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Heidegger in Ruins

BETWEEN PHILOSOPHY AND IDEOLOGY

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For Caroline, *ma femme lumineuse*

Earth and Soil: Heidegger and the National Socialist Politics of Space

By Bodenständigkeit, Heidegger . . . meant to convey a profoundly metaphysical relation to Earth as a place of dwelling, to the landscape as one's indigenous home, and to language as the expression of one's rootedness: . . . as the name for an understanding of history as destiny to which we primordially belong and through which we are appropriated by the gift-giving power of Being . . . [as] Ereignis. Only when we are fundamentally attuned to the Earth, . . . only when we are rooted in it and let this rootedness take hold of us, can we find our proper dwelling place with the Fourfold. . . . Heidegger considered Bodenständigkeit as a relationship to the Earth that acknowledged its hidden, concealed, nocturnal, and chthonic dimensions.

—Charles Bambach, *Heidegger Roots*

The higher compulsion of the Earth does not first emerge with the everyday and the deed, but already in the creative questioning and the world-forming power of a Volk.

[Der höhere Zwang der Erde ist nicht erst beim Alltag und der Tat, sondern schon in der schöpferischen Fragekraft und der weltbildenden Macht eines Volkes.]

—Heidegger, *Überlegungen und Winke III*, GA 94

Earth and Soil: Heidegger and the National Socialist Politics of Space

COMMENTATORS ON HEIDEGGER'S THOUGHT HAVE OFTEN acknowledged the central role that the ideas of "Earth" and "Space"—in German, *Erde* and *Raum*—play in his work. In *Being and Time*, for example, one of the defining features of Heidegger's attempt to renew the meaning of first philosophy was his distinctly spatial reinterpretation of cognition (*Erkenntnistheorie*) as "Being-in-the-world." The paradigm of *Existenz* consciously abandoned the presuppositions of transcendental subjectivity in favor of the embodiment and situatedness of the knowing subject. The "Da" (there) of "Dasein" already depended on a spatial metaphor.

Heidegger's *Daseinsanalyse* was predicated on a hermeneutical, nonobjective understanding of "world" and "worldhood." He expressly understood "world" and "worldhood" in terms of their "spatial" and "environmental" features. "We shall seek the *worldhood* of the *environment* [*Umwelt*]," explained Heidegger; "the expression 'environment' implies . . . spatiality."¹ Beings that are "ready to hand," such as "tools" or "equipment," are also "spatial," Heidegger continued, insofar as they belong to a "region" (*Gegend*). Heidegger's hermeneutical approach to "spatiality" entailed an "existential" critique of the "mathematized" space of physics and the natural sciences. As Heidegger observed in paragraph 23 of *Being and Time* ("The Spatiality of Being-in-the-World"), in the case of physicalist approaches to space, "environmental regions get neutralized to pure dimensions. . . . The whole circumspectively-oriented totality of places belonging to equipment ready-to-hand gets reduced to a multiplicity of positions for random Things. The spatiality of what is ready-to-hand within-the-world loses its involvement-character, . . . [and] the environment becomes the world of Nature. The 'world,' as a totality of equipment ready-to-hand, becomes 'spatialized' to a context of extended Things which are just present-at-hand and no more."²

Interpreters have also commended the prominence of "Earth" and "Space" in Heidegger's later thought as a dimension that furthered his rejection of the Cartesian "punctual self" and that, hence, opened vistas to a set of more concrete, topographical and ontological truths. On these grounds, they have proposed that Heidegger be regarded as a "topological thinker."³ In *Aus der Erfahrung des Denkens* (1954), Heidegger himself recurred to this expression, describing

the "Topology of Being" as the "place" (*Ortschaft*) where the essence of Being becomes manifest.⁴ And in *Pathmarks*, in opposition to the reigning "topography of nihilism," Heidegger proposed a "topology" capable of "gathering Being and Nothingness in their essence."⁵

