the human being results, together with its distinctive epistemological privileges.
Where it does not, there is in its place a kind of squandering or impoverishment of the natural order of things.

But it must be maintained that deviation concerns a far broader context than that of human subjects. This becomes clear when we acknowledge that Aristotle confined techné to the human species because of a relatively unsophisticated understanding of natural processes. It is the contemporary data sets, yielded from the natural sciences about the generative, evolutionary processes at work in phusis that reveal a far greater role for techné. What is thus required is not an abandoning of the topos Aristotle apprehends, but a re-problematisation of techné with this new information in mind.

Once the perspective of this accumulated scientific data is brought to bear upon the Greek topos, what emerges first is how uncertain the telos – the automatic, eternal, purely in-itself ‘purpose’ of phusis – seems to be. Even where the universal, fundamental laws of classical mechanics hold sway, we have learned that the macroscopic law finds its own limit in the activity of the infinitesimal particular; that is to say, the laws of matter seem to be predicated upon the particular, statistical activity of quantum phenomena. Moreover, and despite the fact it remains an often-misappropriated example, it demonstrates that sense (observation and measurement) somehow precipitates the collapse of complex and indeterminable quantum states. This is not to overplay the role of human subjects in the fundamental nature of materiality, but rather to indicate that some function of sense \( f_1 \) affects at this fundamental level a deviation in phusis, precipitating transformations from one set of laws to another. There is of course nothing determinable in this example, but it is
nonetheless evocative of how ubiquitous the functional operation of techné and its interventionist deviations, may yet prove to be.

And if this indetermination is overstated in this case, there are other reasons to doubt the conventionally ‘inert’ status attributed to matter. Theoretical biologist Stuart Kauffman, whose work examines the gulf between matter and the emergence of living entities, discusses certain autocatalytic processes in organic molecules, which seem to actualise co- and self-organising structures, exhibiting particular, emergent properties. Kauffman theorises that such a ‘general biology’ would overturn the necessity for a randomly determined, inaugural or singular evental cause for life (which would make Earth unique), indicating rather that complicated structure emerges ubiquitously from the material.102 Matter does not require a telos to precipitate it upon the path of evolutionary becoming. Matter evidences its own autopoietic functionality, radically distinguishing it from the kind of non-intentional automation that Aristotle was attempting to distinguish.

3.3.2. Techné has an evolutionary precedence, evident in the simplest cells

These speculative examples are not meant to be definitive, but simply indicate that a case might yet be made for a very primordial, operable techné. Let us then consider a less contentious example: the deviations indicating sensitivity and intentional activity in the emergence and behaviour of single cellular life. In the case of the simple, single

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102 ‘If this view is correct, and the kinetic conditions for rapid reactions can be sustained, perhaps by enclosure of such a reproducing system in a bounding membrane vesicle, also synthesized by the system, the emergence of self-reproducing molecular systems may be highly probable. No small conclusion this: Life abundant, emergent, expected...One way or another, we will discover a second life – crouched under a Mars rock, frozen in time; limpid in some pool on Titan, in some test tube in Nebraska in the next few decades. We will discover a second life, one way or another.’
S. Kauffman, Prolegomenon to a General Biology, pp. 30-31.
cell organism, the transformation the first function of sensitive apprehension \((f_1)\) brings would be relatively simple and limited, but as Maturana and Varela have argued, it must be sufficient for the autopoietic emergence of a ‘higher’ order organisation or *rudimentary agency*, capable of exerting affect; a deviation at \((f_2)\), even if extremely limited. The single cell must have this ‘whole body’ capacity to sense coupled to a capacity to act, even if only commensurate with its ability to apprehend then select or reject what may pass its epithelial envelope. *Techné* greatly assists our conception here, because this capacity to sense and to act is not discredited if it proves purely functional (computational) in nature. We indeed expect that this intelligibility is exclusively of a ‘know-how’, pragmatic, even dominantly reactive nature. And if this same functional schematic is indeed common to the single cell and to conscious human beings, we might then venture an additional proposition: as the function ‘to sense’ \((f_1)\) operates upon a more diverse, complex set at \((x)\), this directly corresponds to the magnitude and diversity of affective powers available at \((f_2)\).

This is to enquire into deviation in a mode hitherto unapproached in this investigation. This will require us to see a new division in Aristotelian deviation: there is an ‘interior’ or strong deviation, corresponding to how the complex conjugated functionality of *techné*, transforms *phusis* into a particular being. This process has been schematised in *figure 5*, but particularly refers to the interior conjugation between the two functional operations where the codomain of the first function is taken as the domain by the second (this is indicated by the yellow arrow between the functions). Let us re-iterate, this dominantly concerns *sub*–, because what is brought to being across this process is not the living body but the *agency* specific to this body. This interior deviation is ‘strong’, because the transformed series produced by the
function of sense ($f_1$) feeds directly into the second function bringing action ($f_2$), establishing a strong correspondence between these two operations.

But there is another class of deviations concerning what this particular being will put into affect; that is, which regards what exits the functional conjugation of techné at ($f_2$) concerning the series of actions ($z$) it exerts on other particular beings. These ‘exterior’ or external deviations are precipitated by the intentional activity this particular entity puts into action. And because techné operates deviation in all of these instances, the functional re-problematisation of particular beings cannot be complete without a further elaboration of these additional distinctions.

3.3.3. By degree and recursion, techné potentiates transformations of bodies

Let us pursue the example of the single cell in the context of its evolutionary emergence, in which the complex nature of deviation can be brought to the schemata of techné. Consider the particularly illuminating case of cyanobacteria, a prokaryotic cell, evidently one of the most primordial and simple, single cell organisms on Earth. Cyanobacteria are distinctive, because fossil records indicate an unprecedented morphological stability (some billion years) with no evident evolutionary transformation of the body’s form across subsequent generations. What is additionally distinctive about cyanobacteria across this extraordinary period is that they appear to have transformed the chemical composition of the atmosphere, to one far more conducive for diverse, complex life forms.\(^{103}\)

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Figure 6 schematises this very rudimentary, primordial kind of exterior deviation where technē exerts a difference in degree in the locality of phusis about a particular entity. As the case of cyanobacteria aptly demonstrates, this kind of deviation upon existing evolutionary pressures remains infinitesimal relative to the primary forces determining the particular entity. But as cyanobacteria also demonstrate, with a sufficient population of particular individuals – where many such particular entities, immanent to one another, exert a collective, sustained deviation of the local conditions – the affect may well strongly deviate what comprises the existing, generative flows of phusis. In the case of cyanobacteria, this collective...
affectation was strong enough to deviate the entire atmospheric composition of the Earth, leading to a complete terraforming of the planet. That is to say, they impacted upon the heterogeneous composition of those primary processes which bring different kinds of bodies into being. Thus exterior deviations by degree, which are felt in the ‘atmosphere’ of forces about particular beings, while exceptionally weak and indeterminate in and of themselves, might generate stronger determinations through collective, accumulative affects when many such particular beings operate in parallel to one another.

Yet there is another, important characteristic of exterior deviation, anticipated by the functional schemata of techné. For, like all forces in spatio-temporal extension, the intensity of intentional affect tends to diminish from the immediacy of its expression because affects are not exercised in a vacuum but against other kinds of forces (gravity or air resistance, the movement and resistance of other bodies, and so on). Thus exterior deviation has a particularly potent effect upon the entity which exerts it (figure 7, over page).

In addition to the weak exterior deviation by degree, which works upon those bodies immanent to the particular being, there is a stronger feedback mechanism where exterior deviations work a body’s own generative, individuation processes. This feedback mechanism ensures that its own intentional actions have a progressive determination upon the kind of being it is. Of course, such a series of processes would be radically inadmissible from a process of becoming confined by the general form of problems, where a formal and final cause strictly determines processes of becoming (whether as essences or concrete universals, forms or transcendent donations, chance or randomness). But, in following on from Simondon’s evolutionary logic, particular beings are individuation events – they are not a teleological product divined by an
inaugural form, but ensembles of dynamic processes. The exterior deviations of *techné*, by degree and feedback, therefore arguably introduce what is inadmissible in orthodox evolutionary theory; that is, a role for *efficient causation*, where particular beings have an impact upon the general ‘primary’ process that brings transformations of bodies into being.

As such, to argue that the functional configuration of *techné* appears in the prehistory of living bodies is to argue that efficient causation is not a property of *human subjects*, but constitutes a second and counter-oriented evolutionary process to the primary process driving material causation. More precisely, the sensitive and affective functions of *techné*, with their interior and exterior deviating powers,
respond to the problem of *telos in phusis*. That is, repetitious and productive material causes with a tendency toward inertia, are progressively deviated and worked upon by the autopoietic emergence of living bodies, which introduce differences and cause fluctuations and transformations within processes of becoming.

As such, there are two orders of becoming, two processes of evolutionary progression, driven by material and efficient causation. Material causation is repetitious and productive where efficient causation is deviating and creative. Material causes propagate from *within the interior of bodies* – the universe explodes into being from an indeterminable but interior quantum phenomenon, DNA structures bodies from the interior nucleus of cells. In contrast, efficient causes *propagate across extension*, between particular bodies: the exertions of physical forces; the momentum and resistance of bodies upon each other; the diffusion of light and radiation and their patterns of interference; sound; *communication* and so on. They are like two orthogonally oriented planes, a strong vertical material line of causation and a second horizontal plane of extension in which effects mix and work upon each other. And at the intersection of these irreducible workflows lies the functional operation of *technê* that operates transformational exchanges between them through the work of its conjugated functional operations: an interior deviation of the material into the efficient, and a set of supplementary and secondary exterior deviations precipitating a counter-oriented workflow, where the efficient deviates upon the material.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰⁴ The critical role that recursive processes play in the evolution of biological forms is illuminated in Manuel DeLanda’s *Intensive Science and Virtual Philosophy*. DeLanda’s project is more than a monograph on the scientific and mathematical concepts at work in early Deleuze; DeLanda expands and diversifies Deleuze’s matheme of differential calculus into a vertiginous essay on the implications of contemporary scientific developments. Of particular note is the role of the *integral* which DeLanda re-characterises as the problem of how the information ramified into emergent beings is re-encoded back into generative conditions. DeLanda discusses the significance of Arthur Winfree’s work on how DNA is refolded or integrated back into the nucleus to be transmitted to the next generation; ‘Such miracles bespeak of reproducible precision. But that precision is not the kind we know how to write equations about, not the kind we can measure to eight decimal places.’ (DeLanda is quoting Winfree
Let us return to the functional account of deviation in the evolution of cyanobacteria, now having elaborated a separate evolutionary process of efficient causation; an orthogonal and supplementary evolutionary process, comprising the set of intentional actions exerted in degree and recursion by particular entities upon themselves and others immanent to them. In the case of cyanobacteria, efficient causation must have exerted an infinitesimal deviating force compared to the overwhelming power of primary material causation, which strongly determined the bodies of particular entities. As we have seen, this infinitesimal power of exterior deviation by degree was only gradually amplified by the extensive reign of vast populations of particular individuals. In the example of cyanobacteria, these infinitesimal deviations specifically concern the transformative process of photosynthesis; the combination of carbon dioxide with sunlight to produce self-sustaining sugars, which expels into the local environment the by-product oxygen. Of course, a single prokaryotic cell or even a large colony could not thereby exert a sufficient effect to impinge upon the dominance of material processes, determining the next generation of living bodies. But the repetition of this particular functional transformation over very many bodies and successive generations was sufficient to transform the atmospheric conditions of prehistoric Earth – an event that would prove decisive for following generations of living bodies.

Thus by both degree and by recursion, exterior deviation exerts pressures upon the primary process bringing successive, particular entities. For the cyanobacteria, once the process of terraforming has carried out a sufficient collective transformation in the atmospheric composition, new potentialities for successive generations of bodies have been brought about, through these actions upon the forces of material,
primary processes. But as we will see, this remains a controversial proposition, violating as it does the Aristotelian model at the most primordial appearance of life; for precisely what differentiates the work of techné from the production of phusis, is that intentional affects cannot work upon the eternal self-propagation of natural forms. And where a lingering Aristotelianism was found in the general form of philosophical problems, so here extends another into evolutionary biology: for the functional nature of immanent being will not be re-problematised, so that it remains contested whether the particular might have some recourse upon the forces, bringing subsequent bodies into being.

3.3.4. Never singular, techné organises into parallel and hierarchical structures

Let us continue the discussion of the evolution of efficient causation with a few remarks about the immanent operations techné enters into. The case of cyanobacteria will again be instructive; how does the terraforming activity of cyanobacteria give rise to the emergence of more complicated bodies, the multicellular organisms that follow from it? Let us start with what seems evident to us today; cyanobacteria do not transform into a more complicated multi-cellular organism, as though its essence were to undergo a transition, or that this essence would be simply replaced with another that is expressed into existence. Rather, cyanobacteria persist in the same essential form, carrying out the same functional operation (photosynthesis) throughout the kingdom Plantae (plant life). That is, cyanobacteria have rather remained functionally independent organisms, enveloped within larger more complex entities.

What seems evident is that the probable basis for the transition between single and multi-cellular organisms is that complex behaviour emerges across different
individual entities generating *collective* behaviours. That is, networks of exterior deviations between particular individuals lead to a spontaneous emergence of *autopoiesis* – another ‘higher’ dimensional organisation. These emergences are first aggregates: individual single cell bodies such as those comprising algal blooms, adhere to one another, so as to align their propelling flagella, maximising through collective exertion individual advantage.\(^{105}\) Sense and intentional activity collectively compel them (toward nutrients or sunlight), but these powers are together amplified by exterior deviations across an emergent complex of *efficient causation*.

If such a precedent credibly explicates the transition from singular to multicellular bodies, then exterior deviations and their localised activity must find some way to work upon the primary processes that bring bodies into being. This is not to intervene upon a formal principle, as though the sensitivity and intentionality of particular beings went to work upon an already existent cache of eternal essences. Rather this evolutionary work of efficient causation leads us to a different problem, where evolution implies a progressive complication of material and efficient causes. And if efficient causes cannot insinuate themselves in some essential bedrock or *telos*, then they must rather do so via complex assemblages of many individuals, forming complex ensembles of *technē*.

*Technē* has thus far been presented as a singular but complex functional process, well suited to approach the problem of subjective being. Following this the discussion turned to cyanobacteria to address the primordial appearance of *technē* in

\(^{105}\) 'Even some prokaryotic cells show such social behaviour in a primitive form... They stay together in loose colonies in which the digestive enzymes secreted by individual cells are pooled, thus increasing the efficiency of feeding (the "wolf-pack" effect). These cells indeed represent a peak of social sophistication among prokaryotes, for when food supplies are exhausted, the cells aggregate tightly together and form a multicellular fruiting body (Figure 1-31), within which the bacteria differentiate into spores that can survive even in extremely hostile conditions. When conditions are more favourable, the spores in a fruiting body germinate to produce a new swarm of bacteria.' Alberts B, Bray D, Lewis J, et al. *Molecular Biology of the Cell. 3rd edition.* New York: Garland Science; 1994.
even the simplest of cells. But this was also because the simplicity it afforded us in elaborating the complex functional conjugation of technē in a singular way. But as bodies become progressively complicated, it is impossible to imagine that technē operates as a singular entity.

Cyanobacteria remain discrete, but assembled within a higher complex organisation constituting the multi-cellular organism. It is certainly the case that a ‘higher’ order autopoietic technē corresponds to the new ‘whole’ multi-cellular body, but that does not imply that the ‘lower’ technē emergent with each cell, have coalesced to form this higher organisation. For cyanobacteria continue independently their functional operation of photosynthesis, but this is now put to work in a more complicated series of processes. As such, multi-cellular organisms assemble the ‘lower’ distributions of technē into a higher organisation, so that this ‘higher’ technē may govern the new ‘whole-body’ order of functional processes.

Each leaf has its parallel distribution of many cyanobacteria, each sensing the light, each performing chemical transformations, each with its own computational agency in which the photosynthetic production of sugars is modified and regulated. But, the leaf contributes additional functionality, both potentiating the ‘lower’ technē of the cyanobacteria and profiting from them; it has additional sensitivity and powers of motility to maximise exposure to the sunlight, twisting its surface to trace the path of the sun throughout the day. And what the cyanobacteria gains in additional efficiency and output, is for the profit of the multi-cellular body; it utilises this excess energy to support the larger, more complex processes that support it (the circulatory and defence systems, its roots and branches and so on).
Thus the leaf has a ‘higher’ structure, in which all of these disparate individuated computational processes are assembled and harnessed. But this ‘higher’ autopoietic emergence of the leaf does not constitute an abdication of the functional arrangement of those techné belonging to the cyanobacteria. It rather marks the emergence of another techné, a techné that takes the output – the codomain of intentional activities or exterior deviations at –jet, as its series of inputs at sub– (figure 8).

Figure 8. Techné in parallel and hierarchical structures

Where parallel distributions of like techné are in sufficient magnitudes, they potentiate a further autopoietic emergence of techné, which operates upon the assembled lower strata. This is to bring the capacity ‘to sense’ ($f_i$) upon the output (codomain) of a distribution of techné immanent to each other. This ‘higher’,
emergent *technē* brings its function of sense to a series of affects that are already intentional in nature, having emerged from the lower strata of many *technē*. Thus, the function of sense for the higher *technē*, in carrying out its transformation brings a more complex agency into being, commensurate with this more complicated input. It further follows that the intentional powers (*f*) this ‘higher’ *technē* wields will have extra dimensions or properties pertaining to them.

It is because complex bodies are dizzying arrangements of *technē* in parallel and hierarchical arrangements down to their cellular levels, that the relationship between the material and efficient causes that produce them are reconstituted. It has been argued that *technē* must somehow bring efficient causation to bear upon the strongly determining process of material causation, but it was not at all clear how this could be the case.

It was noted that weak exterior deviations must have a more intensive localised effect or feedback mechanism upon the particular entity itself. But this only becomes really evident once this constitutes localised effects upon small colonies of cells in which they pool resources for mutual advantage (the ‘wolf-pack’ effect). But for complex multicellular organisms, *technē* does not simply remain emergent for the whole (like the essence of a new being), but rather the organism retains a complex arrangement of many *technē* in hierarchical and parallel configurations. *Technē* is not a functional essence, where a different form corresponds to a different body; it is rather more *algorithmic*, so that differences of bodies correspond to various complex assemblages of recursive and parallel *functional computations*.

And if efficient causation comes to exert greater force upon material processes as bodies become more complex, it is because the affective powers of ‘higher’ *technē* are also amplified where many ‘lower’ *technē* have already contributed their
distinctive transformative deviations upon the primary, material flow. As such, efficient causation is *capacitive*, building its counter-causal force through the cooperation of many other *techne*; it is a sort of functional correlate of cooperation in which particular deviations are performed across many individuals.

As Simondon has shown in his theorisation of technology, evolution implies two orthogonally oriented functional processes, indifferent to the orthodoxy of formal and final causes. Following from this, it has been argued that efficient causation concerns all the affective works of particular entities, the entire series of exterior deviations, which progressively deviate the primary generative processes bringing bodies.

This is a direct violation of how Aristotle distinguishes *techne* because there is no possible way *techne* could influence the formal cause determining bodies. As eternal and immutable, the form is always, already – it is therefore absurd that it could be subject to immanent affects. But it is equally clear, that any renunciation of *telos* and the formal must also dispel this prohibition about *techne*. That is to say, in the absence of a determinable cause for processes of becoming there is arguably a necessity that the particular and efficient causation should be re-problematised.

