

The Ancient Science of *Techne*

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Techne was a powerful, ancient Greek science developed by early philosophers to explain and describe personal inner powers or other metaphysical forces. This science was so profound and no doubt considered so magical that the early Catholic Church suppressed it along with everything associated with the Arian Heresy or pagan powers.¹ *Techne*² means “skill, art, cunning or a method of making or doing something.” *Techne* is a form of the root *tek-* as used in words such as *tekmerion* meaning “proof” or *tekon* meaning “giving birth,” which also help to define *Techne*. *Techne* is concerned with how things come into being³ and can be considered as explaining the source of power existing between cause and effect or how a hidden cause becomes its manifested effect. *Techne* was a science of personal power that could be used to find creative answers or solutions to problems independent of the normal methods of learning. To the Greeks, *Techne* was a source of truth for the soul that had to be supported by or compatible with:

- 1) scientific knowledge,
- 2) practical wisdom,
- 3) philosophic wisdom and
- 4) intuitive reason.⁴

Techne was, therefore, not based solely upon imagination, wishful thinking, the supernatural or the occult, but rather upon a possible future.

A major aspect of *Techne* is similar to what is called ‘transference’ in modern psychology. Transference results from finding such a state of union with another person that thoughts, feeling and ideas could be as one, such as often reported in psychoanalysis. The union or oneness required for *Techne* is, however, very complex and includes the union with the self and world in the immediate future as well as the immediate moment.

This transference aspect of *Techne* was known as *henosis*⁵ in the Greco-Roman period. The rise in the early interest in *henosis* in Rome was credited to the male-only *Mithraic* religion⁶ brought in by Persian warriors who had discovered that the effectiveness of hand-to-hand combat as well as personal survival was highly increased with *henosis*.

This basic concepts of *Techne* and transference are also evident in the philosophy of *Sol Invictus* or *Henotheism*⁷, and add further clarification to this powerful ancient philosophy. Constantine the Great gave the description of how metaphysical powers can be transmitted by using the sun as an allegory. Briefly, the sun contains heat and light which is radiated across space as invisible rays to earth where they anoint or coat objects rendering them visible or warm.

¹ Angus, S. *The Religious Quests of the Graeco-Roman World*. New York, NY: Biblio and Tannen, 1967. pp. 104-116.

² τέχνη

³ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Bk. 6, Ch. 4

⁴ Ibid. Bk. 1, Ch. 8

⁵ Greek, ἕνωσις: (*h*)*enosis*: “combination into one, union”

⁶ Cumont, F. *The Mysteries of Mithra*. New York, NY: Dover, 1956

⁷ Greek, ἕνωσις: (*h*)*enosis*, plus theos: God

The important criteria in this allegorical model are that:

- 1) the heat and light in the sun is exactly the same as that which
- 2) is radiated and exactly the same as that which
- 3) lights or warms an object.

Henotheism, the religious view, considers that there is:

- 1) the nature or power of God,
- 2) the radiance of this nature, and
- 3) the covering or anointing⁸ of an individual such that the same nature of God is known within.⁹

The *Techne* view is that:

- 1) an individual contains truth
- 2) which is manifested in some form
- 3) which can then stimulate or cover an observer with the same truth.

There are two separate aspects of *Techne*; one is its usage in creating and manifesting, while the other is the perception and understanding of that which was manifested by someone else. Both forms were considered to require metaphysical inner powers. In other words, god-like traits are necessary to use *Techne* to create and dispense the creation, while similar god-like traits are necessary to use *Techne* to perceive and decode the manifested. An excellent introductory example of this is given in the book of Genesis¹⁰ where the Pharaoh of Egypt had a vivid dream and could describe it in detail, but he was unable to understand it. Joseph, on the other hand, was able to translate the dream and support it with “scientific knowledge, practical wisdom, philosophy and intuition” and hence could prove the truth of both usages of *Techne*. As a consequence, Joseph was, of course, appointed to execute the vision of the Pharaoh. Both the early Greeks and the Hebrews considered that the source of the truth manifested by *Techne* was of some Divine power and would have had common agreement with the Divine-controlled steps of Proverbs 16:9.

Even though there is little public knowledge or support for the science of *Techne*, it is still being used today, such as by the self-actualized individuals, studied by Maslow, to manifest their inner goals. Creative scientists frequently use *Techne* and give evidence of it with their “weird” explanations of how they attained their insights. Perhaps the best-known example is the story told about Isaac Newton when he experienced the falling of an apple as the same as the continual falling of the moon, which led to his profound theory of gravitation. Many creations begin with what Einstein called “mental experiments”¹¹ where the mind sorts through images appearing in the mind until one is somehow “known” to work. This can be described as looking into the future to foresee which possible concepts will work or to find the solution that will exist with complete union with the problem.