Heidegger's attentiveness to considerations of "topography" and "space" nourished his pathbreaking critique of modern technology, whose ravages have been so destructive of tradition and place. As a result, since the rise of the modern environmental movement, Heidegger has increasingly gained followers on the political left who believe that Karl Marx's critique of modernity was insufficiently radical.⁶

Recently, commentators have suggested that Heidegger's attunement to the "politics of space" provides the basis for an "antiauthoritarian" understanding of Heidegger's work: an understanding that belies his "transitory" allegiance to National Socialism. These interpreters have proposed that Heidegger's understanding of "place" represents a template of emancipation, insofar as it facilitates "the opening up of the world and of things in their essential questionability." Heidegger's "topology" is not "a 'violent' mode of revealing," we are told, but one that "allows things to come forth in their difference and unity." As such, it signifies a "turning away from all modes of 'decision' or 'authoritarianism.'" Heidegger's "topological" approach provides the basis for a critique of the "technological . . . tyranny" that is . . . destructive of the human community [and] of the things of 'nature.'" Thus, approaching Heidegger as a "spatial thinker" allows us to recover the "democratic" dimension of Heidegger's work, since his attention to "things in their essential questionability" entails "a mode of politics that, [like democracy], is tied to contestation [and] negotiation."⁷

Heidegger's 1925 assertion, "Unless we succeed in returning to the essential and sustaining powers that derive from our native soil [*aus heimatlichem Boden*], all attempts at renewal and improvement will remain hopeless," suggests that "rootedness" and "native soil" and the related concepts of "earth" and "blood" were recurrent and enduring leitmotifs of his *Denken*.⁸ An attentive reconsideration of the developmental trajectory of Heidegger's topography of "space" and "soil," *Raum* and *Boden*, belies the suggestion that his approach to *Raumpolitik* culminated in a dialectic of emancipation.

Instead, Heidegger's allegiance to the paradigm of "reactionary modernism," before and after 1933, suggests a very different conclusion concerning the meta-political valences of his *Denken*. As Hans Jonas has confirmed in "Heidegger's Entschlossenheit und Entschluss," "A certain 'blood-and-soil' point of view was

always present. Heidegger emphasized his Black Forest roots a great deal. . . . This attitude reflected his ideological commitments: one had to be close to nature, and so on. And certain remarks—ones he sometimes made about the French, for example—manifested a . . . primitive nationalism."⁹

Indicative of this orientation was Heidegger's characterization of his philosophical "mission" in *An Introduction to Metaphysics* (1935) as focused on "restoring historical Dasein's rootedness-in-soil." "Through our questioning," reclaimed Heidegger, "we are entering a *landscape* [*Landschaft*]; to be in this landscape is the fundamental prerequisite for restoring rootedness to historical Dasein [*dem geschichtlichen Dasein seine Bodenständigkeit zurückzugewinnen*]."¹⁰ Since, at this point in time, the preoccupation with *Bodenständigkeit* was also a linchpin of the National Socialist worldview, Heidegger's avowal can only be construed as a profession of ideological solidarity.

One year earlier, in *Logic as the Question Concerning the Essence of Language* (1934), Heidegger expressly associated "history-making" with the "production of space and soil." He insisted that "national histories" are existentially entwined with the forces of *Raum*, *Erde*, and *Boden*.¹¹ Thereby, Heidegger underlined the confluence between his own distinctive hermeneutic-ontological approach to the "politics of space" and the Nazi *Lebensraum-Gedanke*, as canonized by seminal precursors such as Friedrich Ratzel (1844–1904) and Karl Haushofer (1869–1946).