3.3.5. *Lamarck contra Darwin: the efficient (particular) deviates the material (general)*

Before an undertaking of the final step, in which *techne*’s confrontation with *phusis* will return us to the work of art, let us briefly contextualise the controversy in evolutionary theory, over the role of efficient causation.
This controversy is famously emblematised in the contest between Charles Darwin and Jean-Baptiste Lamarck through which the orthodox proposition about a singular primary process was firmly established.

Lamarck reasoned that some sort of recursive particular affect was in play, because an unadulterated primary process should manifest a smooth, ordered progression of adaptions. But contrary to this expectation, the evolution of bodies evidences an eccentric and fragmented progression of wild deviations and otherwise inexorable cul-de-sacs. As such, there must be some other mechanism through which particular differences feedback upon the primary evolutionary process. Lamarck’s famous example of this recursion is the neck of the giraffe: as successive individuals respond to an environmental constraint (such as food scarcity) this generates a feedback on the primary process governing bodies, such that an otherwise undesirable or unlikely characteristic (an improbably vulnerable, elongated neck) becomes manifest.

Darwin argued this recursive mechanism was both unproven and unnecessary to account for this kind of unusual, individual differentiation. The singular causal process need not be violated, insofar as fitness and other metrics of individual survival could sufficiently account for these divergences across species. In the case of the giraffe, chance mutation in the primary process would throw up differentiations in body morphology, that were ramified by immanent conditions: animals that had chanced upon longer necks were simply better nourished, stronger individuals, both factors highly conducive to successful reproduction. For Darwin, random mutations in the primary process assembled with environmental chance was thereby enough to determine advantage. Fitness is thus a derivative degree of affective freedom for
particular beings – a power to determine only what in the primary process moves forward through reproduction, or is extinguished through competition.

Yet, upon what criteria is it that Darwin is generally thought to have won this theoretical contest, and so decisively? Can we not see here again the judgement of the model, the aesthetic criteria of the simple, the elegant and the beautiful, that already demands the problem of particular beings will be exhausted into a clear and abstract resolution? As such, it might be observed that the contest between Darwin and Lamarck concerns a comparison of epistemological axioms, predicated on the assumption that each theoretical proposal addresses the same particular problem. Darwin’s problem is essentially taxonomic, where specific differences are formally categorised and from which a set of fundamental principles is deduced. This is a sort of historical rationalisation predicated upon an ontology of formal relations, in which the immanent moments of particular differences are interpreted through the general abstractions of what has been, or is already in appearance. This is not to problematise specific deviations about the particular nor to inquire into their emergent processes; it is to have already reduced these problems to sets of determinable ontological relations.

Arguably, this bears little comparison to the problem Lamarck approaches. Thus, Lamarck is not simply distinguished by his opposition to a unidirectional primary process, but because he attempts to interrogate the processes concerning particular entities. Lamarck’s characterisation of the evolutionary problem is thus radically different: he identifies orthogonal flows of forces, through which individual, environmental and local conditions organise across two irreducible affective processes. There remains a dominant, bottom-up, primary flow that manifests strong determinations about the specific differences of living bodies. But this dominance
cannot account for those specific adaptations, brought about by the particular entities’ environment and affective actions, which comprise the work of exterior deviations.

For Lamarck, these constitute a ‘counter-affective’ flow of force that not only introduces highly specified differences, but also affects disruptions, changes and irregularities into the primary process itself:

Lamarck joined the two sets in a discordant union that operated more like a tug of war than a harmony. This partnership made no pretense to equality. A primary and dominating force – the march of progress – struggled to order organisms in a simple and sensible way; while a secondary and disrupting force – l'influence des circonstances, or adaptation to local environments – tore this order apart by pushing individual lineages into lateral deviations from the main track, thereby making the order of life rich, messy, and replete with clumps and gaps.106

That these prior judgements about the nature of problems, radically ramify into how we understand immanent processes and the power of particular beings, was

106 Gould, S.J. (2002) The Structure of Evolutionary Theory, pp. 186. Stephen J Gould treats in great detail this contest between a singular, unidirectional process and an orthogonally oriented indivisibility between disparate causal flows. ‘Modern evolutionists may read this list with an odd feeling of deja vu–in the backward sense that we have already encountered all these issues in the modern debates of our own professional careers, but didn't know that our forebears had struggled over the same themes. Doesn't the late 20th century debate about micro and macroevolution raise the same questions about different causes at higher and lower taxonomic levels (the basis of Goldschmidt's argument, for example–see pp. 451-466); and don't extrapolationists still charge the defenders of higher level causality with proposing untestable theories of evolutionary change?’ Ibid., pp. 192.

In the current incarnation, this contest continues between strong genetic determinism and the significance of epigenetic phenomena. It should be emphasised that the same problematic assumptions remain, insofar as the undisputed dominance of the primary process is widely posited, and debate hinges upon the relative degrees of impoverishment about particular entities. What perhaps has changed is that epigenetic phenomena seem to operate upon observable structures in which demonstrable, experimental evidence for a ‘counter-causal’ recursion (rather than a logical or speculative one) might well be in the process of being articulated. Gould provides an encyclopaedic list of examples, but let us refer to a more recent and evocative one. Dias and Ressler have performed a series of experiments where male mice are administered a small electric shock accompanied by the smell of cherry blossom. First and second generation offspring are then exposed to the smell of cherry blossom without any direct experience of its correlation with the negative electric stimulus, however a pronounced shock response remained evident. The experimental analysis found this reaction was consistent with changes to the olfactory system and associated neurological pathways, with increased sensitivity in the receptor areas for cherry blossom and an enlarged correlation of this area with that responsible for the production of fear. Parental olfactory experience influences behavior and neural structure in subsequent generations, Nature Neuroscience 17, pp. 89–96. Additionally, there is a very useful introduction that contextualizes the work within the evolutionary controversies glossed above, by M. Szyf, Lamarck revisited: epigenetic inheritance of ancestral odor fear conditioning, Nature Neuroscience 17, pp. 2–4 (2014).
not at all lost upon Freud. When Freud postulated an evolutionary ‘phylogenetic’ emergence for consciousness, it was not strictly Darwinian. For the postulate of an evolutionary emergence of consciousness is already to propose another kind of evolutionary process, one that does not concern the evolution of material but rather of efficient causes.

Moreover, it is arguably very revealing that this same epistemological privileging effaces Freud’s therapeutic emphasis in order to pursue the theoretical consequences of psychoanalysis. It is only via a theoretical reduction that psychoanalysis resolves into some form of historical, psychosexual determinism – for in practise, the theoretical apparatus works to actualise immanent affects. Arguably, it is the demonstration of therapeutic affect in transforming the subject’s formation, that leads Freud to a particularly Lamarckian speculation; that the affective power of particular beings may constitute another evolutionary process, which might play a broader role upon the primary generative process; that is to say, the affective powers of the particular may well be responsible for the distribution of creative differentiations the primary process throws up:

The experiences of the ego seem at first to be lost to inheritance; but, when they have been repeated enough and with sufficient strength in many individuals in successive generations, they transform themselves, so to say, into experiences of the id, the impressions of which are preserved by heredity. Thus in the id, which is capable of being inherited, are harboured residues of the existences of countless egos; and, when the ego forms its super-ego out of the id, it may perhaps only be reviving shapes of former egos and be bringing them to resurrection.\textsuperscript{107}

Freud’s countering of essentialism contrasts markedly from its contemporary philosophical denunciation. The immanent acts of particular beings are no longer incompatible with the immutable telos (or its lack) which in either case, determines them; intentional activity comprises an alternative to telos – a progressive

\textsuperscript{107} Freud, \textit{The Ego and the Id}, pp. 35.
evolutionary process, accumulating or collectivising particular, intentional acts. This is a ‘rival’ efficient causal process operating upon those primary, material causes bringing the psychic apparatus into being, so that a circulation of efficient and material causes makes redundant the formal and final.

3.4. Techné IV: schemata for human subjects

3.4.1. The lower techné of cells and the medial techné of the organs

Let us complete the schematisation of techné, by returning to the particular case of subjective formation and the distinct functional arrangement found recorded there in the etymological structure of the term ‘subject’. Figure 9 brings this arrangement forward into the general schematic so that it is now specific to subjective emergence.

The distinction of human being arguably arises because the techné responsible for subjective formation is of an unprecedented sophistication and complexity. If the transition from single to multicellular organisms were made possible when a ‘higher’ order techné emerges from an array of parallel, immanent techné (schematised earlier
in figure 8, then the human body would comprise a structure where this hierarchical arrangement was many times repeated. Figure 10 schematises this in a relatively simplified way.

![Figure 10. Techné specific to subjective formation, emerging from the living body.](image)

The bottom layer corresponds to the specialised cells, comprising the body as a massively parallel distribution of individuated cellular units. Even at this level of rudimentary individuation, cells have highly specified functional operations – processes of interior deviation that are particular and autonomous. While the biological sciences continue to affirm that these individuated cellular units come into being through primary, generative processes (the signals and instruction of genetic determinations, unfolding in space-time) they have also demonstrated that these individuated units possess varying degrees of plasticity, through which their
functionality and form are co-determined by the influence of local conditions – the set of exterior deviations in which they are set to operate.\textsuperscript{108}

In complex living bodies, these groups of specialised cells further organise into larger, more complex individuations such as the \textit{organs} (these correspond to the middle strata or first order hierarchy in \textit{figure 10}). This stratum includes the internal organs (heart, lungs, liver, spleen and so on), which comprise the digestive and circulatory systems critical to the nourishment and maintenance of living bodies. But, this stratum also includes the sensory organs where the body is oriented toward the exterior world, and whose emergent functional specificity is to engage more explicitly with the exterior deviations of other bodies.

These medial level \textit{technē} work upon the lower \textit{technē} comprising the organ; the set of specialised cells specific to them (for example in the case of the heart, this would be the muscular cardiomyocytes and the stimulatory cardiac pacemaker cells). In bringing the function of sense upon the sensitivities and activities of the lower set, medial \textit{technē} generates new kinds of affective powers – organ specific functionality generated from its expanded, more complex set of sensitive operations. That is to say, as bodies become more complex, so do the functional operations that animate them. More complex operations – more nuanced sensitivities and greater intentional powers, are thus derived, because chains of \textit{technē}, in parallel and hierarchical configurations carry out more complex calculations across many functional operations.\textsuperscript{109}

\textsuperscript{108} These are those \textit{epigenetic} phenomena, which through various mechanisms activate or inhibit the expression of particular genes. An obvious example of this plasticity is embryonic stem cells, which according to the local bodily region in which they are distributed, can manifest into different cell types, making them of particular interest for medical science.

\textsuperscript{109} There is no doubt that the emergence of such a medial level, higher order agency remains contentious. It would be conventional to argue that the brain maintains these higher order functions, in such a way as to make this concept of a medial order redundant. However, there is recent research into 3D printing techniques of organs that might very well dispute this orthodox assumption. Sharon Presnell has demonstrated this principle in printing living cells (hepatocytes and stellates) onto synthetic three-dimensional scaffolds. What is of interest is that the assemblage of individual cells –
3.4.2. The ‘highest’ techné and subjective formation

This brings us to the strata of ‘highest’ organisation that operates upon the medial level of internal and sensory organs, bringing the functions of sense and intentional activity to the living body as a unity. In figure 10, this is the uppermost stratum and indicates the techné we are most familiar with: namely, the eponymous one Aristotle apprehends in the Greek topos. This was the techné argued to be at rest with the living body and that resolved into epistêmê and subjective formation. Moreover, it is this techné that generates the sense, intentional action and agency, in the orthodox terms with which we are familiar.

At this highest techné, the function of sense envelops or takes as its input all of the medial techné’s functional operations. It is already notable in its immersive state in the living body, that this highest techné is characterised by its mobility, insofar as its sensitive function can be focused upon specific areas within the body – a phenomenon well illustrated by pain, where particular attention is drawn to sensate a particular region (the stomach or kidney, the hand or foot, and so on). And to this ‘whole-body’ sensitivity corresponds a new class of intentional actions exerted at the order of the living body’s totality (the powers of mobility and movement, prey and predation, reproduction and communication, socialisation and so on).

their simple proximity parallel to one another across a horizontal strata – spontaneously precipitates the emergence of higher order functions specific to the behaviour of the organ. In this case, functions particular to the liver, the production of albumin (a protein that transports drugs, salts and hormones throughout the body) and cholesterol. S. Presnell, Rapid fabrication of architecturally-correct human tissues in vitro by 3D bioprinting: Function follows form.

It should be reiterated, that this presentation is greatly simplified – there must be many other levels of hierarchical strata in complex, living organisms. For in complex bodies, even single cells can be exceedingly complex, with multiple centres of various independent functionalities in which new orders of techné might be operating (such as the nucleus and mitochondria). Moreover, there must be additional upper-medial strata, in which various organs are arranged into complex systems (such as the GIT, sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems, the muscular-skeletal, and so on).
In the previous chapter, it was this ‘highest’ techné that was found at rest with the human body, and which had available to it two differing directions; in one direction it moved toward the interior where sense becomes problematic (intense and diffuse) and in the other toward the surface where it became increasingly specified and resolved.

In its movement toward the interior this highest techné sets it function of sense to operate upon the interior population of distributed techné that comprise it. This is to approach the direction from which primary, material causes determine bodies from their interior, but it is fragmented and diffused owing to the reduced functionalities of the lower techné that remain most proximate to them. But what it lacks here in clear resolutions, it gains in direct functional apprehensions – that is to say, it does not acquire from lower techné a clear and distinct transmission (a ‘making of sense’), which is a capacity that is not available to lower techné. Highest techné has transmitted to it the sensitive intelligence these lower techné have themselves acquired.¹¹¹

Nevertheless, we are not accustomed to thinking about ‘highest’ techné in this way, directing its sensitivity into the depths of the living body. We are more generally preoccupied with its other directional movement toward the surface and the rich series of productions it there produces. Here techné ‘co-operates’ with the direction of material causation coursing through bodies, performing the work Aristotle so admirably apprehends there for us. This is not to engage the diffuse sensitivities of

¹¹¹ In his discussion of problems, Deleuze indicates the creative potentiality of this encounter and describes the ‘being of the problematic’ encountered in depth. ‘More profoundly still, Being (what Plato calls the Idea) “corresponds” to the essence of the problem or the question as such. It is as though there were an “opening”, a “gap”, an ontological “fold” which relates being and the question to one another. In this relation, being is difference itself. Being is also non-being, but non-being is not the being of the negative; rather it is the being of the problematic, the being of problem and question.’ Difference and Repetition, pp. 64.
vague depth impressions, but rather deviates in the most recognisable way from this primary flow of generative *phusis*. That is, ‘highest’ *technē* performs that most distinctive deviation, by projecting itself from its envelopment with the living body, bringing the thinking subject into appearance.

It has been argued that what determines subjective formation is not the prolonging or donation of an essence or form, but a *deviation* in nature, predicated upon an intentional action: it is where this ‘highest’ *technē* throws itself. Thus, subjective formation is the distinctive act, in which the higher organisational operation of *technē* becomes fixated into the specialised strata of abstract thought.

We owe to Lacan the schematisation of how such a process must precipitate that most specific particularity – the emergence of the thinking subject (*figure 11*). The subject comes to being in language, or more precisely, in the symbolic fundamentals, the abstract series of relations which structure *epistêmê*.

We recall that the precipitation of the subject begins with the sense of immersion, the distinct lack of intentional power within the living body, such that it throws *itself* into the signifying regime, in a sort of defensive posture. But this is also
a bid for power: for this immersed ‘highest’ techné, overwhelmed by the intentional demands and actions of all the ‘lower’ and ‘medial’ techné driving the body’s processes, must transform its sensitive immersion into a decisive act. Thus what Lacan demonstrates for us with the mirror stage corresponds to an emergent power at \( \text{jet} (f_2) \); it is a decisive intentional action that determines how subjective formation comes into appearance.

Arguably, the functional schematic of techné offers us a way of illustrating what is significant in this projection – that is, to support the contention that what techné carries over into epistêmê is the functional configuration it gains from the living body; for to ‘project’ is really to reorient the functional mechanism from its calculative activity in the living body.

It was shown earlier, in figure 10, how each strata of techné (lower, medial and also the ‘highest’) remain oriented in the same direction, so that each function of sense \((f_i)\) ‘naturally’ works upon the direction of the material causal flow in which bodies come into being. But what so differentiates the ‘highest’ techné precipitating subjective formation, is that to project itself, is to ‘turn’ the functional assemblage so that it can fall upon a completely new series of inputs. That is to say, the ‘highest’ techné (at \(f_1\)) no longer senses the living body or operates upon it as its series of inputs, but now falls upon the series of abstract relations comprising the signifying regime.
It is this intentional reorientation of ‘highest’ techné that makes possible subjective formation and the world of ideas (figure 12). Techné no longer operates upon the complex sensitivities of the living body, but rather takes the abstract-ideal as its input or domain, bringing to it first sensitivity. There must correspond an entire haptics for thought pertaining to the sense function specific to thinking. For thought’s leaps and movements, its connections and oppositions, its moods and textures, would here indicate the transformation sense (sub–, $f_1$) carries out as it processes relations and objects, models and representations, into a new class of intentional activity – the process of thinking (at –jet, $f_2$). In short, the same sensitive and active functional conjugation found everywhere animating living bodies, also performs the logistikós, the calculative faculty that Aristotle argues is specific to thought. But in the functional re-problematisation of techné, logistikós is rather a specialised application of techné’s primary operation, where the functional conjugation animating living bodies is tasked with animating thinking subjects.

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112 Spinoza’s intuition and Deleuze’s survol, may well be accounts of this nature.
3.4.3. Techné is not emphasised because it precipitates a subjective form, but because of its mobility, in and out of epistêmê

However, whether or not ‘highest’ techné may be argued to make subjective formation possible, does not resolve the functional problem. This is because the mechanism of techné has not been elaborated in order to satisfy philosophical or psychoanalytic criteria; it is to address the problem of art on its own terms. Subjective formation is a critical problem for epistemological interrogation because of the role it plays in structuring the meaning and sense constituting the model. But the resolution of subjective being is not a necessary problem for art: as we will see, subjects and epistêmê are not conditions or problems to resolve, but configurations through which the work of art necessarily passes.

Let us complete the schemata of techné specific to subjective formation by emphasising what for ‘highest’ techné is most important – not its formalisation into subjective appearance, but rather its mobility. For the work of art is only possible in a final movement that becomes possible there – a second projective movement in which techné throws itself again, but this time out of subjective formation.

It has been argued that subjective formation and the possibility of knowledge are predicated upon the thrownness of techné, re-orienting itself from the living body into the abstract strata (epistêmê). But the work of art begins with another distinctive re-orientation: having acquired additional apprehensions about the nature of functions specific to epistêmê, techné throws itself again, reorienting toward the living body.
This is no longer in accordance with *phusis*, where *techné* is naturally oriented to the flow of material causation bringing bodies – it rather constitutes a challenging, a mode of direct opposition (figure 13).

The work of art therefore exploits what remains a hitherto widely occulted circuit: the ‘counter-causal’ flow of efficient causation, where the differentiations and creative transformations affected by particular beings, exert upon the primary processes comprising *phusis*.

Lamarck and Freud both argued that an efficient causation from particular beings to the primary processes that determine them must have been operating, if obscure, in evolutionary processes. But perhaps it is the case that Nietzsche had already identified the nature of this obscurity in *The work of art. The Birth of Tragedy* argues that two processes must be at work in the problem of Greek tragedy – the *Apolline* (responsible for knowledge) and the *Dionysiac* (responsible for creation). If the Apolline is characterised by the more familiar tracing of how causal forces precipitate beings, then the Dionysiac is characterised by the *dissolution of beings*; a counter-actualising mechanism through which beings become force. That is why for...
Nietzsche, creation and knowledge are not dialectically opposed, but operate upon rival circulations or movements, orthogonally displaced from the other.