⁸ Greek, χριστος, *christos*: “to anoint or coat”

⁹ Council of Nicaea

¹⁰ Genesis, Ch. 41

¹¹ First defined by Ernst Mach as *Gedankenexperiment*

Some poets, such as Emily Dickinson, are masters of *Techne*, able to impart strong metaphysical feelings with only a few words.¹² Many painters, such as Pablo Picasso, spend considerable time and effort developing their *Techne* to depict deep inner metaphysical feelings and forces. In his famous Ninth Symphony, Ludwig van Beethoven combined chorus and orchestra with the poetry of Friedrich von Schiller's *Ode to Joy* to manifest the metaphysical joy that re-unites one with the world.¹³

The works of Newton, Dickinson, Picasso or Beethoven can only be fully appreciated, however, by a relative few who have the *Techne* to understand or find union with both the creation and creator. The initially created physical works of *Techne* exist as "agents of transfer"¹⁴ of the inner vision of the creator to the outer world. As Aristotle noted, *Techne* deals with things coming into being. *Techne* serves both as an intermediary between a creator and the created as well as between the created and the observer. It can open a path to the future or vice versa.

We have avoided using the word "Art" as is commonly done as a translation of the word *Techne* since the majority of modern art is not *Techne* as originally described by the Greeks.

Lowrie¹⁵ gives an excellent dissertation on the usage of Art by the early Greeks and the subsequent changes that occurred when the metaphysical content of Art became replaced with a message,¹⁶ teaching or something to be purchased. There can be far more *Techne* in a child's drawing of a frowning face to express an inner feeling than in the regimented usage of art to attract, decorate or sell.

Because of the proliferation of Art to educate or sell, the ability to use *Techne* to appreciate and understand the metaphysical content of art has nearly been lost. Art is now judged as to its physical portrayal and form rather than decoded as to its content. Paintings are judged according to their photographic likeness or how they will match the setting in some room. Writings, as will shortly be presented, are similarly judged according to how entertaining they are, how easy they are to read, and their political or religious correctness much more than their content.

The perception of Art in terms of its physical form or popular acceptability is not new to this generation but must have been also present in ancient China, where the relative blindness of the public was aptly described by the maxim, "Finger Pointing (to) Moon." This maxim refers to the vast majority of people who can perceive only the physical form of *Techne*,¹⁷ which is never the vision, but only that which points to the vision. The majority of people resort to describing and judging the physical finger, painting or writing according to social, religious or academic standards. Nevertheless, the maxim can be understood to be affirming the existence of fingers or allegories which are a product of *Techne* that do in fact point directly to the moon.

The metaphysical can only be pointed to and never be directly observed, touched or measured such as is common in the subjects of science. The science of *Techne* can be explained as the use

¹² See Peck, R. L., *Directing Life*, Appendix, Samples of Poetic *Techne*

¹³ "Thy enchantments unite together what society's sword did divide."

¹⁴ Peck, R. *The Stone of the Philosophers*. Lebanon, CT: Personal Development Center, 1988

¹⁵ Lowrie W. *Monuments of the Early Church*. New York, NY: Macmillan, 1923. Ch. 1

¹⁶ A relatively modern example of this occurred in the late 1800's when a clergyman named Henry van Dyke arranged a new hymn as he took the music of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony *Ode to Joy* and replaced the words in the last movement as a way to provide a popular religious meaning instead of the original metaphysical experiencing of inner ecstasy and its power.

¹⁷ Or as many state, "It takes too much effort to understand things." or "Why should I?"

of special allegories to manifest the metaphysical. If a proper allegory is created then it can be used to recreate the original metaphysical concept. For instance, as a scientist, Peck often uses an allegory in describing the concept of force by stating that it is “like” pushing a car. If you can relate to his allegory of pushing, then you can experience the same metaphysical force that he was experiencing. An allegory often can present a clearer depiction of truth than can a lengthy technical essay, provided, of course, that it satisfies: scientific knowledge, practical wisdom, philosophic wisdom and intuitive reason as required by Aristotle.¹⁸

An excellent example of *Techne* is given in music with *cadenza*¹⁹ performed by a solo instrument or voice in a concerto (also found in modified form in early jazz and folk music). *Cadenza* comes from Latin meaning “to fall or end” and has the accepted modern meaning of denoting the end of a musical expression specified by some arranger. However, there is the earlier²⁰ concept that a *cadenza* was to be a soloist’s unspecified impromptu addition to the *Techne* of the composer as well as a summary and end to the preceding expression. The soloist, therefore, must find an expression using *Techne* that is built upon the state of the musicians, conductor and audience to clarify or fully manifest the original metaphysical expression of the composer. The instrument or voice then becomes an allegorical tool for the further expression of the metaphysical content.²¹

A successful soloist must satisfy the above four requirements of *Techne* if an impromptu created *cadenza* is to fit into and amplify the concerto. The soloist, for instance, cannot ignore the physics or structure of the music, ignore the mood of the audience and past performance of the musicians, or be unaware of the metaphysical content of the music. The soloist must finally combine the preceding with creative insight and learned skills to fully manifest and amplify the vital metaphysical insight of the composer.

The self-actualized individual or the fully human person of Maslow can be described as a soloist within a society expressing *cadenza* to more fully manifest the steps or evolution of life. Similarly, any individual who initiates a change in the world with his or her creation is a soloist. A soloist, however, requires a supporting and united group that accepts individual powers and the resulting changes.

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¹⁸ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Bk. 6, Ch. 4

¹⁹ Apel, W. *Harvard Dictionary of Music*. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1972. p. 120

²⁰ Ibid. p. 120: before the 19th century

²¹ Ibid. p.742: Rhythm was also varied by the performer with *Rubato*.