As we have seen, Heidegger's endorsement of the "production of space and soil" by a *Volk* harmonized with the "peasant" or "agrarian" strain of National Socialism that was codified by the Nazi minister of agriculture Walther Darré in his *Blut und Boden* manifesto *New Aristocracy of Blood and Soil* (1930).¹² In *The Language of the Third Reich*, Victor Klemperer characterized this current of Nazi ideology as follows: "The glorification of the *Bauer* [farmer or peasant], wedded to the earth, steeped in tradition and hostile to all things new, remained constant to the end. The declaration of faith expressed in the formula BLUBO—*Blut und Boden*—. . . derived directly from his way of life."¹³

The German *Volk*'s orientation toward *Blut und Boden* was regarded as an expression of authenticity. In the *Black Notebooks*, Heidegger extolled *Boden*, or "native soil," claiming, "In *Bodenständigkeit* alone does one find the rootedness [*Verwurzelung*] that grants growth into the universal."¹⁴

In the *Der Spiegel* interview, which was conducted some twenty years after National Socialism's collapse (1966), Heidegger recurred to the thematics of

"Heimat" and "rootedness," reaffirming, unapologetically, "Everything essential and everything great originates from the fact that man had a home and was rooted in tradition [dass der Mensch ein Heimat hatte und in einer Überlieferung verwurzelt war]." In the same passage, he dismissed "modern literature," tellingly, as "predominantly destructive" owing to its lack of "rootedness."¹⁵

Heidegger's disparagement of aesthetic modernism was of a piece with the "reactionary modernist" rejection of "degenerate art," whose decadent qualities reflected the "rootlessness" of modern "society." From here, it was but short step to Heidegger's repeated denunciations of "world Jewry" as a perennial cultural interloper and corrupter of ethnically homogeneous "communities." Time and again, Heidegger excoriated European Jewry as the leading "carriers" of *Machenschaft*: a code word for the corrosive tendencies of (modern) "Zivilisation." Heidegger's hostility toward Jews was consistent with Shulamit Volkov's construal of anti-Semitism as a "cultural code": a network of demeaning stereotypes that, by the time of the Nazi *Machtergreifung*, had coalesced into an objectively lethal discursive paradigm.¹⁶

Far from being contingent or adventitious, Heidegger's aversion to Jewish influence was an *existential judgment*: a conviction that was largely predicated on his *ontology of rootedness*. Heidegger regarded Jewish "rootlessness" as an emblem of Jewish perdition: an ontological stain that permanently consigned the Jewish people to "inauthenticity," insofar as Heidegger embraced "rootedness" as a *sine qua non* for "authenticity." Heidegger's enduring preoccupation with *Boden* and *Raum* underlines the extent to which his thought was suffused with ideological elements that he imbibed from the conservative revolutionary *Zeitgeist*.

During the 1930s, Heidegger's recourse to a semantics of "Earth" and "Soil"—*Erde* and *Boden*—reflected his ontological-historical "Turn" from the existential ontology of *Being and Time* to the "metaphysics of German Dasein."¹⁷ This re-orientation of Heidegger's *Denkweg* was accompanied by a heightened infusion of *mythical*, *chthonic*, and *obscurantist* themes in his work. "The higher compulsion of the Earth does not first emerge with the everyday and the deed," declared Heidegger, "but already in the creative questioning and the world-forming power of a Volk."¹⁸

Heidegger's dissatisfaction with traditional *Erkenntnistheorie* impelled him to defend the epistemological superiority of myth vis-à-vis "cognition" or rational knowledge. "Mythos," Heidegger enthused, "names Being in its primor-

dial looking-into and shining-forth." Heidegger exalted "Mythos [as] the only appropriate mode of the relation to appearing Being."¹⁹

Heidegger's advocacy of the epistemological benefits of "myth" reflected his blossoming intellectual friendship with Alfred Baeumler, whose three-hundred-page introduction to Johann Jakob Bachofen's *Der Mythos von Orient und Occident: Eine Metaphysik der Alten Welt* (1926) Heidegger revered.²⁰ It also coincided with a more general and worrisome shift in German spiritual life during the 1920s, whose signature was a heightened antipathy to "reason" and a correlative infatuation with "prehistory" and the "archaic."