Nothing demonstrates the orthogonality of Nietzsche’s rival circulations so clearly as the apparent paradox the Dionysiac line presents. That it is properly the circuit responsible for all creative power is overwhelmed by the trepidation of destruction it instils in constituted subjects. This is not the product of an illusion: from the formal subject’s perspective, the transformation into force is experienced as a line of death and disintegration, for the subject cannot withstand the encounter with *phusis*. For what characterises creative work as Dionysiac, is that this return to the depths in which the body is torn apart, precisely analogises the subject’s dissolution as the condition for the work of art to begin.

If art cannot be apprehended from an ideal perspective, where a sufficient fixation of subjectivity makes possible the theoretical model, it is because art begins with the dissolution of the subjective form. This is not an autonomic *aphanisis* (the fading of the subject in Lacanian discourse) because art is born from an intentional ejection of higher *techné* from its subjective fixation. Yet, if it is predicated upon a comparable functional principle to *aphanisis*, it is because both are effects of the computational limit earlier encountered with *techné*. Subjective dissolutions of all kinds occur because *techné* no longer carries out the active calculation upon which subjectivity rests. And if this is simply an effect, it is because *techné* has been elsewhere directed to carry out other kinds of functional operations, be it the sensitive

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113 Lacan stresses that *aphanisis* concerns the split nature of the subject; ‘where the subject appears somewhere as meaning, he is manifested elsewhere as ‘fading’, as disappearance.’ *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, pp. 218. Lacan is very clear that this phenomena occurs within the Symbolic, generated by the fundamental dissonance between the Other (the structure of language) and the *place of enunciation* which the subject must come back to in order to speak.
focus within the body, the production of a sense impression, the exertion of an action, or else, as we will see, the work of art.

At the heart of this dynamism is the transformation of an efficient cause into the momentum of the material. It has been argued that this flow of efficient causation may well have a broad evolutionary precedent, forming a counter-causal process through which the differences emergent at particular beings are progressively deviated into material, primary processes. But in any case, what is lacking in this general evolutionary counter-flow is a very specific kind of intentional power. For the deviation that Aristotle apprehends techné performing, the one that specifies the human and inaugurates the work of art, is not differentiated by the deviations of such a broad circuit of efficient causation, but arguably by the intention to carry out this kind of deviation.

Perhaps it is only when the intelligent sensitivity about functions becomes detached from the living body and the immanent processes in which they operate – that is, in their abstract series of relations and the appearance of thinking subjects – that such an intentional power becomes possible. For what we learnt from pure mathematics is that in the world of ideas, functions are decoupled from the material causes upon which they operate, so that techné acquires vast, new intelligence about functional operations and new experimental powers to mix and assemble them together. That is why pure mathematics is so inseparably creative. But it was in the dual workflows evident there, in the generation of abstract relations into theoretical models and the setting of these theoretical unities into creative experimentation, that we anticipated that a more flexible agency was operating. ‘Highest’ techné can perform as this more flexible agency, always distinguishable from epistémê and
subjective formation and the living body, because its intelligence and activity remains about functional operations.

It is one of these emergent functional powers ‘highest’ techné acquires that both specifies and makes the work of art possible. This distinctive power is intentional; it is the specific, intention to deviate the primary processes that determine beings. Art is nothing else than the progressive exploration and potentiation of those functional operations capable of carrying out this intention – the calculated deviation of phusis. Subjective formation is not the beginning and resolution of the problem pertaining to art, but a necessary coordinate across its active process. For art will require not only that highest techné be projected out of subjective formation, but that it circulates between its various stages in the living body and in the world of ideas.

3.5. Techné and deviation

3.5.1. The functional re-problematisation attempts to reassemble the disparate elements of techné as various deviations of phusis

Aristotle’s inaugural apprehension of techné was of a broad, ambitious problem, concerning human specification, the nature of work, a fundamental relativity to nature and the specificity of art. But since this time, changing demands about problems, have seen a progressive fragmentation and breaking up of these apprehensions about techné. As such, we have been led to the disparate contemporary stages where fragments of the problem have been pursued.
Theories of subjectivity and epistêmê explore central aspects of the problem, pertaining to human specificity. Here technê is a medial process between the problem of donation (at \( f \), or \( sub \)) and the appearance of thinking subjects. This is not to examine technê per se, for technê is tasked with bridging the irreducible divide between living bodies and the appearance of epistêmê. That is to say, the problems about subjects and epistêmê are framed about the origin and the outcome, the cause and the effect, where technê performs the identical relation carrying one to the other. Even where the origin is denounced and an empty abstraction or void is postulated, the processual relation remains the same and technê dutifully transfers a void or empty relation to establish the distinctive properties of subjective being. That is why despite the great variation in epistemological propositions about how subjects come to being, the function technê performs remains identical in each case: a passive or mechanical transformation from problem to solution, where the nature of the former determines the appearance of the latter.

These attempts to resolve the subjective problem thus seem disconnected from the other problematic aspects of how technê indicates human specificity; that is, the activity and deviations carried out by the living body. This is because, by the time that technê sets about performing its immanent acts, the formative process is thought complete, establishing not only what kind of being a human is, but also what kind of acts this being can perform. On the one hand, technê is the necessary, medial process that functions to distinguish epistêmê from its own, and by extension, all living, material bodies. Technê therein secures for human beings the identity of its distinctive difference. But on the other hand, technê exemplifies all that is impoverished about this being, in putting into action its limited sphere of affect – a degraded, artificial power against what constitutes the primary process.
That this impasse might be predicated upon another problematic aspect of techné – the problem of deviation relative to phusis – comes into view elsewhere, with the theorisation of technology. This is because industrial and modern technology demonstrates that techné is not at all impoverished against the forces of phusis. But this does not inspire a wholesale re-problematising of techné, in which the activity of immanent beings causes us to question our relationship to nature or what kind of beings we are. It more reliably animates those judgements established by the Greeks: to act in accordance with phusis, along its material primary flow legitimises techné, but to move against it, is to impoverish and degrade, or moreover, to violate phusis.

3.5.2. Techné asserts the power of the particular

Arguably, this judgment turns upon a final, deeply occulted aspect of the re-problematisation of techné. For techné is the very problematising of particularity, where to deviate phusis, is to problematise the causal relations between the primary process and what it brings into being. That is why it has been necessary to proceed through a critique of what constitutes a problem: it is the general form of the problem that relegates techné to a medial element between relations and into which it is resolved, rather than as a functional problem bringing difference into the particular. For techné is not a simple relation between two terms, but a third, independent element – a functional operation. And the particular is never simply the resolution of a formative general problem, because techné continues to animate the particular, conferring to it generative, transformative, creative powers.

Where creative power and transformation are generated by the operations of particular techné, this unsettles speculative propositions about the nature of primary
processes. Let us be reminded, that Aristotle’s proposition about telos – that it concerns an eternal, unchanging principle – abstracts a similitude from the apprehension of the repetitious force evident in immanent affective processes; it was never a direct apprehension of a universal principle. A particular tree emerges from a seed and dies, but the form ‘tree’, evidenced by the forest and testified by antiquity, has been and will be, continually forthcoming. Aristotle did not know the geological history of the Earth, the time before trees (nor the single celled organisms which both precede and prolong in them), nor else could he conceive they would not eternally prolong. Of course, since Aristotle’s time, our postulates of universals are more rigorously scientific, subtler and far more abstract; but the point is not to debate whether a direct apprehension of a formal and final cause, a telos for physis, has been forthcoming. It is rather to re-emphasise that it has not at all absolved us from the affective problem of particulars: for irrespective of ‘shape’ everything we know of universals is abstracted from a brute fact of computation: in the iteration of particular phenomena, it is repetition, which indicates whatever constants dwell in natural processes.

114 ‘Now action is for the sake of an end; therefore the nature of things also is so. Thus if a house, e.g., had been a thing made by nature, it would have been made in the same way as it is now by art; and if things made by nature were made not only by nature but also by art, they would come to be in the same way as by nature. The one, then, is for the sake of the other; and generally art in some cases completes what nature cannot bring to a finish, and in others imitates nature. If, therefore, artificial products are for the sake of an end, so clearly also are natural products. The relation of the later to the earlier items is the same in both.’ Aristotle, Physics, pp. 340.

115 In light of the doubt thrown upon transcendent or abstract donators, both Nietzsche and Deleuze (whom in this regard, builds upon and follows from him), argue convincingly that an immanent power of repetition performs the task allocated to primary universals. From the occupation of an immanent perspective, both argue universals are rather composed of a pure repetition of forces, comprising the primary process. One might think of these as statistical or consensual compositions of infinite differences or perhaps something like the conservation principle in classical momentum (where a vector in a closed system, unless acted upon by another force, will continue indefinitely). In any event, repetition has the advantage of being an affective primary process, rather than predicated upon an essential, teleological principle.
For what is obscured between *techné* in the formative process of thinking subjects and its setting into work the acts these subjects perform, is that creative power *always* concerns the particular. And if we have laboured unwittingly under this divisiveness upon *techné*, it is perhaps because it is art that bears this sufferance and which is thereby obscured. For in the absence of a functional re-problematisation of *techné*, there has been little taste to connect art in its general sense (the intentional deviations of particular bodies), to its specific or disciplinary sense (the historical and contemporary work of art). One may not appreciate that the same impoverished *mimesis* that relegates the work of art to a peripheral consequence also reduces the technological object so that it seems inconsequential or else violates natural processes. Heidegger warns us that it is the *mode of challenging*, the very counter-orientation at *techné*, that constitutes the danger it presents to the order of nature. But what is arguably of a far greater danger is our insensitivity to a *particular affect*, that impoverishes our sense of the deviations we perform: for to act *inevitably* precipitates a flow of cause where, directly or recursively, the flows of *phusis* will be altered. And while the treatment of nature as *standing reserve* (*Bestand*) certainly captures the materialist reduction characterising our contemporary posture toward the natural world, no moral prohibition could avert the amassing of particular powers, amplifying about increasingly sophisticated *techné*. It is arguably not the alienation of mind from body that divorces us from ‘natural’ processes, because *epistêmê* and living bodies *are* irreducible: what fractures our relationship to nature is *the continual failure to compute how significant immanent affects are in the ordering of forces* (a situation tragically evident in contemporary climate denialism).

It is this failure to re-problematise the particular that devalues the work of art and ramifies into the artificiality of the technological object. Had we learned from the
work of art that the creative praxis of immanent beings was not impoverished or derivative but genuinely transformative, the advent of the modern technological object would not have appeared as such an unprecedented and traumatic anomaly.

3.5.3. Techné affects a progressive complication of material and efficient causes

Yet, there is another possibility. Rather than a single formative problem resolving into particular differences between bodies and thinking subjects, two orthogonal causal processes are differentiated by a particular that generates the difference. This is only possible because a third element – the function – makes the particular the place of creative transformation. This transformation between causal processes is potentialised by the interior deviation that techné performs: in the complex functional arrangement, where sense is conjugated into action, material and efficient causes are progressively composed or brought one upon the other through the computations of multiple techné in parallel and hierarchical arrangements.

It is such that the functional re-problematisation of techné, through its deviations of phusis, envelops all the disparate elements attributed to it at the topos. Techné operates along the primary process where its functional operations work in the bringing forward of particular beings. But techné is not a passive conduit; its complex functional conjugation transforms the primary flow. It is through this interior deviation of phusis, that a new particular nature becomes manifest.

But techné is not exhausted in this process, through which a particular entity comes to being. Techné remains active in this entity, generating sensitivity coupled to a power of immanent affect. Through these exterior deviations, techné propagates another evolutionary process by contributing to the flows of efficient causation. This
process is felt in the progressive transformation upon each particular entity, because through degree and recursion, these deviations work upon the ensemble of forces that constitutes its ‘being’. But each particular never simply appears once and for all inaugurated into being, but rather continually becomes through a dynamic circulation of processes.

Across the currents of efficient causation, exterior deviations also exert pressures upon other techné, so that in collective flows, techné potentiates transformations across bodies. That is why the evolution of efficient causes can be forwarded as an alternative to the thorny problem of telos, and why the evolution of bodies diverge and differentiate into various forms.

It has been argued this process culminates in ‘highest’ techné that precipitates the process of subjective formation. We have argued this techné remains oriented to the living body so that what indicates the human (homo sapiens), is when techné throws itself into the abstract strata (Symbolic or signifying regime), precipitating a self-identifying, subjective formation. But techné is not resolved into, nor excluded from epistêmé. Suitably reoriented, techné rather goes to work as logistikós, the sensitive, active calculation peculiar to thinking.

But the subject’s appearance and the activity of thought do not of themselves recapture the other set of distinctive deviations Aristotle apprehends at techné: this is the sphere of immanent acts about the living body in which its distinctive intelligibility goes to work upon primary, generative processes. These deviations of poiesis announce techné – they are a kind of work that deviates primary processes, and by introducing supplementary efficient causes they bring different entities into being. Yet the sophistication of the scientific method in its forwarding of experimental praxis and the technological object, has led us to understand that this
work cannot be carried out by an *epistasthai*, pertaining exclusively to bodies; a more sophisticated exchange between *praxis* and *epistêmê* is evident. Thus, the *technê* at rest with the body, re-oriented and projected within *epistêmê*, must have an additional recourse back into the body. This will be to transform the intelligence acquired about new functions within *epistêmê*, into the generation of new powers to *affect*.

Yet, for any work of art to be possible, this intentional reorientation of *technê* must have always been required. In going to work upon abstract and epistemological constructions, *technê* will throw itself back into the body, but this will no longer be at rest: this will be a *counter-orientation* so that it is now in confrontation with the direction of *phusis*, the material causation flowing from the interior of bodies. The work of art in its general and disciplinary sense is thus always a contest with *phusis*. And although *technê’s* evolutionary complication indicates to us that counter-causal affectations must be something far more ubiquitous in the evolution of bodies, we must see here in this distinctly *intentional* deviant activity what equally specifies the human (*homo technê*).

The re-problematisation of *technê* opens up a way again to the field of art that has long been foreclosed: the approach through the problem of *functions*. Why does Plato’s exile continue to destabilise the function of art, long after the discreditation of its transcendent donator? It is because it brings forward the profound uncertainty about the particular, what kind of deviation *technê* affects there upon *phusis*. Where, ‘to be’, remains a fragmented, partial being, how are we decoupled from the judgement that an always superior process or being, determines us as inferior, darker, impoverished and disempowered? For even when this superiority loses its *own* power, the judgement persists in the formal relation that carries on the impoverishment of the particular.
But *techné*, in passing from living bodies into the world of ideas, does not prolong a given nature from either donators or processes; for across its complex functional conjugation it brings an unprecedented nature into being. And when it goes to work again upon the new kinds of sensitive intelligence generated there, its counter-oriented functional affect is to potentiate in living bodies unprecedented *new powers*. This work belongs to the genuinely creative flow comprising all of efficient causation; and with it a very different sort of power is restored to art, as to all particular life.
Chapter 4:

The function of Art
Creation and *poiesis*
4.1. Poiesis I: Making and creating

4.1.1. ‘For of anything whatever that passes from not being into being the whole cause is composing or poetry.’

The preceding chapters have arrived at a new problematisation. In the absence of a counter-causal workflow, it is not possible to approach the function of art and to understand how it operates. This is not to say this makes the discipline of art unique or unapproachable through other modes of disciplinary inquiry, it is rather to argue that art is incomprehensible solely within the problem of generative processes that grapple with how entities come into being. This does not simply mean that art is irreducible to ontology. It also implies what Nietzsche had already brought to our attention; production and creation are not interchangeable names for a singular process of becoming, but they are differentiated by counter-posed or counter-oriented workflows. Poiesis remains the general term for the process of coming into being but this can no longer diminish praxis about particular entities – these activities must be argued to constitute a necessary aspect of phusis where efficient causes progressively participate in and deviate the very processes of becoming. That is, praxis participates in a rival circulation, a counter-oriented workflow or creative

116 ἡ γάρ τοι ἐκ τοῦ ἰὰ τοῦ μὴ ὤντος εἰς τὸ ὅν ἑνὶ ὤντοιν αἰτία πᾶσα ἐστὶ poiησις. ’Plato, Symposium, pp. 557. There is a wide variation in the translation of this key sentence, which well encapsulates the very different kind of problematic apprehension at work with the Greeks and its difference from contemporary thought. For example, the above translation from M. Joyce (Plato, The Collected Dialogues, Princeton, 1961) which emphasises the ontological dimension of the problem, is rendered; ‘After all, everything that is responsible for creating something out of nothing is a kind of poetry’, by A. Nehamas and P. Woodruff (Plato, Complete Works, Hackett, 1997). What this emphasises is the tension in contemporary debates about the primary problems there apprehended and in particular, the role of creation or production in the genesis of beings.

poiesis. As such, poiesis can no longer be assumed to be a unidirectional, identical process, but concerns a distinct division in workflows. The task can no longer be to simply determine whether poiesis is productive or creative: it will rather be the elucidation of a dual workflow where processes of production or making must be distinguished from processes of creating.

The Greek sense of poiesis is very general: it is the unidirectional process through which all comes forward from non-being into being. This general conformation of the process indicates why poiesis is thought to be indistinguishably a making (production) or creating. That is why the historical terms of debate have focused upon the nature of the donation; where \( a \rightarrow b \), poiesis is the identical process or relation (\( \rightarrow \)) in every event, so that whatever comprises \( a \) determines the nature of \( b \). Whether \( a \) is thought to be a Transcendent subject or decree, a form or essence, or else a chance, random or chaotic event, poiesis is the process of transference but never that which admitting of variation in-itself, introduces difference into how this bringing is brought forth.

When poiesis is thought to be a problem of the general form – an identical process, movement or transference – there are profound consequences for the concept of creation. Where poiesis is understood to be a non-transformational relation this already determines it as a process of production rather than creation. When \( a \) is an existing entity (God, concrete essence, cosmic singularity or so on) creation inheres within \( a \), as the singular event generating all possible beings. In this case, poiesis will be clarified as production, because creation will pertain only to this original event or being and not to the nature of the process through which all possible \( b \) will be brought into appearance.
Where the existence of \( a \) will be called into question (to be replaced by nonsense, non-being, void, or indeterminacy) creation, deemed a property of \( a \), will be denounced along with it. That is to say, in the absence of a singularly creative event, \( poiesis \) is deduced to be outside of time (eternal or ‘always, already’), invoking an indifferent abstraction or structure that takes up the task of ontological determination. Thus despite knowledge’s retreat from \( a \) as something indemonstrably determinable the identical nature of the relation remains in place to characterise \( poiesis \).

Thus whether \( a \) is posited or refuted, the consequences for creation remain the same – whether it inheres within the origin or is clarified into the unidirectional nature of the process, creation is not an authentic power. It is rather some kind of lingering mythology of transcendence, forever tied to a divine or chance origin, or otherwise complicated by an illegitimate, transcendent agency.

But this only exhausts the possibility of a proper power for creation so long as \( poiesis \) remains an inert, identical operation; that is, by foreclosing creation from \( what \ is \ produced \), namely from \( b \) – from the \( particular \) that is brought into being.

Let us begin by observing that there appears to be no necessity to the identical determination of \( poiesis \) outside of the desire to establish a principle of ontological consistency. In the absence of \( a \) and amongst the reality of a seemingly infinite diversity of \( b \), it is only in seizing upon an identical relation animating \( poiesis \) (the process of becoming), that ontology can generate general principles or statements. This comprises a familiar strategy for dealing with ‘artistic problems’, composed in response to the Greek \( topos \); this was to deploy the interior resemblance to the model upon whose judgement \( technē \) became broken apart and obscured. \( Poiesis \) is subsequently interpreted as a general form of the problem where the process of
moving from non-being to being is taken as a relation, reducible to the two ontological terms $a$ (or not $a$) and $b$.

But if poiesis is not a problem of a general form but a functional operation, then other possibilities emerge for a power of creation. The function is not reducible between two sets or terms; it is a third and independent element, through which one term is deviated into another. This is to open up for poiesis the possibility that its process of becoming may not be identical but might admit of an interior variation. More importantly, this indicates poiesis might not be indifferent to that which it brings into being, so that both its process and what this process produces, cannot be determined by establishing original conditions.

If this returns us properly to the problem of art it is because Aristotle’s superior formulation already apprehends art as the activity that supervenes upon poiesis and works to deviate what is brought into being. And although for Aristotle art was impeded from an understanding of poiesis and its cause, this was only because they were thought to reveal themselves solely to epistêmê: the contemplation of universal properties and what is unchanging in nature.

But where doubt has fallen upon the universal, this configuration might be argued to restore to technê a greater significance. For where the reality of the unchanging unveils itself to epistemological interrogation it remains the case that the dynamic elements of nature have always revealed themselves to technê. That is to say, when poiesis is no longer thought to issue from essences or universals but from dynamic or indeterminable processes, it is reasonable to assume they will be most directly apprehended by art’s greater proximity to ergon – to functions and the dynamisms of action and deviation.
This will be to address the final step in the recovery of the topos and the functional re-problematisation of art. In this alternative account, art is the functional interrogation of how techné works to progressively deviate the flows of poiesis, but this is no longer where praxis is diminished against the order of poiesis, in a kind of localised deviation from the law. It has been argued in the progressive emergence of complex, living bodies that there is no general ontological problem in which an identical processual relation determines what kind of being is produced. What comes to being emerges as a progressive series of ever more complicated functional calculations across many techné, in which efficient causes (deviations or local effects generated by particular beings) ramify into and shape those processes bringing the next higher order of emergent beings.

This cascade through orders of particular beings never simply prolongs a unidirectional poiesis, having no effect upon the nature of phusis that poiesis brings forward. Poiesis is thus not productive or creative, making or creating. Rather, there are two broad orders or kinds of processes within poiesis. There is a primary, productive poiesis, the poiesis with which we are familiar. These material causes are dominated by repetition and strongly determine what is brought into being (b). But there is an entire counter-flow of efficient causes that emerge at every particular being (b) and which go to work by deviating the ‘primary’ process. This work of particular beings comprises what will properly differentiate creative poiesis from the primary, productive kind.

What follows from this differentiation within poiesis returns to the topos; the complex, functional problem through which poiesis comes to us via the work of art. For here the work of art exemplifies the indeterminably dynamic nature of this process by affecting a deviation upon it. This is not simply to reveal the primary
process, but to show us what art works to do: art belongs to a rival process that works
to systematically and intentionally deviate productive poiesis. Art thus exemplifies
and capitalises upon the rival circulation emerging from complex bodies and that
were earlier found to challenge the orthodox interpretation of the topos. Art is not an
imitation of phusis nor does it operate upon a unidirectional process of production.
Art exploits the rival circulation of efficient causes, which play an important role in
the telos or shape of what phusis brings forward.

Thus, creative poiesis forms a collective, counter-oriented workflow to
primary, productive poiesis, but it is not its dialectical other nor does it form with it
an irreducible aporia. Creative poiesis is rather supplementary and emerges out of the
primary process insofar as it becomes progressively intensified about ever more
complex bodies. The terms of this reconstituted sense of creation were earlier
clarified with pure mathematics. Creation does not belong to the origin and nor does
it exclusively belong to whatever operates there as the instigator or agent of cause.
Creation is rather a power belonging to the particular. Creation does not collapse
into an original, causal event because the power of original events rather derives
from their singular particularity. And moreover, the demonstration of creative
powers about particulars do not concern the ‘nature’ of their being for art or
technology alike: it is rather something put into affect, that emerges when they go to
work – a power to deviate processes of becoming.

If the problem is not to determine whether poiesis has a singular origin or is a
unidirectional process, it is because deviations do not seem to happen at the origin.
Poiesis does not diversify and diverge of itself – it is forced to deviate by particular
beings. The evidence of a doubled workflow in poiesis is not present at the origin or
in the unchanging element but is a progressive emergence. Creative poiesis is not
‘always already’ there within productive, originary *poiesis*; it is the cumulative force of creative powers exerted by particular beings that works to progressively deviate what determines from the origin.

Finally, if this differentiation between making and creating has remained theoretically obscure, it is because the process of knowledge production fractures the functional nature of the problem. That is to say, the same productions of epistemological specialisations that generate for us such rich catalogues of knowledge about the world and ourselves, also work to fragment the nature of creative workflows. This has profound implications whenever we attempt to apply epistemological sense making to the problem art presents.

4.1.2. The properties of the function – repetition and creative transformation – describe why the primary process is dominated by productive *poiesis*

To create is thus never the same kind of work as to produce. But it is true that in making creative *poiesis* emergent and belonging to the particular, the distinction of production has been weakened, insofar as it distinguishes *poiesis* in general. This is a crucial issue because although the work of art is born from the circulation of creative *poiesis*, no work of art is possible without a profound engagement with productive *poiesis*; the primary mechanism through which all comes into being. Art contests the primary flow, but the work of deviation is always minute compared to the mediation or shepherding of processes of production that must accompany it. As such, the functional re-problematisation of art cannot simply explain how a genuinely creative *poiesis* operates without accounting for productive *poiesis*. It has been argued that *technē* is not excluded from *epistêmē*, but is projected within it. This is both to bring
sensitivity to the abstract structure and to drive the *logistikós* – the series of calculations without which thought is not possible. That is to say, there is also a *praxis* for dealing with production that must be discussed in functional terms.

In the early encounter with the function, its heterogeneous character was emphasised. It was argued that functions are composed of an irreducible and inseparable mixture of properties, *repetition* and *creative transformation*; both properties must be present in order for functions to operate. Repetition is necessary for the process of *iteration*; it drives the computation across an ordinal direction, both animating and ordering the functional dynamic. To this ‘mechanical’ property must be added the ‘dynamic’ property of creative transformation; all of our knowledge of the function appears into being through the series of transformative effects, through which one series becomes transformed into another. These properties are irreducible and inseparably mixed in the function. As such, it is impossible to deal with one of these properties of the function without potentially invoking the other.

As such, it is the privileging of one functional property over the other that differentiates productive and creative *poiesis*. Productive *poiesis* is dominated by repetition. It is conceivable that the most primary of generative flows approaches a kind of pure repetition – iteration or computation of the same particular process where transformation is extremely limited. This dominance of repetition in inaugural, singular particulars would perhaps then find an expression in the laws of conservation of momentum and inertia. That is to say that repetition prolongs in the *absence of a contest* where another particular causes the existing process to deviate into a new or supplementary one (such as the appearance and accretion of mass in the universe is thought to bend and curve the pure parallelism of space-time expansion).
That productive poiesis dominates first by this uncontested reign of repetition is also evident in the emergence of functional techné animating living bodies. The billion years long reign of cyanobacteria, with little demonstrable ontological transformation or change exemplifies the dominance of repetition in productive poiesis. It is only by a mass of simple, particular transformations through the work of many disparate but similar techné that productive poiesis finally deviates into producing different and more complex bodies. Thus, as the particular becomes more complex (that is, as assemblages of many particulars) the work of creative transformation ramifies into a growing tide of counter-oriented workflows, deserving of the distinction of another kind of generative process – creative poiesis.

If repetition in productive poiesis and in the order of functions operates as a kind of default, it is because it must be made to deviate; there is always a particular that affects a transformation or change. That is why creation must be clarified as peculiar to particular beings. As such, the functional mechanism of techné required a detailed elaboration because techné is proposed as the minimal functional configuration within particular bodies sufficient to cause poiesis to deviate into a new workflow. Moreover, it is also why deducing the origin of the primary generative flow of productive poiesis cannot certify the work of deviation about particular beings. Insofar as productive poiesis continues to suggest a singular, inaugural event as that initiating the process of becoming into being, creative poiesis emerges in a supplementary, autopoietic progression toward a hitherto unprecedented ‘end’. And if creative poiesis is not to be found in the origin of production it is because it emergences from the efficient cause generated by particular beings. This is not an emergence ex nihilo nor from an ‘always, already’; it emerges in action when the calculative process goes to work.
4.1.3. Creative poiesis and the intentionality of art in general

The progressive emergence of creative *poiesis* provides an alternative genealogy for thinking about art. Creative *poiesis* addresses why art continues to indicate something quite general, emerging from the broader work of deviation specific to particular bodies. Art is born of creative *poiesis*, which everywhere concerns the *work of deviation*. This work is opposed to production, which in privileging repetition works to reiterate again a given functional operation. Creative *poiesis* is, rather, inseparable from particular beings, because it requires that they intervene in becoming and make new kinds of being possible. Such a scenario is absurd where ontology comprises a general problematic form. But this remains eminently possible where the function remains a third, additional element or *autopoietic* phenomena that belongs to particular beings.

Yet art could not be thought to have such a broad evolutionary precedence. It requires the complex development of a higher order *techné* to exploit this broad path of creative *poiesis* in a new way. Thus, the general sense of art is born of creative *poiesis*, but it is differentiated by a new intentional power for *techné* (at $f_2$ or –jet): it is to *intentionally deviate* processes of production. As such, from this orthodox Aristotelian interpretation a more radical consequence can be drawn; for this general determination of art must be argued to *always* differentiate from processes of production. The work of deviation is never to imitate *phusis* because creative *poiesis* is always a counter-oriented process that works upon it. But this will open a new distinction in human activity that will return to the problem of how art differentiates from craft. For it is the orientation or utility of intentional deviation that distinguishes
between painting a house and painting a canvas, and moreover, why a painted house might indeed comprise a work of art and painting a canvas may not.

Aristotle’s apprehension about the topos remains nevertheless instructive for we know the distinguishing power he draws there from wielding an intentional function. Art is distinguished from phusis most clearly because it deviates telos; the telos of the acorn seed is the tree, but technè intervenes with its own purpose so that the form of the tree is deviated into the bed. It is this special kind of intentionality directed at deviating the ‘end’ – the form of being that appears – that remains the foundation of art’s peculiar power.

Despite this lurch into teleology, intentionality has been re-problematised by the critique of Aristotle’s four causes. It was argued with Simondon, that the telos does not necessitate a general form of the problem, bracketed between an original (or formal) and a final term. Telos may rather be accounted for in the dynamic circulation of material and efficient causes. Where productive poiesis is dominated by repetition, even when repetition becomes ‘pure’ or in-itself, the process of becoming it governs is characteristically strict or rigidly observed – ‘mechanical’ and indifferent, reiterating the same, identical process. We have seen how in the denunciation of an original cause, such an indifferent, mechanical, material causation takes the place of a necessary telos – no longer a formal donation of shape or purpose, but the shaping effect of an identical, indifferent process.

On the other hand, creative poiesis comprises a very different conception of telos: the efficient causation generated by the intentional deviations about particular beings. This kind of ‘purpose’ does not arise from originary conditions, from the nature of the process that brings beings forward. Rather, this telos is the intentionality emergent at –jet (f₂); it is an emergent property of the complex
conjugation of *technē*, which conjoins the function of sense directly to the function of action. As Freud has shown, this intentional power remains overwhelmed by what for ‘highest’ *technē* remains *forces of repetition*. But to follow another workflow becomes possible here, and this includes a very different type of deviating power – to *intend* to deviate the processes of becoming in order to precipitate a new kind of being.

Human differentiation emerges in the *topos* with *technē*, not because it is a rational faculty (or thinking subject) but because it has the power to *intentionally deviate* its environment for its own advantage. If creative *poiesis* very broadly describes deviations of becoming (that identified with Lamarckian evolution), it is because this deviation is *not* expressly intentioned, but a consequence of a particular act. A cyanobacterium, in sensing the sunlight, orients itself to maximise its sugar production to which a rudimentary *praxis* corresponds. This sensitivity is thus coupled to a determinate action and so implies intentionality. We might see here the primordial *potential* for an artistic act insofar as this exerts a transformative effect upon subsequent generations of bodies. But it is sharply differentiated because it is very difficult to think this evolutionary transformation was the intended *end or purpose* of the bacteria’s immanent, intentional activity. It is rather an unintended consequence of the simple cell’s activity that was elsewhere directed.

But the human is defined by a new kind of intentional capacity whose ‘end’ or purpose is to deviate material causes. Art is rather born of a particular kind of

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118 ‘The functional importance of the ego is manifested in the fact that normally control over the approaches to motility devolves upon it. Thus in its relation to the id it is like a man on horseback, who has to hold in check the superior strength of the horse.’ S. Freud, *The Ego and the Id*, pp. 19. In this context, not only is the ‘highest’ *technē* overwhelmed by the repetitious flows of material causes, but also by the efficient causes or exterior deviations of lower and medial *technē*, which will attempt to over-determine consciousness with their own desires and demands.
class of deviations within creative poiesis, where intentionality performs the work of telos by generating an efficient cause. This is to put the intentional functionality ($f_2$ or $-jet$) to work to deviate productive poiesis directly. This is a very special utilisation of techné’s powers because it requires a counter-projection to that bringing subjective formation. Art requires the functional mechanism to project upon the process of becoming, to compute differently the primary flows of production. Art in the general sense is thus the class of intentional acts whose purpose is to intervene in the process of production. As such, it remains that art deviates phusis, but it is no longer an accident – it is the intention to differently shape generative processes, so that something else comes into being.

4.1.4. ‘Art in general’ and disciplinary difference

This determination of ‘art in general’ can be strictly applied. Art, as the intentional deviation of processes of production can be functionally opposed to every workflow of production. If art maintains the enveloping sense in which it indicates all possible disciplines it is because each comes to being through an intentional deviation of a productive workflow. That is to say that all human endeavours remain an ‘art’, insofar as this describes the intentional deviations carried out by highest techné to bring into being very diverse kinds of work.

Nevertheless, these disciplines will thereafter be defined by the processes of production that are subsequently established within them; an emphasis upon immanent experimentation might deviate metaphysics into the emergent field of physics, but physics will become identified by the particular type of knowledge it produces. Once a process of becoming has been deviated to establish a new field or
area of inquiry, it is then regulated into a particular form, which is to say, it is
directed toward a particular end by the repetition of a new process of production.

*Techné* continues to play the critical role, for the intentional power of *techné* governs
whether a repetitive (productive) or transformative (creative) workflow, will be set
into operation. Thus the persistence of the general work of art within each
disciplinary distinction tends to be overlooked, where it will perform those
deviations through which innovation and creative transformation will enervate new
processes of production. Moreover, it will be elsewhere called upon to perform more
decisive deviations, in dividing up an existing discipline into new sub-disciplinary
areas or precipitating the emergence of a new discipline from an existing one. And it
is because each discipline will come to be defined by the new process of production
brought into being that this general work of art will remain largely elided.

What finally characterises the determination of art in general is that although
it is only possible by the deployment of an efficient causal process upon production,
this intentional intervention nevertheless retains a *productive end*; that is, the work of
transformation intends to bring about a new process of production. Moreover, it is
this intention that will continue to qualify the fine division between art and craft –
their exceptional proximity and the difficulty in differentiating one from another.
Both are concerned with art in general, but where art becomes distinguishable in its
contemporary disciplinary sense, they will have diverged by a further intentional
difference: for the *work of art* remains wholly specified by the intention to deviate,
that cannot have a process of production as its end.

If this distinction remains an important issue, it is because this complication
of *techné* in art and craft remains contemporised in the problem of *technology*. The
*technite* deviates *phusis*, but the *telos* – how the intentional affect governs the
efficient cause – is put to work in shaping a new productive process. Techné must vacillate here between precipitating a creative workflow in order to deviate an existing mode of production, but the end remains a re-stabilisation or repetition of what the deviation has performed. And where the discipline and work of art comes into its recognisably contemporary context is where the telos comprising the efficient cause, works to introduce a sustained or progressive deviation into processes of production, so that deviation becomes the end in itself.

It has been argued that poiesis is not a singular, unidirectional workflow, creating or making. Yet this was not determined by examining again the ontological problem of why things come into being so that it was refuted that poiesis describes an identical relation between a producer and all that it produces. Rather, poiesis concerns an independent functional operation, a third participating element in the process of becoming. As such, we have found a mechanism to indicate a difference in the workflow of poiesis, concerning how things come to being; not only a primary, productive poiesis, but another workflow – creative poiesis – that emerges from particular, processual computations.

Moreover, in the previous chapter, we located with processes of interior deviation, a rudimentary techné animate within primordial life, suggesting that creative poiesis was emergent in early evolutionary history. If there is a particular advantage to this doubled workflow it is because it describes a mechanism where particular differences affect the primary flow, thus presenting an alternative to determining once and for all why particular forms come into being. This is to argue that a genuinely creative power belongs to particular beings, an emergent power that is felt in its capacity to affect. The interplay between repetition and deviation, between production and creative work indicates that sense and activity and their
correlated agency, are not ontological problems, but functional operations pertaining to productive workflows. They are not aberrant, metaphysical properties, whose very appearance into being proves exceedingly difficult to assign, but functional operators emerging from generative processes: this is another evolutionary process of efficient causation.

Most importantly, the terms of a creative poiesis pertaining to particular beings opens a vector of return to the Aristotelian topos sufficient to re-problematise art in its necessary complexity. That creative poiesis locates intentional pressures exerted upon the processes bringing forth particular beings, radicalises the deviations belonging to technē: these are no longer a class of transformations subordinate to the primary generative flows, but deviations that are necessary to the general work of poiesis in determining how difference comes into being.

4.2. The disciplinary structure of the field of art

4.2.1. The work of art cannot be reduced to a product or mode of production

Art in its broadest sense is born of creative poiesis, but it is no longer any deviation whatsoever. In the previous chapter, complex assemblages of many technē were discussed and which supported the development of highly complex bodies in parallel and hierarchical arrangements. This progression was followed to the emergence of a ‘highest’ technē that in projecting itself from the body became reoriented to the field of abstract relations, making subjective formation possible. This projection into the ideal dimension left technē free to take abstract relations as its series of inputs, upon
which it could directly operate.

If art is born when particular technē gain an intentional power to deviate the process of becoming into new modes of production, then the discipline of art begins with a further specification of intentional functionality: this is to continue to orient away from a productive outcome in order to introduce deviation into the process of becoming as the ‘end’ of the work. The discipline of art is specified by this praxis, which no longer intends to produce a new mode of productive poiesis, but works to establish a deviation that escapes resolution at all. This is the work of computing a particular functional transformation upon a productive workflow so that it continuously diverges.

Yet, despite this idiosyncratic distinction, the discipline of art is continually reduced to the series of effects its work produces. In the most obvious case, this concerns the conflation about the very term ‘the work of art’, as though it interchangeably signifies artistic praxis and what this praxis produces (be it material and physical objects, artefacts, texts, scores, performances, utterances, images, installations, concepts, and so on). This becomes further confused in art’s contemporary context, because this conflation between praxis and product is then abstracted into productions of meaning and sense, as the new determination for what signifies its ‘work’.

Yet arguably, these difficulties do not belong to art but are rather produced by other epistemological disciplines attempting to make sense of its work. Nietzsche had forewarned us of these inevitable difficulties when he told us that knowledge and creation, truth and art, were opposed to one another – that is, the apprehension of a fundamental discordance between the problem art presents and the production of epistemological sense-making. Where poiesis concerns two opposing workflows
between production (*Apolline*) and creation (*Dionysiac*), fundamentally different processes operate with regard to the work of art as opposed to the work of knowledge production.