In "Greek Mythology and the Intellectual History of Modernity," Walter Burkert pithily summarized the generational fascination with "myth" and the "archaic" that characterized the worldview of reactionary modernist *Kulturkritik*. According to Burkert, this trend was "influenced by Expressionism, by phenomenology, by the Youth Movement, and by the Stefan George-Kreis. It was far removed from the Christian tradition, opposed to 'Der Bourgeois' and to Reason. It was elitist and latently 'fascistic.' The shock of the Great War was a decisive formative element, but not its sole cause: the rational world of the nineteenth century seemed to have shattered and primordial depths [*Urgründen*] emerged and came to the surface."²¹

Geopolitics as Political Eschatology

The most comprehensive discussion of Heidegger's "politics of space" is Charles Bambach's *Heidegger's Roots: Nietzsche, National Socialism, and the Greeks*. In his study, Bambach meticulously reconstructs the toxic categorial admixture that subtended Heidegger's endorsement of the Third Reich's exterminatory "push to the East": a vision of "continental mastery" that was predicated on Germany's entitlement, qua *Herrenrasse*, to dominate its racial inferiors: Slavs, Jews, Sinti, and Roma.

Bambach convincingly demonstrates that Heidegger's embrace of "rootedness" was not merely a contingent or occasional political disposition. Instead, from the very beginning, Heidegger's thought was predicated on a commitment to "ontological rootedness" as a paramount factual-existential value. In Heidegger's first lecture course, *On the Definition of Philosophy* (1919), he characterized philosophy as an "Urwissenschaft": a "science of origins" that was engaged in a phenomenological quest to "disclose" (*entdecken*) a primordial

substratum of Being—an archaic stratum that "Platonism" and "Western metaphysics" had "concealed."²² Two years later, in *Phenomenological Interpretations of Aristotle* (1921–22), Heidegger restated the epistemic centrality of this longing for the "primordial," observing that we must "hold onto the beginning [*den Anfang*], while understanding it *radically*; remaining within the *Anfang*, we must grasp and retain it."²³

For Heidegger, "originary thinking" (*anfängliches Denken*) meant "bodenständiges Denken": a thinking that was rooted-in-soil. Conversely, Heidegger consistently condemned intellectual paradigms that shunned "rootedness" as nihilistic and degenerative, insofar as they abetted the technological mastery of Being and beings. The tendentious racism that was "always already" latent in Heidegger's predilection for thought-forms that were "rooted" and "originary" emerged with his declaration in *Überlegungen XII–XV*, "The more primordial and original [*ursprünglicher und anfänglicher*] that future decisions and questions become, the more inaccessible will they remain for this 'race'"—that is, for the Jews.²⁴

As Bambach has shown in *Heidegger's Roots*, this fundamental ontological prejudice on Heidegger's part engendered numerous ontic missteps. It conditioned his receptiveness to National Socialism as a political form that, in the *Rektoratsrede*, Heidegger praised for having vanquished the "moribund pseudocivilization [of the West]" in the name of a "more primordial and replete concept of knowledge [grounded] in the historical-spiritual world of the Volk."²⁵ As Bambach remarks, "Heidegger was convinced that 'originary philosophy' could only be done in dialogue with politics . . . as the historical-ontological site within which Dasein struggled to find its own sense of *being rooted*: in a *community*, a *Volk*, a *tradition*, and a *history*. On this reading, politics is a *politics of the Earth*, a *geopolitics*, whose ultimate meaning is *ontological* in the sense that it becomes the *site for the unfolding of basic human possibilities*. . . . The Earth becomes what the ancient Greeks called 'chthon,' the place where humans go and form a homeland."²⁶