It has been discussed in previous chapters how the process of abstraction already paves the way for this opposition in the kind of problems proposed between abstract relations and functional processes. But this is further complicated for contemporary art, which takes place within a model of trans-disciplinary organisation predicated upon the problem of productive workflows and where disciplines are defined by the various kinds of sense and meaning they produce. This works additionally to elide the distinctive activity of art, which is not assembled about production, but rather its inverse workflow of creation.

### 4.2.2. Art and disciplinary subjects

It is illuminating to compare the semiotic and structuralist accounting of epistemological distinctions with the discipline of art. The privileging of creative *poiesis* gives the discipline of art a necessarily different kind of structure. Unlike those disciplines (philosophy, theory or even science) with which it is often compared, the work of art is not oriented toward a production of sense or meaning in which its disparate activities are of necessity *consensualised*. That is, art lacks a ‘disciplinary subject’ because it is not organised about a consensus or collective enunciation. Moreover, because ‘art in general’ participates in the emergence of disciplines and the processes through which they are transformed, this indicates that
a certain ‘anti’ or ‘counter’ disciplinary affect is peculiar to art. This is predicated upon the fact that a circulation between creative and productive poiesis precedes any new kind of coming into being, and the emergence of disciplinary distinctions is no exception.

The emergence and structure of epistemological disciplines was earlier anticipated with Lacan’s unfolding of the cogito. In the analysis of the mirror stage, Lacan locates a speaking subject (subject of enunciation) as the necessary precedence for a thinking subject’s emergence into the Symbolic; this structurally corresponds to why each discipline requires a disciplinary subject to produce its distinctive body of knowledge.

Disciplinary subjects illuminate for us something of great importance about subjects in general, that we approached in Chapter Two. Techné are not simply

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119 This becomes clearly manifest from modernist art praxes onwards, because various epistemological constructs become the materials or inputs for the work; the history of aesthetics and the formal intra-disciplinary distinctions (literature, painting, music and so on) generally assumed to comprise the discipline of art. It is certainly the case that modernist praxis begins by working upon these aesthetic and formal productions but if this parallels the development in pure mathematics, the discipline of art is breaking from the ‘extra-artistic’ constraints of the model, which direct it toward the task of representation and the realisation of the ‘beautiful’. That is to say, it is the recognition of its own task of creative transformation that liberates it from the allotted task of production, setting it to work upon the conventional structures (form and aesthetics) in which it was constrained. Yet this project does not culminate in the series of works that mark the purported ‘crisis’ or ‘end’ of art; where music becomes silent (John Cage’s 4’33”), words inexpressive (Samuel Beckett’s Unnameable), or in the realisation of purely non-representative images (Kazimir Malevich’s Black Square or Jasper Johns’ White on White). This is rather when creative poiesis is set to intentionally work upon the productive processes that constrain it, and provide the functional impetus for why art has always concerned an anti-disciplinary tendency. For this working upon formal and aesthetic productions was always the preliminary for the anti-disciplinary work upon ‘art’ itself; and if this was not already demonstrated by Dada, it would find a more overt expression with Fluxus; ‘PURGE the world of dead art, imitation, artificial art…PROMOTE A REVOLUTIONARY FLOOD AND TIDE IN ART, Promote living art, anti-art, promote NON ART REALITY to be fully grasped by all peoples, not only critics, dilettantes and professionals,’ G. Maciunas, Fluxus Manifesto 1. In Fluxus, the very ‘anti-art’ trajectory is to fully embrace what the work of art pursues in its ‘purist’ intentional activation; it is to be opposed to all of production; the reduction of the work to the object and aesthetics (‘Fluxus is definitely against art-objects’, ‘Fluxus objectives are social (not aesthetic)’); all the epistemological accretions of knowledge (‘all institutions’, ‘ANTI-PROFESSIONALISM’); the fixation of subjective formation (‘not the artist’s personality or ego’ or ‘ANTI-INDIVIDUALISM’); and everything formal, representational and imitative in art which is to say to radically efface everything that opposes life. G. Maciunas, Fluxus Codex, pp. 37.
proto-subjective individuations nor are they resolved into subjects, they are rather what animates subjective formations and makes them possible. Techné is the functional operation which brings sense and activity to subjects and which inhabits them with agency. Thus, in order for disciplinary subjects to generate meaning (such that the Structuralist analysis indicates for us), this implies that techné must project itself out of its individual subjective formation to inhabit the disciplinary subject, in order to participate or produce for itself the meaning specific to the discipline. This will be to vacate one’s own particular subjective formation in order to animate another – to change the place from which one senses and speaks, in order to produce and constitute another kind of meaning. It is the necessity for techné to project itself in this way that illustrates why disciplinary subjects are some sort of collective, consensual or ‘public’ form.

Of course, that disciplines are organised about the perspective of a disciplinary subject, does not imply that epistemological disciplines have an agency of their own. It rather highlights the alterity between agency and subjective formation, for therein lies the difference between individual and disciplinary subjects. Where individual subjective formations are animated by a single and unique agent (that is one particular, ‘highest’ techné), disciplinary subjects are consensual or ‘public’ formations, constructed by the work of many different ‘highest’ techné.¹²⁰

As such, Structuralist sense production is essentially perspectival; in a field of abstract signs, sense and meaning are local productions generated when a sensitive agent takes up a particular perspective within it. This appears to give to ‘highest’

¹²⁰ That is to say, Aristotle as a thinking subject was animated by the unique ‘highest’ techné that emerged from his living body, but Aristotelianism as a disciplinary subject, is a philosophical perspective that may be inhabited by many different thinking subjects.
techné a certain free mobility to animate various perspectives across the ‘empty’ or purely abstract semiotic or signifying regime. But what now mitigates this freedom is the limit encountered with Barthes and Derrida, because at the level of the text (that is, the abstract or semiotic structure) poiesis is re-characterised as a singularly resolute production; once the sensitive agent has been projected into the abstract structure, there is thought to be no way of getting out of it. That is to say that sense, meaning and the very constitution of being are all thought to be produced by the structure itself, and cannot be exported out by the agent projected there.¹²¹

But the discipline of art cannot pertain to this structure first of all because it does not intend to produce sense and meaning. It begins with a movement to project techné out of the abstract or semiotic structures. That is why artists continually tell us the condition for the work of art always entails some kind of depersonalisation or a loss of self-conscious subjectivity; this is what Nietzsche identified in the figure of Dionysus.

But if this remains distinct from aphanisis and other effects of subjective degradation, it is because the work of art begins with an intentional act to traverse the supplementary workflow of creative poiesis. In the discipline of art, one looks in vain for a consensual discourse or production of sense making across its practitioners, that works to organise its processes of production. Art thrives on diversifying its ideal perspectives, in the intentional dissonance between its sensitive

¹²¹ It is unclear whether this sense of Derrida’s famous, ‘there is no outside of the text’, establishes itself on Lacan’s arguably more nuanced position. For Lacan, it is certainly the case that the sensitive agent will under certain conditions (such as trauma) find themselves projected out, and again overwhelmed in the experience of the Real (indeed, that this Lacanian mechanism indicates a possible approach to the problem of art, is explored in Hal Foster’s admirable, The Return to the Real). But this is at odds with the current line of argument, in two immediately obvious ways. First, because techné concerns the intelligibility about functions, the entire edifice of knowledge is engaged in order to gain new intelligence about functions to be exported back into praxis. And secondly, the traumatic encounter in which the subject falls out of the Symbolic is consequential, and the work of art is only possible with an intentional ejection from the abstract, semiotic or Symbolic structure.
agents. In contrast, disciplinary subject’s perform synthetic unifications and build
toward an interior resemblance in which ideas and theoretical constructs are
progressively rationalised, together. This is to overcome perspectival, linguistic,
terminological, personal and sensible differences into a clear, collective enunciation;
it is to mitigate difference through the structure of representative ideas.\footnote{Deleuze is decisive on the consequences of this for difference; ‘The ‘I think’ is the most general principle of representation - in other words, the source of these elements and of the unity of all these faculties: I conceive, I judge, I imagine, I remember and I perceive - as though these were the four branches of the Cogito. On precisely these branches, difference is crucified. They form quadripartite fetters under which only that which is identical, similar, analogous or opposed can be considered different: difference becomes an object of representation always in relation to a conceived identity, a judged analogy, an imagined opposition or a perceived similitude. Under these four coincident figures, difference acquires a sufficient reason in the form of a principium comparationis.’ \textit{Difference and Repetition}, pp. 138.}

But nothing in this process reflects how the work of art is \textit{created}. The work
of art proceeds through a dispersing and diversification of possible perspectives. It
amplifies the dissonances between methodological \textit{praxes} in order to disrupt the
consensual repertoire of formal and aesthetic unities. This is not to argue that the
work of art can do without a sustained engagement with material and methodological
\textit{processes of production}. As such, art makes \textit{use} of disciplinary subjects, in particular
those pertaining to its formal distinctions and the mastery of craft specific to them;
the mastery of its instruments (the violin or camera) through which it masters a
particular process of production (the technical construction of music or images).

But the \textit{discipline} of art is not organised around a disciplinary subject. The
work of art operates counter to ideal productions, rather working to deviate them
back toward processes of becoming. What constitutes the work of art cannot be
‘organised’ around a consensual perspective, because there can never be a process of
production adequate to creation; it is not possible to \textit{reproduce}, represent or redeploy
the function of ‘creative deviation’ as a kind of pedagogy. As such, art cannot be
understood to exhaust or resolve itself in the appearance of any kind of subject (be it disciplinary or individual), but rather works to exploit subjective formation to generate a new suite of affective powers.

4.2.3. Techné does not inhabit the abstract dimension to resolve sensible productions, but because it is a laboratory for creating functions

The problem of art is not predicated upon establishing a regulated procedure for delivering immanent experiences into abstract relations in order to model them. Art is a praxis, that intends to return the intelligence it acquires about abstract relations to generate new affective powers. This is not to dissolve the irreducible division between the world of living bodies and the abstract structure in which sense and meaning are produced. But it is to refute that the flow of material causation, becoming through cells and organs and culminating in a ‘higher’ self-conscious entity, exhausts or resolves poiesis; it is rather to potentiate a rival efficient causation in the emergence of the intentional activity of ‘highest’ techné.

For art, the important distinction does not lie between the body and the mind, between embodied sense and thinking subjects, because techné computes both realities. Art is rather re-problematised by the ordinal limitation of techné. This is because techné can only process across one direction of poiesis or the other, either setting about the task of production or in counter-orienting its functional mechanism, working toward a creative transformation.

It is in this regard that the richly productive labour with which subjects are engaged is not simply constrained within the structure where meaning is produced and conserved, and transmitted between subjects. Techné drives logistikós in which
the abstractions of thinking subjects are generated, but this calculative faculty does not belong to the semiotic structure – it is carried there by the functional operations and intelligence *techné* gathers in living bodies. Thus, the question is not whether *techné* becomes adequate to *epistêmê* where it produces sense and meaning, but what intelligence *techné* gathers there about *functional operations*. For what *techné* acquires in the emergence of the abstract ideal, *is a powerful laboratory for experimenting with and generating new functional operations*. The world of ideas greatly potentiates *techné*’s intentional powers because what abstraction makes possible is the *decoupling of functions from their processes of production*, which in the living body are so oriented as to compute material causes. This is the well observed liberation abstraction affords from spatio-temporal dimensions that opens vast new possibilities for *techné*; ‘the mind of the mature poet differs from that of the immature one not precisely in any valuation of “personality,” not being necessarily more interesting, or having “more to say,” but rather by being a more finely perfected medium in which special, or very varied, feelings are at liberty to enter into new combinations.’

This issue was encountered earlier with Brouwer, in which the abstract appearance of the function was found to have a precedence in dynamic, *natural* processes. Functional computation does not simply ‘appear’ with thinking subjects. Rather, the re-oriented projection of ‘highest’ *techné* within *epistêmê* carries with it the intelligence about ‘natural’ functional operations it has already acquired through its sensitivity of the living body. And although representation strictly identifies the ability to correlate abstract relations with these natural functions, this does not resolve the functional work carried out by ‘highest’ *techné*, because it continues to

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perform there the \textit{calculation} of these abstract elements into \textit{new kinds of functional operations}. Moreover, Lacan never ceased to remind us of the significance of this functional creativity for immanent agents:

Let me illustrate where logarithms arose. In one case the first relation is addition. Addition is nevertheless intuitive. There are some things here, some things there, you put them together, and you get a new collection. Multiplying loaves is not the same as collecting loaves. It is a matter of applying one of these relations to the other. You invent the logarithm. It starts to run wild in the world, on the basis of little rules that seem to be insignificant. But do not think that the fact that they exist leaves you, any of you who are here, in the same state as before they appeared. Their presence is all that matters.\textsuperscript{124}

In crossing into the world of ideas, \textit{techné} makes thinking subjects and the world of ideas possible. But this is far from an end in itself. For where productive \textit{poiesis} concerns the repetition and becoming of existing functions into being, then creative \textit{poiesis} works to deviate processes of becoming via \textit{new functional operations}. \textit{Epistêmê} remains dominated by the prolongation and repetition of functional operations; some acquired by \textit{techné} in the living body and many others generated there by efficient causes that have been stabilised into new processes of production (such as linguistic, cultural, moral and \textit{aesthetic} norms). It is in the projection of \textit{techné} within \textit{epistêmê}, that the detachment of functions from processes of production makes these new configurations possible, that could never be composed together in their natural, material ensembles. That is to say, \textit{techné} achieves a certain liberation from the \textit{ordinal} limits that restrict it in the living body, where the orientation of its sensitive functionality remains constrained to the material causes producing bodies from their interior.\textsuperscript{125}

It is this mixing of functional operations the abstract affords that gave to

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\textsuperscript{124} J. Lacan, \textit{The Other Side of Psycho-Analysis}, pp. 188.
\textsuperscript{125} In this regard a consideration of the Kantian \textit{a priori} might seem inevitable for a more thorough accounting of the functional problem, particularly in elaborating the emergence of calculation from living bodies and its overcoming of ordinal limits as the distinction of abstract thought.
\end{flushright}
mathematics its prodigiously creative *praxis*. But for art, this concerns not only the
creation of new abstract functions, but also the opportunity to transform them into
new intentional, *affective* powers \( f_2, -jet \). Pure mathematics pursues creation in a
complete renunciation of material causes, but the work of art remains specified by
the intention to confront them.

All art in general begins with an intentional act but the discipline of art is not
any intention whatsoever. It is additionally not enough to return the creation of
functions upon the material world, for this would not distinguish art from those
scientific disciplines and technologies that put the mathematical function to work to
affect a new productive end (to make atoms smash together, or to produce a new
metallic alloy). Rather, the work of art remains uniquely specified by the intention to
deviate *phusis*, but it is longer for a material or productive end. It is the intention to
deviate as the ‘end’ of the work.

### 4.2.4 Art and language

It would be absurd to deny that the artist and the work of art are not signifiers in the
definition structuralist thought provides for us. But that does not imply their
respective presence within the signifying regime produces the work of art in the
prescriptive manner in which all sensible productions are there reduced. For even
though the literary utterance or mark emits through the signifying order its missives
or expressions, the work of art does not appear in the regime, but merely resounds a
stubborn silence. Thus while *technē* animates the appearance of a signifier, it does
not at all describe to us what brings the art, nor does it indicate the particulars of
creative *poiesis*.
If the work of art does not draw out truths, nor else does it combine together signs in order to produce sense: art works to *saturate the sign* through an inward forcing, filling it up with intentional affects; ‘The idea has come to me that what I would like to do now is to saturate every atom.’ Woolf’s methodology is not an example of the signifying regress but a presentation of its counter-operation. This is to efface the ‘horizontal’ movement of sense production in order to confront the primary generative forces, which determine thinking and material bodies from their *interior*. In this new praxis of writing, consciousness is not the stream that follows and reveals the contours of the earth; it is a damming of this flow to confront the generative forces in their *depth*, where they remain profoundly mixed together. As such, the work of art has the *effect* of freezing the horizontal flow where techné is tasked to calculate the production of sensible relations. And if Woolf’s novels defy or unsettle the orthodox transmission of meaning, it is because the work intensively pursues creative *poiesis* in this confrontation with *depth*.

This work cannot be represented; it can only be traversed. Beckett’s theory of non-relation exemplifies this work of creative *poiesis*, where the artist is ‘the first to submit wholly to the incoercible absence of relation’: the work is to oppose the ‘estheticised automatism’ of reconstituting a workflow of sensible production.

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126 ‘The idea has come to me that what I would like to do now is to saturate every atom. I mean to eliminate all waste, deadness, superfluity: to give the moment whole; whatever it includes.’ *The Diary of Virginia Woolf, Vol. 1-5*. Modern Fiction C.E. pp. 109. Anthony Uhlmann discusses very clearly how this creative workflow implies a counter-directed ‘infolded’ workflow, which precedes the latter productive effects in which this labour generates different kinds of meaning. ‘In writing one seeks to recapture such a moment or to approximate the intense sensations it produces by other means. Such a moment, however, because it is folded in, might in turn be unfolded, teased out, either in interpretation, or in the stories which surround that moment, leading up to and away from it.’ *Thinking in Literature*, pp. 113.

127 Indeed, if we have lost faith in the unidirectional structural *poiesis*, it is because the regress does not survive Brouwer’s scepticism about infinite calculation. It is only in the pursuit of the trace that Derrida demonstrates how one sign can be found infolded in another; without the dynamic work of *techné* there is no ‘autonomic’ movement from one sign to another.

Non-relation goes to work *upon* the gestalt ordering the semiotic system (signifier/distribution of signs), disrupting, breaking or ‘failing’ the transmission between signs, concepts and perspectives through which knowledge and meaning are produced. But this is not at all to represent the problem of the emptiness of signs, nor else, the kind of polysemy or plurality of surface effects, generated by the endless slippage of the signifier. What is arrested in the Beckettian formulation is the mechanism through which the slippage may operate at all: that is, to seize the production of sense in its tracks, to freeze out the regress and to exclude the production of meaning altogether.

Yet, the power of this proposition is not to negate sensible expression with the revelation of its own exhausted machinations. Signification is exhausted only as a secondary consequence, where the computation of *techné* is oriented away from the task of producing meaning. The freezing or collapse of meaning derives from *techné*’s ordinal limit; its incapacity to perform productive and creative workflows simultaneously. Thus the power of Beckett’s proposition is to show the necessary conditions through which the work of art can be performed. As *techné* prepares to orient itself away from abstraction and signification, the work of art begins when *techné*’s sensitive functionality ($f_1$) works upon various epistemological productions: ideas and models, language or semiotic sequences, and so on. In the case of modernism and its antecedents, this may additionally operate by going to work upon a disciplinary or individual subjective form, in which various epistemological constructions have already been composed. In this mode of counter orientation, *techné* directs itself towards the *interior*; the gaps, holes, *coupures*, through which, in
becoming again forces, they may contest again the foment of phusis. The ‘insuperable indigence’, the extreme exhaustion of the machinery for making sense does not constitute a nihilistic resignation; the failure to calculate productions of sense indicates that technē has turned toward the task of creative transformation. Represenational relations do not perform the work of art, but Beckett deploys them to emphasise where creative praxis has gone to work: there is a subtraction of movements across the surface; a freezing and reduction of bodies (in the earth, or heads, to mouths); and moreover, a freezing of expression more generally. This is not to carry out creative work in order to resolve for the reader a new productive poiesis, which would imply the transmission of a particular sense or meaning between artist and viewer; it is to solicit the traversal of creative poiesis within the reader (in another technē) to carry out their own deviations upon production as the ‘end’ of the work. That is what characterising the work of art as Dionysiac implies; it is to set to work across efficient causation the powers liberated from resolving into being, through which phusis, and thus all else, will be otherwise transformed.