Heidegger's defense of ontological rootedness betrayed a long-standing German Romantic prejudice concerning the unique spiritual confluence between the *Volk*, on the one hand, and *Heimat*, *Boden*, *Landschaft* (landscape), and "Mother Earth," on the other. This paradigm represented a distinctly German response to the upsets and dislocations of "modernity": especially, the risks of destabilization and loss of identity associated with the transition from *Gemeinde*,

schaft to *Gesellschaft*. The discourse of "rootedness" in "landscape" and "native soil" situated the individual in a greater cosmic whole: a force that guaranteed unity and provided an "existential" prophylaxis against atomization. It signified a rejection of *Gesellschaft* and the "division of labor" and a return to "primordiality." Since nature was endowed with spiritual properties, the "return" was viewed as "regenerative": as a quasi-theological *restitutio in integrum*. As the philosopher and former Heidegger student Wilhelm Kamlah observed in 1943, "Race and *Volkstum* [folklore], Blood and Mother Earth, are cosmic powers that determine *Thereness* [*Dawesen*] in a manner different than historical tradition."²⁷

Heidegger's efforts to amalgamate *Geopolitik* and *Heilsgeschichte*—the "politics of space" and a "politics of redemption"—dominated his middle period. In "The Origin of the Work of Art" (1935–36), Heidegger expressly linked the interplay between "Earth" and "World" to a neopagan eschatology in which the German *Volk*—which Heidegger exalted as "the most metaphysical of peoples"—emerged as the catalyst and pivot.²⁸ "World," claimed Heidegger, "is the self-revealing openness . . . concerning the simple and essential decisions [*Entscheidungen*] in the fate of a historical *Volk* [*im Geschick eines geschichtlichen Volkes*]."²⁹ "The great turning points among peoples [*Völker*]," he remarked, "emerge . . . when a *Volk* penetrates to the Earth in order to take possession of its *Heimat* [*in seine Erde hinabreicht und Heimat besitzt*]."³⁰

The oscillation between "Earth" and "World" governed the dynamic of "concealment" (*Verborgenheit*) and "unconcealment" (*Unverborgenheit*) that, according to Heidegger, defined the ontological precondition for the emergence of truth qua *alétheia*. However, in keeping with Heidegger's commitment to the ideology of German "exceptionalism," he construed *Deutschum*—the uniquely "historical" *Volk*, whose singularity emerged in its status as a nation of "Dichter und Denker"—as the ontological-historical axis on which the consummation of *Seinsgeschichte* depended. "Unconcealment," observed Heidegger, "does not subsist off somewhere in itself or even as some property of things. *Being happens as the history of human beings, as the history of a Volk.*"³¹ "The governing expanse [*Weite*] of this open relational context [the polis] is the world of the historical *Volk*. Only on the basis of this site does the *Volk* return to itself, thereby fulfilling its mission."³²

In Heidegger's eyes, the German Revolution's salvific, ontological-historical thrust portended restoring the *Volk* to its chthonic "origins," thereby offsetting

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the degenerative influences of "Enlightenment" and "progress." Heidegger railed against the "urbanization of German man [*Verstädterung des deutschen Menschen*]." Conversely, he praised National Socialism for promising to return the Germans to "soil and the country through resettlement [*dem Boden und der Land in der Siedlung*.]"³³ During the 1930s, Heidegger reconceived *Geschichtlichkeit* as *Seinsgeschichte*: a development that he claimed was driven by a cryptic dialectic of "rootedness" (*Verwurzelung*) and "redemption" (*Rettung*).³⁴ In "The Origin of the Work of Art," Heidegger defined tragedy as the "speech of the Volk [*Sagen des Volkes*]," as the site of the "battle [*Kampf*] of the new gods against the old." In this capacity, it determined the "decision" (*Entscheidung*) concerning "what is holy and unholy."³⁵

Heidegger's metaphysics of *Erde* and *Boden* endowed "German Dasein" with a higher mission and purpose. As Dieter Thomä comments appositely in *Die Zeit des Selbst und die Zeit danach*, "Heidegger's recourse to 'Earth' as 'Event' [*Geschehen*] served as a mechanism of strengthening the primordial 'action' [*ursprüngliches Handeln*] of the Volk. 'Earth' became the 'higher imperative' to which the Volk needed to subordinate itself in order to escape 'idle talk' [*Gerede*]. . . . The Volk developed itself not as a determinate, isolated human 'type,' but instead in relationship to the 'Earth.' On this basis, the German Volk assumed its 'fate.' "³⁶