If this leads us to the presence of a signifier that does not speak, it is because to speak is only one face of a certain vacillation. ‘If the poem is to be pure, the poet’s voice must be stilled’. Technē turns from the task of enunciation, the production of signification engaged in making sense. The ordinal limit of technē – that it may only admit one workflow or another – necessitates that it must orient away from sense

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129 A. Uhlmann convincingly argues that strategies of artistic praxis have never been simply explicable by philosophical sense making, but rather comprise a genuinely rival work-flow, another kind of activity for thought; ‘a kind of linking or connection that proceeds across gaps, urging flashes of insight to emerge, to speak from ourselves to the mute tableau, as a lightening flash leaps from the sky to the ground, or a signal across a synapse.’ Thinking in Literature. pp. 12.


making in order to create. What appears as a signifier that does not speak, is the turning away of techné, its becoming dispersed and disappearing into the depths.

There are two distinct perspectives here that must be clarified. From the surface of sense, the horizontal movement in which sense is produced closes down and the subject senses its own fading. But this is only symptomatic of the Dionysiac quality of the creative workflow, where the return to the underworld is experienced as a tearing apart of the body. If this is not simply metaphorical, it is because the subject’s ‘body’ is the manifest form of its self-consciousness; a sensitive body constructed from the mise en abyme of techné’s own recursive and sensitive computations. As such, the turning away of techné from its fixation within epistêmê is experienced as the breaking up and dissolution of this ‘self’-sensitive nexus. Yet what the subject experiences in its dissolution, passing into these gaps as a negative or void of sense, is for ‘highest’ techné a repurposing of its computational faculty. It is only because techné has ceased to calculate within the semiotic regime that the subjective form dissolves.

In this counter-oriented projection into depth, techné encounters again the processes of material causation forcing through the interior of bodies, but it now intervenes upon them as an intentional force. And if this experience is everywhere elided, it is because the conditions of this encounter are first the loss of all those sensitive calculations, where techné makes sense of (or rather, computes the awareness of) its own functional processing. That is to say that techné cannot return to enact intentional powers through living bodies and simultaneously remain the subjective consciousness assembling this activity into meaningful relations. This is consequent of the computational limit, in which it can process either a productive or creative workflow but never both simultaneously.
Thus, *techné* cannot ‘export’ the particulars of subjective self-consciousness or the productions of meaning specific to them as it projects out of the abstract strata. What it carries along and what potentiates the emergence of unprecedented affective powers is rather *the new functional operations it has acquired in epistêmê*, which it intends to put to work upon productive processes. These powers will be exercised in the generation of an *efficient causation*, a ‘shape’ that deviates, by setting these new functional operations to work upon processes of production.

Thus, *techné* does not return to encounter *phusis* with the determination or resolve of the idea: it acts upon *phusis*, with all its assembled intelligibility about the nature of functions. This no longer concerns production at all but rather the activation of intentional forces.

4.3. *Poiesis* II: Creative and productive *poiesis* in the work of art

4.3.1. The work of art is born of creative *poiesis*, but this is a supplementary workflow, irreducible to and inseparable from productive *poiesis*

It has been argued the work of art is defined by the specialised attention to creative *poiesis*: an intentional force proceeding from particular beings whose task is to introduce a deviation into *phusis* in its becoming. But this is never to confront the ‘origin’ producing a flow of primary cause, because it is the *contest of forces* that determine what kind of being is brought forward. This is the corrective forwarded to Aristotle: *phusis* has been re-problematised as a recursive circulation between material and efficient causes, where the origin only dominates insofar as its force...
persists. It is not a general form of the problem in which to deduce an inaugural determinant but a complex functional problem in which the origin is a singular particularity amongst many; ‘The creation of the world did not take place once and for all time, but takes place every day.’ \(^{132}\)

Functions are indifferent to origins. Because they do not inhere within a domain from which their nature is derived, the origin is simply another series upon which to work. It is the function and its predilection for the particular that works to contest the power of the origin. That is how the function has led to a revitalisation of creation, no longer conflated into the origin, but that which contests it at the particular. In this sense, it doesn’t matter if origins are universal, even absolutely so; their power progressively diminishes against the immanent emergence of creative transformations, which everywhere acts upon and deviates them. Thus, the point has never been to determine how ‘original’ poiesis operates as a singular, unidirectional workflow: deviation is decided at the particular so that poiesis becomes divided into counter-oriented workflows.

Moreover, when the power of the origin is restored to its evental nature (that is, as a particularly singular event), phusis itself becomes conceivable as a contest of particulars. For a functional re-problematisation, the key issue was never to overthrow transcendent donators, whatever Gods or universal forces were believed to determine our nature; it was always to enervate about the particular adequate powers of deviation thereby restoring to generative processes the dynamic properties of the function.

In this turning about the particular, techné provides for us the logic of how poiesis is divided into genuinely separate workflows. ‘To create’ is to direct a

counter-oriented force against production or ‘to make’; and because phusis is the general sway of the contest of particulars, to create is always the attempt to affect the order or the ‘shape’ of what comes into being. And let it be reiterated that it has always been the task of techné – its intelligence about the function coupled to its capacity to set functions into operation – that carries out this task of deviation.

As such, it is always problematic to invoke the ‘origin’ of the work of art, where a unidirectional poiesis collocates it with production, so that all working moves together from non-being to being. The work of art begins by seizing what poiesis has rather already produced, because it actually works against this inaugural flow or origin. The work of art born from creative poiesis remains distinct from a making of materials, ideals, concepts or bodies; it is to work upon the material or the concept, a structure or a body, in such a way as to create there what has no prior being. Art is thus an irreducibly creative labour, but it is radically complicit, engaged with and inseparable from the processes of production, the productive poiesis, upon which it goes to work. Thus, artistic praxis concerns the counter-posing of creative and productive work-flows: through creative poiesis, intentional forces deviate into phusis to precipitate new beings; through productive poiesis, a mastery of production presides over the bringing of new beings into appearance.

4.3.2. Productive poiesis concerns the mastery of repetition

We have been told that poiesis is a unidirectional workflow, creating or making together. But it has rather been argued that art could not be possible without a doubled workflow, a phusis of productive and creative poiesis. In order to apprehend
the work of art, we must therefore understand how it remains separate from the processes of production, which must be mastered across a very different workflow.

Heidegger clarifies a great deal about how art utilises processes of production when he reminds us the artist is also a technite. The craftsperson (technite) works to master production, because technical mastery works upon the mixture of properties in the function (the function qua function), privileging repetition over transformation. That is why the differentiation in the workflow, between productive and creative poiesis remains intimately about the intentional activity of techné (at $f_2$ or –jet); it is intentionality that manipulates the function into a process of production in which repetition dominates, or else into a process of creation that deviates into production and transforms it.

In productive poiesis, techné has the intentional goal (the efficient cause) of mastering repetition. The mastery of craft not only governs the turning of the lathe but also presides over the bowing of the cello, the mixing of a turntable and the programming of the interface. This is difficult and delicate work, because it requires the extreme sensitivity of techné to be attuned to warding off the risk, omnipresent whenever the repetitious function is put to work; that is, it must mitigate the introduction of aberrant transformations or unintentional deviations, leading to undesirable variations of production. The exactitude of the work, of the dealing with the mixed properties of the function, provides for us another insight into the extreme proximity between the artist and the craftsperson, and why they are almost always, in

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133 M. Heidegger, *The Origin of the Work of Art*, pp. 56. However, Heidegger arguably deploys a very sophisticated version of a general form of problem, so that art is deduced to exemplify the same essential process in which all knowledge is produced. Thus, key differences with Heidegger in the clarification of poiesis (as unveiling of truth) and the origin of the work of art (as exemplifying this process of ontological unveiling) would need to be elaborated.
practise, a mixture of both. But they are governed by fundamentally different intentions, and the mastery of one does not at all evidence a mastery of the other.

The mastery of the craftsperson flows across productive poiesis, for its end concerns bringing something into being. Craft remains an art in the general sense, in the terms most strongly identified by Aristotle, because it is through a deviation in the workflow – through technē’s intervention upon phusis – that craft brings what it does into being. But in the circulation of workflows, in which productive and creative poiesis work upon one another in complex ways, craft is that which intends that a particular deviation becomes stabilised into the flow of repetitious production. Thus, the mastery of production concerns in our antiquity, the progressive mastery over the material: the minerals and elements of the earth, clay and stone, the degree of hardness and grain of wood. But it has always been inseparable from technology, so it has always concerned the development of new deviations into processes of production. Thus it also governs those new properties creatively wrought from the elements of the earth – it works toward the strengthening and flexibility of steel, the rigidity of concrete, the purification of various products from fossil fuels.

But, as we have already argued, such a mastery of the material of the earth and of other bodies is only possible because ‘highest’ technē is predicated upon the technicality and labour already at work in complex bodies. Thus, the mastery of productive poiesis makes new demands on what kind of work its own body can perform. That is to say that the mastery of production governs those recursive deviations, in which ‘highest’ technē transfers new functional operations into the medial technē of the organs. For the hand does not prepossess the requisite precision and control to produce an even curvature in wood or ceramic. It is this progressive mastery of production that art history traces between prehistoric cave art and
Renaissance portraiture, even though it properly remains distinct from the artistic value or the work of art.

In our own period, this mastery of production has extended from its governance over bodies to *productive machines* and other sophisticated technical apparatus. However, in every case *techné* is called upon to perform the same kind of work – to manipulate the properties of the function in processing what is becoming and to stabilise deviations through a mastery of repetition. This remains the case for the simple tool (the brush or the hammer) as it does the highly sophisticated machine (a laser die-cutter or a super-computer).

And of course, this progressive mastery of production could not have been possible were a commensurate mastery of production not carried out in the *abstract-ideal*, where the projection of *techné* carries out the same functional operations in working upon language and semiotic systems and producing epistemological models. The thinking subject is a prodigious *technite*, and the foundations of the *logos* – of the clear and distinct *production* of rational ideas – typify the labour where *techné* is set to the task of stabilising repetition and warding off unintentional deviations in the process of production. This labour is most clearly encapsulated by how preoccupied epistemological sense making is with the mitigation of *error*. If this recalls Nietzsche’s opposition between knowledge and creation it is because errors of all kinds belong to *creative poiesis*; whether in material or abstract productions, *unintentional deviations* are deleterious to processes of production, introducing inconsistencies by deviating the smoothness or consistency of fabrication. The consensual or collective nature of disciplinary subjects is critical to this task, because nothing introduces dissonance and divergence so much as the differences between individual subjects and the paucity of their sensitive apprehensions over a collation...
of sense between them. The principle of objectivity thereby attempts to rectify the
parallax error of individual subjective differences through a consensual perspective
shared amongst observers. That is why in the highly epistemological disciplines
(science, philosophy, mathematics and logic) extensive work is devoted to the
analysis of logical fallacies, which everywhere threaten to distort or unravel the
delicate unities of theoretical models.

4.3.3. Artistic praxis requires the introduction of creative poiesis into processes of
production

Of course, the requirement for a mastery of production is no less heightened for the
discipline of art. The artist always works against the risk that unintentional deviations
will collapse the work of sustaining a progressive deviation upon the processes of
material or primary production. The difficulty is never in mobilising the power of
creative poiesis, for there is nothing easier than setting into action an uncontrollable
flow of creative transformation. And when we talk of ‘bad art’ this is generally to
what we refer: there is too much deviation relative to the productive poiesis
employed, resulting in a work with an insufficient circulation of forces. Thus, artistic
praxis reminds us of something about production that is not necessarily obvious from
the perspective of intending productive repetition; repetition intensifies whatever
'shapes' the circulation of forces. Everywhere ‘free’ or unrestrained creative
transformation quickly exhausts the forces built up through repetition; disease
introduces free, runaway transformations of the productive orders powering the
body, the free transformation of the doxa destroys the careful production of reason. If
productive poiesis requires all the strenuous deployment of techne’s intentional
resources, then the work of art must be up to the reciprocal task of a carefully intended, controlled and targeted deviation of creative workflow. This is of the upmost importance for the work of art; for its work to be successful, techné must master productive and creative poiesis, so that deviation is brought to work upon a process of production in order that a progressive, sustained transformation is affected.

Let us consider in a functional light, the utility of technical precision or productive mastery, for the work of artistic praxis. The establishment of the intensive circulation of forces begins with repetition. A mastery of production proceeds through an exploitation of the repetitious function dominant in production. It has been argued that complex bodies must be thought to be composed of many techné, organised in parallel and hierarchical configurations. This allows us to understand something very important about the observation of automaticity clarified earlier by Freud; automaticity does not imply that lower functional strata are mechanical, as though they are devoid of sense and intentional activity. It rather indicates they are also individuated entities, so that ‘automaticity’ describes the intentional force or workflow carried out by different kinds of techné. What is rather apprehended in this perception of a machinic indifference is the limitation of those lower techné to intelligibilise the more complex organisational nature of ‘highest’ techné. Lower techné are perfectly capable of sensing the intentional forces higher techné direct upon them, but they may only process this affectation within the powers of sense and action belonging to them. That is to say, that their reactive nature does not indicate a lack of intelligence or agency, but the inability to apprehend their more complex emergent properties or formations. Thus while a lower techné could not be capable of responding to the complexity of self-consciousness that emerges in highest techné,
the computational basis of the agency they share ensures that transmissions of functional operations may pass between them. That is to say, where those dynamic transformations or ‘natural’ calculations performed by living organisms are carried over into the basis of logistikós (the calculations of thought), so more complex functional operations can be transmitted and set to work in lower techné, even though they lack the capability of creating these functions or comprehending the end to which they are intended.

Thus, the mastery of production, for art or craft alike, exploits the medial techné that emerge in more complex assemblages of the living body – namely, those corresponding to the organs. In the hierarchy of techné discussed in Chapter Three, such a medial level techné was posited, between the level of the cell and the ‘highest’ techné precipitating subjects and self-consciousness (these three strata are illustrated earlier in figure 10). It is the techné of the organs (the eye, the ear, the stomach and the skin) upon which artistic praxis must first go to work; ‘the eyes are the hammers, the soul is the piano with many strings. The artist is the hand which plays, touching one key or another, to cause vibrations in the soul.’ Additionally, although we are less accustomed to thinking in this way, there is a medial techné for the ‘organ’ of the hand and the foot (and so on) that must also be mastered.

Artistic praxis requires first the disciplining of these medial, organisational techné, through the enhanced functional sensitivity of ‘highest’ techné. One learns to draw or write, or to strum a guitar by bringing the sensitivity of highest techné upon the operable movements of the eye and the hand. Irrespective of the vagaries of natural talent, one must learn to draw or play an instrument and this cannot be done through a transference of signifiers and meaning, alone. This was earlier discussed

134 W. Kandinsky. Concerning the Spiritual in Art. p. 32.
with Aristotelian *mimesis* and the pedagogy of *praxis*. For quite separately from the transmission of communication and signs, *praxis* concerns an exchange from *techné* to *techné*, of the intelligence and putting to work of functional operations. In the mastery of production, this transference takes place between the different individuated elements within the living body. Having generated new functional operations in abstract *epistêmê*, highest *techné* sets these to operate upon the medial *techné* of the organ. Thus although the abstract strata remains inaccessible for these medial *techné*, more complex functional operations may be recursively fed into their sensitive functionality, making available there new intentional, affective powers or *new kinds of actions* they would be otherwise incapable of.

Thus, the medial *techné* of the organ assimilates the capacity to execute new functional operations and intentional actions. First, the highest *techné* in transmitting a new functional operation makes possible a *deviation* in the processes of production operating within the organ. Once this has been established, a new process of production works to stabilise the *repetition* of this new functional operation. That is why a mastery of production always proceeds through *practice*; the repetition of scales or the making of marks, so that the medial *techné* becomes imbued with reiterating this new functional operation. In the process of mastering production, ‘highest’ *techné* continues its intervention on the medial *techné*’s execution of the functional process, by directing its sophisticated sensitivity to govern the stricture of the repetition, mitigating unintentional deviations and intensifying the precision of the operation.

It is worthwhile emphasising again that this pedagogy does not proceed through a communication of sense production, meaning or significance: a movement of the hand does not correspond to the ideal geometry of the circle, nor else do
particular finger positions to an $e$ chord, but rather to the repetition of a functional operation which either performs the intended function or unintentionally deviates it, so another is produced (an ellipse or an $e\#$). The objective of this exercise is that the medial *techné* of the organ becomes so rigorously versed in this capacity to repeat the required functional operations, that the ‘highest’ *techné will be liberated to perform a very different kind of work*. For it is only once the medial *techné* of the organ has sufficiently mastered this process of production, that the ‘highest’ *techné* can pursue the orthogonal workflow of creative *poiesis*, in which the work of art becomes possible.

Mastery of production, in craft or art, always concerns this process through which ‘highest’ *techné* disciplines the organs to carry out new functional operations. Yet this is only the condition for the work of art, that the *techné* of the organs master the repetitious act of the brush or the key stroke; for the importance of liberating ‘highest’ *techné* from the task of production, is not merely from the specific technicalities of material production – *it also requires a liberation from subjective fixation and consciousness, alike*. Kleist’s marionettes exemplify this condition of the work of art, made possible through the liberation of ‘highest’ *techné* from the crucifying refraction of self-consciousness.\textsuperscript{135} The art of dance is not only to master the movements and steps, but also to *give oneself over to the creation of the work, which is only possible, because the medial techné will continue to carry out the repetitions of productive poiesis*. In order for the work of art to begin, ‘highest’ *techné* must reorient itself from its subjective fixation and project itself out of *epistêmê*. For one does not affect a deviation by summoning the Gods of the Earth or encountering the meaningless void out of which all circulates, one deviates *phasis* by

projecting there *teknē*’s functional powers and computing the deviation upon the circulation of forces. That is why the work of art constitutes a final projective possibility for *teknē*, no longer oriented in its habitual direction along the flow of production, but now in a counter-orientation.

The work of art always requires two orthogonally oriented workflows. The orthodox sense of mastery concerns *poiesis*, the practised precision of iterations, the repetitious mode of production – but this would never lead to art if this were an end in itself. For what is required is that the mastery of repetition liberates ‘highest’ *teknē*, in order that the work of art begins. Here, the task of productive *poiesis* is taken over by medial *teknē*, but this intensive production is what allows the place of immanent sensitivity or awareness to escape, such that the artist loses their hands, the eye, the occupation of self-consciousness, in order to inject a *sustained* deviating workflow, into the processes of production. It is here that the force of creative *poiesis* performs its crucial work – to deviate the processes of becoming, by setting a flow of efficient causation upon the *telos*, in order to shape again *phusis*.

4.3.4. *In the work of art, teknē must circulate across productive and creative workflows*

The work of art is born of creative *poiesis*, but in *praxis*, all of *teknē*’s projective plasticity and movement must be deployed to establish a sufficient circulation between productive and creative workflows. To intensify this circulation of forces is never simply to set into motion a singular, intentional activity at *teknē* (at –jet or $f_2$). It is never to deviate the origin or its eternal propagation through an omnipotent act. The consequence of recalibrating Aristotelian causes is that the *efficient* is
inseparable from the living; it is only as a series of immanent acts, ramifying into complex ensembles, that the efficient exerts a force sufficient to shape the material. That is why, technē must be present to compute or set into operation each deviation in order for the work of art to function.

The reality of artistic praxis is therefore underscored by the prodigious mobility of technē. It must circulate between the workflows, which is why the work of art unsettles subjective being into a febrile chiaroscuro, where it flickers in and out of appearance. It is not simply a preliminary to program or school the organs of the body for the task of production; the reality of artistic praxis requires that ‘highest’ technē vacillates between its productive orientations in the body and mind with the counter-orientation through which creative work is set into operation.

Artists have told us over and again of this experience in making work, of the distinctiveness of its de-personalising or de-subjectifying affect. ‘The progress of an artist is a continual self-sacrifice, a continual extinction of personality.’¹³⁶ Making work is a vertiginous experience, in which sense and intentional activation rapidly vacillate between the various workflows, so that the experience of consciousness and subjective presence seems to flicker in and out of being.

Artistic praxis thus requires that ‘highest’ technē circulates between overseeing the processes of production (the repetitions of the medial technē of the body’s organs and the various technological apparatuses deployed) and the creative workflow, which introduces into them progressive deviations. Intentionality is the critical operand in this circulatory flow of artistic praxis, where technē is mobilised across productive and creative poiesis. Together with its ejection from subjective formation as the condition for the work of art to begin, this mobility of ‘highest’

techné explains why art is never determinable as the activity of a subjective or meaningful type. Moreover, this setting out from subjective formation cannot be incidental or the effect of another process (aphanisis or loss of consciousness), because art remains differentiated from the broader work of creative poiesis by its intention to deviate. If techné requires an incredible mobility here, it is because it must modulate the organs in their mode of production, so the intentional creative force can work upon them. Yet it will also require the continual passage through subjective formation in order to make sense of medial techné’s productive work, so that the creative workflow can be targeted again; ‘The hand must incessantly advance, ready at every instant to obey the head; and yet the head holds the creative instinct no more at command than the heart can bestow love at will.’

4.3.5. The work of art counters productive poiesis, for it resists what in it, desires the end (the appearance of the product, object, being and so on)

From a functionalist perspective, the artist is not differentiated from the craftsperson, due to a hierarchy in the kinds of functions they create nor certainly by various judgements upon the value of the work in which they are engaged. For the proximity to the function (ergon) with which techné is wholly concerned, makes the artist and craftsperson alike a technite.

What differentiates them is the intentional action exercised by techné; on the one hand it is to bring to repetition a new or existing process of production, and on the other it is to will production to progressively deviate. As such, it is the failure to acknowledge that techné affects here a change in poiesis that prolongs the

137 H. Balzac, Cousin Bette. pp. 270.
indetermination between art and craft. Moreover, it is the failure to make this
distinction that resurfaces in the strange *artificiality* of the technological object,
which despite the de-authorising of transcendent donators and the concept of nature,
continues to degrade it against a universal *poiesis*. Where the technological object
remains the result or *product* of a process of production, it is inconceivable that its
coming to being might affect powers capable of influencing processes of becoming.
But if its actions indicate not a resulting *effect* of a cause, but a *new causal process*
(the *efficient*) then it must present to us a very different kind of problem. This
remains an important part of re-problematising *techné*, because the unprecedented
power modern technology wields against primary, material processes, should have
revitalised the *particular* and its affect upon *phusis*.

Where this is not the case, this degradation of powers particularly diminishes
the encounter with contemporary art. Thus, when modern art *praxis* takes up the
utility of machines, it raises old problems because art continues to be tied to processes
of production. Is it not strange that after the secular reformulation of the *cogito*, in
which the ‘natural’ and ‘creation’ are so convincingly de-authorised, that the problem
of art should resurrect a natural/artificial distinction, where the production of hands
and bodies is valorised against the production of machines? Only an obscuration of
the breadth of *techné* could fail to challenge here the unidirectional assumption of
*poiesis* where art is a mode of production, differently determinable by hand or
machine; ‘As to whether a musical process is realized through live human
performance or through some electro-mechanical means is not finally the main
issue.’

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It has been argued that intentionality determines the difference between art and craft and so it remains in art’s relation with technology. This situation has a primordial precedence, where even the simplest bodies by exerting their intentional function (at $f_I$) affect a deviation between productive and creative workflows through particular techné. As such, in the first instance, this might clarify why the work of art, born across the flow of creative poiesis could never be determined by the productive work with which it is generally conflated.

If this issue becomes striking in contemporary art, the dissonance between creative and productive praxis had clearly been demonstrated where the technological object was worked upon by early modernist art experiments. The playfulness of Duchamp’s ‘readymades’ had already problematised the grave sobriety of the ‘always, already’, because the readymade fundamentally defies participation in the process of production. Rather, what the readymade shows is that not only is creative poiesis differentiated from the process of production, it operates across another kind of workflow, by going to work after the production has been completed. Moreover, Duchamp demonstrates quite precisely the function of the work of art, which intentionally intervenes by resuscitating the process of production from its collapse into the object. As such, the bottle-rack no longer simply appears as the product of a technical production, but becomes circulated into a new process of becoming.

It has been observed that the significance of the readymade lies in effacing the object to draw our attention to context – this is not simply its immanent framing (the gallery and the gallery context), but more importantly, is thought to lead us back to a supportive epistemological context; what Arthur Danto argues to require a ‘certain
theory of art'. Thus, the subtraction of a productive labour (the ‘work’ or art) is meant to unveil that art is always a kind of semiotic play, in which meaning and sense are infinitely exchangeable about an object.

Yet, it is not the art that works to produce for us this realisation of a historical or theoretical gestalt in which it circulates (even if Duchamp – as a thinking subject – also, intends to draw our attention to this). That is to say, what produces for thinking subjects a rather jolting recognition of their epistemological sense making, does not at all define how the art functions. This is rather an effect; for the art has already gone to work to deviate the ‘end’ of a productive process (industrial mass production), in which the technical object had been considered complete. That is to say, the art does not intentionally work to deviate the art-object into a new resolution between itself and the space, or between the canon and the expectation of a viewing public. The work of art concerns the intention to progressively deviate the process of production in order to overcome the reduction to the object or the relation altogether. That is to say that what Kandinsky apprehends in Cézanne is common to all art: ‘He raised the "nature morte" to a height where the exteriorly "dead" object becomes inwardly alive’.  

4.3.6. Art and modern technology

If this returns us to the complex functional problem of techné, it is because the work of art does not inaugurate some miraculous precedent here; it simply refutes the historically dominant idea that particular beings have no genuine power of affect, by challenging the assumption that poiesis is unidirectional. Moreover, the consequence

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140 W. Kandinsky, Concerning the Spiritual in Art, pp. 31-32.
of this power for the particular does not merely reiterate the ancient aporia between
being and becoming, because the power of the particular resides in the conjugated
sensitive and affective functions that deviate *poiesis*.

The work of re-problematisation with Simondon must be brought to bear
upon the work of art, and its engagement with modern technology, more specifically.
We have seen with Heidegger that behind the restorative romanticism devaluing
*techné*’s deviation from *phusis*, lies first a fundamental commitment to a
unidirectional *poiesis* (truth as unveiling), which consequently valorises
philosophical sense making and devalues the deviations of particular beings. This is
the foundation of valuing *techné* in its double movement: deconcealing (working
with the generative flow is legitimate) and deviation (its mode of challenging is
dangerous and illegitimate). But the work of art proceeds from the double workflow
initiated by *techné* since antiquity, and whose particular deviations comprise the
differential forces in the *telos*. The legitimacy of art’s deviations therefore concerns
the entire function of the counter-oriented workflow, through which difference
deviates the very nature of *phusis*.

The consequences of this conflation become increasingly problematised by
the introduction of technological processes into modern art. Walter Benjamin’s
highly influential *The Work of Art in the Age of its Mechanical Reproducibility*, sets
an emblematic precedent. Benjamin’s unidirectional *poiesis is Marxist*, and the
discussion of modern art practices takes place within the terms of a materialist and
correspondingly political mode of production.141 Once again, this unidirectionality

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141 The unidirectional determination in which the work of art falls into line within a unidirectional
Marxist process of production is well summarized in the introduction to *Author as Producer*: ‘Here
you have the catchword around which has long circled a debate familiar to you. Its familiarity tells
you how unfruitful it has been, for it has not advanced beyond the monotonous reiteration of
arguments for and against: *on the one hand*, the correct political line is demanded of the poet; on the
proceeds by first delegitimising the explicit function of creativity, which is thought to be overcome by constraining it within the origins of production.\footnote{Benjamin argues that the new theses capable of responding to the technological complication of art proceed from the following criteria: ‘They neutralize a number of traditional concepts - such as creativity and genius, eternal value and mystery - which, used in an uncontrolled way (and controlling them is difficult today), allow factual material to be manipulated in the interests of fascism.’}  Benjamin’s innovation is to utilise historicism to differentiate art into modes of material production.\footnote{Benjamin’s materialist historicism in locating the authentic origin of the work of art could be most profitably contrasted with T. S. Eliot’s processual historicism, in which the critique of the ever distant object is contrasted to the living history of an immanent creative exchange. (i.e. \textit{Tradition and the Individual Talent}).} Here the ‘aura’ of the original in which the authenticity of the work of art is magnified, is contrasted with the mechanical reproduction of the work, through the labour of technology.\footnote{‘The here and now of the original underlines the concept of authenticity.’} For Benjamin, this is a critical codex for understanding the difference between the modern and pre-modern work of art.

Benjamin’s argument elaborates upon differences between an ‘original’, ‘authentic’ work of art and the work of mechanical reproduction; let us consider differing productions of images, between a painting and a photograph. It is because for Benjamin, the fundamental concept of ‘work’ makes all processes of production unidirectional, that the discussion of what here constitutes the ‘work of art’, is made exchangeable with its modes of material production. As such, it is the value of the labour the painter invests in the production of the work from which its ‘aura’ and authenticity are derived. Each painting is an ‘original’ or singular work, and this is thought to fundamentally determine its value.

other, one is justified in expecting his work to have quality. Such a formulation is of course unsatisfactory as long as the connection between the two factors, political line and quality, has not been perceived. Of course, the connection can be asserted dogmatically. You can declare: a work that shows the correct political tendency need show no other quality. You can also declare: a work that exhibits the correct tendency must of necessity have every other quality. This second formulation is not uninteresting, and, moreover, it is correct. I adopt it as my own.’ \textit{W. Benjamin, The Work of Art in the Age of its Technical Reproducibility}, pp. 79-80.

\footnote{Ibid., pp. 20.}
In the case of the photograph, the way the technological apparatus reduces the labour involved in image production is thought to fundamentally transform its perception of value. Moreover, this cursory or ‘uncritical’ application of labour in the capturing of images is further devalued because there will be no original – that is, the process of reproduction progressively devalues the resulting art objects. There is something profoundly Platonic in this logic of productions and reproductions in which the authentic origin is ever distanced across the general workflow, and which the process of further iterations, degrades and dilutes the potency of subsequent particulars.\textsuperscript{145}

But this unidirectional grounding in material production does not apprehend the problem of art at all; nor else the problem persisting from it by the fundamental technical distinction established by Aristotle. For was not the entire distinction between types of \textit{technites} – the very problem of differentiating between art and craft – precisely so composed because the \textit{mode of production} could not adequately determine there a difference? The power of Benjamin’s procedure in discussing the social upheaval heralded by processes of technical reproduction are enfeebled where they are purported to split the difference in the historical function of art;

for the first time in world history, technological reproducibility emancipates the work of art from its parasitic subservience to ritual – to an ever-increasing degree, the work reproduced becomes the reproduction of a work designed for reproducibility. …as soon as the criterion of authenticity ceases to be applied to artistic production, the whole social function of art is revolutionized. Instead of being founded on ritual, it is based on a different practice: politics.\textsuperscript{146}

Art is not detached from the ‘parasitic subservience to ritual’ through the advent of reproductive technologies, because art always worked \textit{upon} the productive \textit{poiesis} proximate to it. That is to say, creative \textit{poiesis} was already circulating long

\textsuperscript{145} For discussion of ‘originality’, ‘authenticity’ and the technological tendency which opposes the ‘unique’ to the ‘mass’, Ibid., pg, 22.

\textsuperscript{146} Ibid., pg, 24-25.
before magical practices were ritualised by putting art to work, or more pertinently, where the work of art was subdued into aesthetic productions to constrain its deviant nature. One cannot, as Benjamin argues, determine another epistemological end for the work of art – neither a social, religious, nor political function – because art is never any kind of productive process. And where the work of art is simply collapsed to any such mode of material production, one does so at the cost of losing all capacity to apprehend what makes it art, paving the way to its ideal degradation; all pronouncements and writing become poetic, every application of paint on a surface a painting, each tea cup and toilet bowl, indistinguishable from sculpture.

What is lacking in Benjamin’s analysis is what theorisation dominantly lacks – the accounting after a different kind of work through which processes of production become art. The point is not even to challenge the distinction between ‘authentic’, which is to say traditional methods of producing works of art with the work of technological reproduction, which has been exploded by the reality of contemporary practice. Who could any longer suggest there was an inferior technical mastery in the production of photographic images? One need only consider the meticulously constructed self-portraits of Cindy Sherman or the intricate digital constructivism in Andreas Gursky’s technological naturalism, or else mixtures of both in Geoffrey Crewdson's cinematic images. It is rather to recognise that the work of art, is not commensurate with the process of production at all, whether it be by hand, celluloid or pixel. Ansell Adams had already dispelled this kind of mechanical or productive reduction of the work of art, by emphasising a different kind of work was required, even to ‘simply’ capture naturalistic images; ‘A great photograph is a

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147 Let us recall that Heidegger greatly clarified technology through its ‘to-handedness’, by drawing together the intentionality and immanence of techné, with its distinct impact upon the process of production, in general. That is to say, in clarifying that technology is not ‘modern’ but the distinctly human capacity for using tools, coming importantly, to include language.
full expression of what one feels about what is being photographed in the deepest sense, and is, thereby, a true expression of what one feels about life in its entirety.\textsuperscript{148}

This is not an appeal to sentimentality; it is to draw upon a vast repertoire of functional information about how generative processes become and transform, one into another.

It has been argued that this mastery of technical production has always been necessary, presiding over the epistasthai pertaining to technology or craft; this concerns the repetitious mastering of the light reading and depth of field, of processing film and print, or digital developing. But it also pertains to the mastery of the perceptual organs of the body, the repetitious training of the visual mechanism, in which the rules of aesthetic composition are productively encoded (rule of thirds, Fibonacci sequences or Golden spirals and so on). All of this work, this mastery of processes of production, must be set to an ‘autonomous’ activity; the profound schooling of the medial techné of the body as well as the machines and apparatus of technological production. It is only on these conditions that ‘highest’ techné can project across a counter-oriented creative poiesis, sufficiently to deviate the flow of production and bring forward something that has not before entered being. In order for the photograph to become a work of art, all this must circulate in the time of a firing shutter: it is what differentiates Adams’ Yosemite Valley, Thunderstorm, from a holiday snap or the work of aerial or geological survey.

\textsuperscript{148} A. Adams, \textit{A Personal Credo}, pp. 378. Moreover; ‘It seems that one can define all the qualities of a work of art except that essence which is self-evident in the art itself, and which creates a resonance of thought and feeling beyond verbalization. I attempt in these books to suggest the importance of craft and its relation to creativity in photography. As for the creativity itself, I can only assert that it exists.’ A. Adams, \textit{The Camera}, pp. 10.
4.3.7. The problem of intentionality in technology and the projection from subjectivity

The New Critics raise an objection to intentionality that remains pertinent where the artist’s production of meaning illegitimately dominates the function of the work.\footnote{This position is emblematised in W. K. Wimsatt Jr. and M. C. Beardsley’s essay, \textit{The Intentional Fallacy}, in which the intentional, creative work performed by the artist is argued to be radically divorced from the production of meaning the work produces.} Yet what here is at issue is precisely what defines intentionality. The New Critics proceed with an orthodox sense of intentionality as a property belonging exclusively to thinking subjects. That is to say, they did not address what has been recovered with Lamarckian evolution and Freudian theory: the operation of pre-subjective intentional forces governing processes of production, that have nothing to do with how the ‘artist’s’ intentionality has gone to work. It might rather be argued, the intentional fallacy anticipates a doubled workflow in \textit{poiesis}, because its central insight cannot be disputed: namely, that the productions of meaning or sense generated by artistic subjects remains fundamentally distinct from their creative work.

Intentionality is not restricted to the active productions of thinking subjects; it is rather a functional operation, and a very primordial one at that, exercised by even the most rudimentary living organisms. Nevertheless, the intentionality precipitating the work and discipline of art is a specialised type, orthogonally oriented to \textit{all of production}, the task for which intentionality is ‘naturally’ oriented. In the work of art, intentionality is rather counter-oriented toward deviating processes of production. And because this begins with a countering of the productive work fixating
subjectivity, the functional re-problematisation of intentionality does not violate the objections of the New Critics. The function of intentionality does not assure a special relationship between the creation of the work and the artist’s interpretation produced from it; rather this disconnection returns to the phenomena of de-personalisation, of subjective de-centring or fading, that is so commonly reported by art practitioners as an effect of the creative process.

If technology strangely prolonged problems of authenticity and legitimacy for modern art, so the orthodox understanding of intentionality complicates the utilisation of sophisticated technologies in new media art practices. Where the transition from material to sensible processes of production continues to define how the work of art operates, what happens when the technological apparatus takes on decision-making tasks in the process of production? This is the case in generative art practises, where the technical apparatus assists in or takes over the task of aesthetic determination in the work.\(^{150}\)

It is already clear that the reduction of intentionality in the production of sense-making anticipates this development in the work of art. Derrida has already forwarded convincing arguments that reading and interpretation are equal to the purported difference at work in the art, so whether the art is produced by one of Barthes ‘eternal copyists’ or whether by chance or machine, it seems to equally affirm the productive work of semiotics is here in play. That is to say, a kind of genuinely creative work might be arguably degraded, where pastiche, chance or indifferent machinic processes are argued to equally stimulate the effect of the work of art, in generating various sensible productions between viewing subjects.

\(^{150}\) Magaret Boden and Ernest Edmonds argues the term ‘generative art’ is traceable to Georg Nees and Freider Nake, in seminal computer works from 1965. *What is Generative Art?* pp. 3.
But before reducing the work of art to the labour of sophisticated machines, let us first return to what Heidegger has elsewhere clarified.\textsuperscript{151} Any work of production, the ‘to-handedness’ of the brush or the chisel, is already inseparably \textit{technological} – the work of \textit{techné} deviating \textit{phusis}, with which \textit{poiesis} is originally clarified. Yet where \textit{techné} is something far more ubiquitous, prior to thinking subjects, \textit{techné} is not simply that ‘to-hand’ but rather \textit{that the hand is already technological}, so that a body is living \textit{and} ‘machinic’.\textsuperscript{152} That is to say, whose sense and activity are already the results of an interior, deviating process through which \textit{poiesis} has become progressively transformed across a cascade of individuated agents, executing many orders of intentional actions. Simondon distinguishes processes of individuation between the tool at hand and the machine, but bodies are, in the circulation of material and efficient processes Simondon describes for us, already profoundly sophisticated \textit{living machines}. And if aesthetic integrity or authenticity is challenged by mark making machines and poetry producing algorithms, it is only because we inadequately grasped that \textit{aesthetics has always concerned processes of production irreducible to art}, despite the fact they are those most intimately co-opted and worked upon by it.

When ‘highest’ \textit{techné} achieves a mastery of production – a \textit{programmatic} enterprise of re-functioning the organs of the body, the hand and the eyes, as the preparatory conditions for any work of art – then it is a relatively simple matter to draw out the principle mastering production, from the hand to the bow or the brush,

\textsuperscript{151} M. Heidegger, \textit{Being and Time}, pp. 98.
\textsuperscript{152} This post-Cartesian transformation of the analogical relationship between bodies and machines, is elaborated in Deleuze and Guattari, \textit{A Thousand Plateaus}. Living bodies are no longer like machines, which seeks to strip them of intentional, living properties, endowed with a supplementary principle, through which life, consciousness and agency are donated. ‘Machinic’ is rather reoriented by Freud’s decentring of consciousness, because machinic rather implies the body is not an empty matter, but a granular, multiplicity of individuated bodies, a molecular population.
and on to the printer or the computing apparatus. For in each case, it is always the same task of divesting the work of production from ‘highest’ *technē*, liberating the specialised function of intentional activity, which orthogonal to all production, affects the counter-oriented, creative workflow.

The abdication of the artist’s intentionality in the work of production does not begin with generative art practices or the readymade. Nor does it begin with the introduction of random and chance elements in art; the experimental ‘musical dice games’ of Haydn and Mozart or else in its modernist popularisation with John Cage or Jackson Pollock. In fact, there never was an intentional fallacy, because the work of art does not operate across the process of production, where the task of determining the colour and compositional scheme is carried out, whether by a human subject, chance, or the algorithm. That is to say, none of these make a direct or consequential impact upon the work art must perform. The same governance of productive processes operates the hand, whose medial *technē* is programmed for the task of material production, as the machine. For in each case the intention is the same; it is not to determine the meaning and sense produced for another subject, it is to liberate ‘highest’ *technē* for the task of creative work.

Nevertheless, the analysis leading to the intentional fallacy importantly identifies that the work of art remains irreducible to the discovery of an original meaning. But this is not restricted to the realisation this does not reside with the artist’s subjectivity, because the work of art does not begin at the origin; the particularity of creative power rather specifically contests what counts as the origin. That is why the lack of direct correlation between the artist as subject and the

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153 M. Boden and E. Edmonds discuss these precedents and others in their development of a taxonomy of new media practises, of which generative art is one such division (including, electronic, digital, computer art and so on). *What is Generative Art?* pp. 8-19.
completed work, cannot be traced to the origin of abstract play or the production of sense as a general poiesis. This is not simply because meaning is localised and dependent upon hidden abstract relations; it is rather because these differences of the local, the individual and the personal constitute the forces of another causal operation; the efficient which exerts its emergent effects upon the primary process.

4.4. Techné to techné

4.4.1. The field of art is established by complex functional interactions between series of works

The emotion of art is impersonal. And the poet cannot reach this impersonality without surrendering himself wholly to the work to be done. And he is not likely to know what is to be done unless he lives in what is not merely the present, but the present moment of the past, unless he is conscious, not of what is dead, but of what is already living.154

The work of art is born from creative poiesis but artistic praxis requires all of techné’s highly nuanced and sophisticated movements, orientations and projections. Creative poiesis begins with the particular, so it is always a supplementary, emergent workflow, operating upon what has been brought into being; the ‘already living’. T. S. Eliot might then constitute a functional corrective to Benjamin’s art historicism; the canon of works are not the successive objects or stages of a temporal labour, but living circulations of immanent and dynamic processes. Eliot does not invoke a spiritual or transcendent dimension for this ‘life’ of the work, as though the poising pen resurrects a series of dead poets, or the work possesses its own agency. It is

rather that the particular functional operation through which the literary work comes into being, becomes again productive and creative once another techné puts it again to work.

Let us consider the brief appearance of Tiresias in Eliot’s The Wasteland, which we are told is the ‘most important personage’ of the poem. Tiresias is at once a symbol of dialectical heterogeny, both masculine and feminine, seer and blind. Eliot draws the figure of Tiresias from Ovid’s Metamorphoses; born a man, Tiresias becomes transformed into a woman and back again, an event that leads to the bestowal of a secondary, complex heterogeneous power. For as a consequence of this transformation, Tiresias is called upon to arbitrate a quarrel amongst the Gods, from which he is blinded and then compensated with the gift of foresight.

Yet, Tiresias is punished because between thinking subjects and their immanent experiential activity, new functional powers become possible that are not discernible at the origins of the Gods, or elsewhere made possible by indifferent universalising structures. That is, Tiresias acquires a kind of knowledge greater than the Gods, because an immanent act leads to a transformation from that bringing him to being; the striking of copulating snakes leads to his becoming female. This progressive acquiring of functional transformations is at odds with a fundamental heterogeny, because the capacity to circulate between abstract relations and the experience of living bodies is what leads to the acquisition and transformation of functional differences. It is the idiosyncratic nature of these circulations that progressively differentiates each particular being and its properties, from its purported origin, or indifferent, determining structure.

155 In a footnote, T. S. Eliot states that, ‘Tiresias, although a mere spectator and not indeed a “character,” is yet the most important personage in the poem, uniting all the rest.’ The Wasteland, pp. 2302.
Thus, the importance of Tiresias is in animating Eliot’s ‘meta-fictive’ assemblage, rather than to serve as the representation of its theoretical reality. What is missed where Tiresias represents *The Wasteland, as an assembled pastiche – ‘tissues of text’ – is that the work of art relies upon the process of *complicating* functional operations; it is the ramification of the ineffable phenomena emergent in the cell, the class of *autopoietic* phenomenon or higher order emergence. That is why the work of art is lost in its deconstruction into an assembly of various parts.

Let us recapitulate precisely what of the function complicates here this otherwise abstract reduction to the model. Just as one does not encounter the *autopoietic*, higher unity of the cell from breaking it down into constituent particles, nor can one derive the higher unity comprising a literary work from breaking it into signs. What one misses is the entirety of the art, the series of functional operations that only *works* when it is *calculated* by another *techné*. For it is through these functional assemblages, from *techné* to *techné*, that the complications across works of art become possible. For it is in the process of their computation that they become transformed and *live again*; it is such that new works are brought forward and those existing become again transformed.

4.4.2. *The function of art plays out from techné to techné*

If the mastery of production concerns functional interactions between ‘highest’ *techné* and the medial *techné* of the organs, then the work of art concerns exchanges from one ‘highest’ *techné* to another. The work of art has been defined as the intentional insertion of a specific deviation into processes of production, but this is
only possible where a new functional operation has been set to work from one
computor to another; that is, from techné to techné.

This is to approach the final issue in this discussion, for the dynamic counter-
oriented workflows that have been necessitated by the work of art, must be carried
over to re-characterise the act of its reception. This is to enquire into the role that
reading, viewing or engagement plays in the work of art. Let us first proceed by
reiterating what has already been shown; that the work of art does not comprise a
mechanism for the production and transmission of a particular meaning between
subjects.

If the model of a general problematic form has been elsewhere insufficient for
art, it will no more characterise the relationship between a ‘creator’ and a ‘viewer’.
There is no problem-solution coupling between artist and viewer, between an active
creative instigator and its passive resolution in a receiver. Where the creation of the
work requires a circulation between productive and creative workflows, these
demands are no less necessitated for those techné encountering the work.

If the creation of the work of art is not possible without the vacillations of
techné, circulating between the abstract and living bodies, then the act of
encountering this work would not be possible without eliciting a sympathetic
circulation. It may be orthodox to assume that the work of art is solely for thinking
subjects, as though the task of reading and writing takes place wholly within the
abstract exchange of signs. But there is always a return to the sensitivity of the living
body in order to confront the music of the orchestra, or to stand before the video
installation or to read the pages of a book. One must always pass again through the
mediat techné of the perceptual organs, whose very special task is to process the
exterior deviations, the currents of efficient causes, passing between various techné.
If there is nothing passive in the encounter with the work, it is because of what has already been clarified about sensitivity; to sense is never passive, it is a functional operation that transforms what it goes to work upon. From the functional perspective, to encounter the work of art is to set one’s functional sensitivity upon it, so it flows through the cascades of techné animating the living body. If there is no one-to-one relation between the work and its encounter it is not least because what we have learned about living bodies; they are already baroque complexes of functional computations, circulating between the body and the mind.

As such, the art does not simply go to work between the formation of ideas and sense impressions through which the thinking subject makes sense of this encounter. For in order for this to happen, the art has already gone to work across each techné’s interior process of calculation. For the consequence of this sensitive encounter is most of all, to deviate the process of subjective reformation. This deviation works at ‘shaping’ the process of the calculation, in which a thinking subject will re-emerge.

But this encounter with the work does not fulfil its intended function, unless it solicits a sympathetic deviation within another techné. That is to say, if in having processed or rather intelligibly acquired this functional operation, the viewing techné does not intentionally set it again into operation. Perhaps the encounter does not compel our continued attention, so we move away from ‘contemplating’ the work. But if it manages to do so, the vacillation of techné is set into operation, when we willingly project again our techné into the encounter with the work. This sets into operation the circulation of techné between operating upon the encounter and transforming these operations back into our subjective assemblage. Across these
circular processes or calculations the force of the functional deviation at work, intensifies, setting the viewing *techné* across its own traversal of creative *poiesis*.

Yet what here distinguishes the art is that it does not shape in us a new object for thought, nor does it dictate to us a mode of living or a way of being. What the art always goes there to do is to deviate what in us repeats, to work upon what is fixated into a process of production. That is to say, that initiates in another *techné* a deviation upon a path of creative *poiesis*. It is to enervate a transformation of existing ideas, or to inspire in us new associations between them. It is to reanimate old memories and in setting them again into operation, subtly, perhaps radically transforming them. It might affect a lasting deviation on the process of our subjective fixation, setting in us a recursive cascade in which the medial *techné* of the organs become re-programmed, opening to us new aesthetic pleasures or appreciations, or even new ways of being.

The active process of reading comes to the fore, because out of the vast repertoire of sensitive functionalities *techné* acquires over its lifetime, it will deploy assemblages of these in this encounter with the work. This is the problem encountered earlier, where the productive nature of reading or reception is emphasised when the technologically generated artwork ‘dupe’ the perceiving *techné* into having an ‘authentic’ or identical response to a ‘genuine’ work of art. It recalls the joke about the patron of the contemporary art gallery that ‘incorrectly’ identifies something as a work of art and pontificates about a mundane object (a pile of rubbish, an exhaust grate or fire extinguisher). Yet all that this tells us, is that *techné* acquires from various works of art, ways to deviate its sensitive functionality. That is to say, before a rubbish pile or a readymade can be regarded as art, one must have already encountered *Arte povera* or a Tracey Emin installation, Duchamp or
Andy Warhol. One must separate here the aesthetic consensualisation of a particular form, because nothing is degraded or made inauthentic about the work of art, which *intends* to deviate the process of production in other *techné*. For the function of art operates from *techné* to *techné* in which processes of production are deviated from their restitution into the object, to promote transformative deviation as the ‘end’; which is to say the shape, purpose or *telos* of the work.

What the art practitioner and the interested spectator acquire alike in their encounter with the work is the particular functional configuration specific to traverse a process of deviation. Although *techné* requires the immanent encounter with the work, its intelligence acquires specific apprehensions from the works functional configuration so that it may again be put into operation. That is, what is transmitted in the work of art between artist and viewer, is what is transmitted between medial and ‘highest’ *techné* in the process of artistic *praxis*; a distinctive *functional operation* that does not produce a particular end or effect, but makes possible within other *techné* new kinds of deviating processes. And if this does not require the passing from one living *techné* to another, it is not because the function is recordable in the object or completed work, but because when another *techné* sets their sensitive functional operation upon the artefact, it is processed and *further deviated* by this new act of calculation.

It has been argued that the work of art is defined by a unique intentional affectation, whose ‘end’ is to cease the end at work in productive *poiesis*. This is to intend a *progressive* deviation within *phusis*, so that the supplemental circulation of efficient causes continues to amplify difference, by *complicating* generative processes. But this is never a will unto itself, a decisive or singular act, because it does not work against the ‘law’ or the origin where doubt has already fallen. *It is a*
solicitation to other technē, because it is only technē who decide, in their multitude of immanent, particular actions, to contribute to the task of deviation or whether to repeat productive poiesis. Material causation may well prove to have an indifferent repetitious basis, but the power of efficient causation is of a radically different kind. It multiplies across the immanence of many particular beings and it ramifies in the complex functional operations that emerge, in vertiginous parallel and hierarchical calculations. This vast calculative activity becomes progressively complicated over time, so that even the most rudimentary technē must have been supported by a vast, immanent network of efficient causation, from which particulars launched their deviating works upon the material. And it is in these particular contests across the circulation of material and efficient causation, that the telos or ‘shape’ of what comes into being is decided. If there is an antagonism in this contest, it is perhaps because the supplementary emergences of particular beings have always been a kind of resistance to the indifference of originary conditions. This is what Schrodinger defined for us as the ‘negentropic’ function of the living - a resistance to the law of entropy at work in productive poiesis.
4.5. Art and Nature

The artist has a twofold relation to nature; he is at once her master and her slave. He is her slave, inasmuch as he must work with earthly things, in order to be understood; but he is her master, inasmuch as he subjects these earthly means to his higher intentions, and renders them subservient.\(^{156}\)

Creative *poiesis* has a very special relationship to *phusis*. Oscar Wilde has already told us what it is – art works to *improve* nature; ‘Art is our spirited protest, our gallant attempt to teach Nature her proper place.’\(^{157}\) But this is not restricted to an aesthetic innovation; Artaud will show us that this is not a surface re-arrangement of productive effects but a conflict with our process of becoming. It is to stage an encounter with *phusis*, where before the structured abstraction of language (grammar), one must go again to work as the very condition to be: ‘There are some fools who think of themselves as beings, as innately being. I am he who, in order to be, must whip his innateness.’\(^{158}\) It is always with the whip and the hammer that creative *poiesis* is carried out, where *technē* goes to work upon the dominance of productive *poiesis*.

In the previous chapter we touched upon alternative evolutionary models, arguing a rival circulation was necessary to account for the transformations across living bodies. Where the process of becoming remains fixedly unidirectional it is laughable to argue that an effect might influence its cause or that the product of a

\(^{156}\) Goethe, *Conversations of Goethe*, pp. 248

\(^{157}\) O. Wilde, *The Decay of Lying*, pp. 5. Or moreover; ‘Life imitates Art far more than Art imitates Life, and I feel sure that if you think seriously about it you will find that it is true. Life holds the mirror up to Art, and either reproduces some strange type imagined by painter or sculptor, or realises in fact what has been dreamed in fiction. Scientifically speaking, the basis of life—the energy of life, as Aristotle would call it—is simply the desire for expression, and Art is always presenting various forms through which this expression can be attained. Life seizes on them and uses them, even if they be to her own hurt.’ pp. 38.

\(^{158}\) A. Artaud, *Correspondence with Jacques Rivière*, pp. 19.
process may have any influence upon that which determines it. This assumption drives the general form of the problem because where poiesis is unidirectional for all events \((a \rightarrow b)\), it is absurd to think that \(b\), could have any influence upon \(a\). Even when \(a\) is denounced, so that the unidirectional process indifferently inveighs, there is no way a being could effect the process from which it results, and this is common for all that comes to being.

But, where doubt has fallen upon the existence of \(a\), there seems little more reason to assume that processes are any more indifferent or immutable than those fixed, original causes that gave way before them. As such, what constitutes nature – phusis – must be re-problematised. It denotes no more than the sum of particular flows; a statistical dynamism rather than a fixed process, something progressive rather than established. As such, the power of a particular would not equate to a direct contest with the origin or the law; for it would take a place in determining phusis, in a progressive complication of many particular operations, all working to ‘shape’ what next comes into being. In the circulation of material and efficient causes, technè’s primary task is to influence telos, the ‘shape’ of individuation processes in their becoming.

Creative poiesis – through which the particular brings its differences to bear upon the orders of generative production – does not belong to art, but is exploited by it; ‘The creation of a work of art must of necessity… be accompanied by distortion of the natural form. For, therein is nature reborn.’\(^{159}\) Thus a critical function art performs is to demonstrate to thought that it is not the isolated citadel in which its

\(^{159}\) P. Klee, On Modern Art, pp. 8. The original quote reads, “The creation of a work of art must of necessity, as a result of entering into the specific dimensions of pictorial art, be accompanied by distortion of the natural form. For, therein is nature reborn.” The reference to pictorial art was removed to fit with the present context, not to alter the original meaning.
being resolves, but is rather a particular coordinate which generates for it new transformative powers.

If the function of art operates from technē to technē, it is because the work of art solicits technē to deviate away from subjective formation, in order to affect processes in their becoming. The work of art exploits the possibilities of creative work, but this is hardly to exhaust it: this rather indicates how phusis itself is populated and renewed with difference. Creation is the kind of work that assures that subjects do not remain fixed at sub—: this is because we are not subjects at all, but the autopoietic functional conjugation of ‘highest’ technē, whose self-consciousness is an effect or emergent property of its subjective formation.

If the functional conjugation of technē was found ubiquitous across the evolutionary transformations of bodies, it is because an inaugural, indifferent inveighing of law or structure is insufficient to account for the emergence of complex difference. Everywhere technē remains the special entity, because it is technē that deviates creations into productions and elsewhere productions into creations. And moreover, technē may carry out this work on every level, from the emergence of matter out of force, to the emergence of consciousness from the body; and because technē always deals in functional exchanges, it ensures that whatever hierarchies emerge to institute flows of cause, it goes to work there to make deviation possible, so that particular events have recursive and counteractive powers upon that which determines them.

Most importantly, the counter-causal directionality that introduces creative transformation into phusis does so by virtue of the proliferation and complication of the living. If phusis is indeed dominated by the repetition of indifferent simple laws comprising material causation, art counters nature because it belongs to the complex
higher order emergences peculiar to life. The particular need not directly confront the origin; it complicates primary flows by making them pass through many complex functional assemblages, each affecting many deviating processes. If art must stand as a bulwark against the general form of problems, it is because the deduction of foundations tells us nothing of this complex, higher order workflow, across which efficient causes ramify. That is because in deducing the terms of its construction, it does not see it in operation, does not see the higher orders of emergence that only appear in their active computation. Thus, we do not find in the foundation a principle of the telos ordering phusis, because it rather emerges upon the dizzyingly complex computational operations carried out by the living and computed from one technē to another.

But this is not finally to raise a quarrel with the over-determining desire of knowledge – Nietzsche already told us that ‘we possess art lest we perish of the truth’. The functional re-problematisation of art rather directs us to differently experience sense and activity and the agency emerging from them, for none are terminals that make us some kind of ‘being’: we are not the resolution of a problem that has produced us as a product, as though the world of beings were so many cut flowers, whose price of coming to being was already the severance from life. We are pervaded with this sickness of the end, in which our intentional individuations could never matter.

Art opposes this ontological reductiveness, not in the order of truth, but because the reality of particular deviation could never be exhausted in such a manner; ‘It is only natural that we want not death but life.’

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161 W. Kandinsky, Preface to Der Blaue Reiter Almanac, pp. 36.
As such, the function of art does not confront knowledge, which rather becomes for it a crucial and prodigious ‘material’ upon which to go to work. Nevertheless, its problem can never be approached by epistemological sense making, because the work of art must dissolve subjective being in order to traverse the creative workflow. Art shows us that we do not resolve into subjective being, but that it is rather a coordinate in which to produce new powers, new functional operations. This activity is to participate in the process of generative differentiation across the flow of efficient causation, together with all life. All our acts induce affects, not simply at the local in our milieus, but because purpose is decided in the activity of particular, intentional acts, the purpose that shapes the telos – a forcing that introduces purpose into the circulating shapes of phusis.
for Mum and Hayden.
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Creation and the Function of Art