Thomä's remarks lend support to Hannah Arendt's contention in "What Is Existential Philosophy?" that Heidegger's exaltation of "mythologized and muddled concepts such as 'Volk' and 'Earth'" reflected his efforts "to supply the isolated selves [of *Being and Time*] with a shared, common ground." Arendt correctly foresaw that "concepts of that kind can only lead us out of philosophy into some kind of nature-oriented superstition."³⁷

The discourse of "rootedness-in-soil" was pronouncedly "anti-Enlightenment" and "anti-Western." Over time, it hardened into a worldview that was intolerant vis-à-vis "otherness": especially in the case of ethnic groups such as Poles and Jews, who, purportedly, incarnated threats to *völkisch* unity. On these grounds, such groups were denigrated as (racial) "enemies" of the Volk. "Foreign presence [*Fremdes Wesen*]," bemoaned Heidegger, "distorts and disrupts our specific type of Being." "Why is it," he continued, "that the Germans are so susceptible to being seduced by that which is foreign [*zu fremdem Wesen*]?"³⁸

In *The Crisis of German Ideology*, George Mosse explained that the ideology of "cosmic rootedness" entailed a set of enduring metaphysical attributes:

The term "rooted" was constantly invoked by *völkisch* thinkers. . . . [It] conveyed the sense of man's correspondence with the landscape through his soul and thus with the Volk, which embodied the life-spirit of the cosmos. It provided the essential link in the *völkisch* chain of being. Moreover, rural rootedness served as a contrast to urban dislocation, or . . . "uprootedness." It also furnished a convenient criterion for excluding foreigners from the Volk. . . . Having no roots stigmatized a person as being deprived of the life-force and lacking a properly functioning soul. Rootlessness condemned the whole man, whereas rootedness signified membership in the Volk which rendered man human.³⁹

Over the course of the nineteenth century, the idiolect of "rootedness" played a key role in defining the ideology of German "exceptionalism." The *Sonderweg* paradigm demanded the rejection of the "civic" understanding of citizenship associated with the French Revolution (*jus soli*). Instead, it favored an "ethnic" definition of citizenship (*jus sanguinis*) that was closely allied with the discourse of *Heimat*, *Boden*, and *Volk*.

Like so many aspects of German ideology, following World War I, the discourse of *Bodenständigkeit* underwent a radicalization that reflected an escalating rhetoric of German superiority. Correspondingly, the inferiority of non-Germanic peoples was portrayed in harsh and defamatory, racial terms.

To be sure, there was nothing predestined or inevitable about the catastrophic dénouement of the discourse of German "rootedness." Nevertheless, historically speaking, it culminated in Goebbels's notorious dictum, formulated in the aftermath of the Nazi *Machtergreifung*, "The year 1789 has hereby been effaced from history."⁴⁰

Although Heidegger's habitual recourse to the terminology of "Heimat" and "rootedness" was not inherently reducible to his support for Nazism, his reliance on this idiom, already during the 1920s, was inherently ideological. It betrayed Heidegger's indebtedness to the discourse of the "German exceptionalism." According to Bambach, the imperatives of *Bodenständigkeit* conditioned Heidegger's

reading of German history in terms of a *völkisch* bond to the homeland and to the native Earth: a *völkisch* myth of destiny that offered a way of preserving and transforming the German Volk against forces of industrialization, urbanization, and the threat of foreign influence. . . . Only if a Volk is rooted in its own Earth can it summon the historical energy necessary for embracing and transforming its own destiny. . . . In Heideggerian terms, this *völkisch* commitment to rootedness was transformed . . . into a myth of autochthony that claimed a privileged, originary

relation between the ancient Greeks and the German *Volk*. Based on this autochthonous bond of "originary" *Völker* . . . Heidegger framed his own account of the history of Being.⁴¹

The tenets of Heideggerian *Seinsgeschichte* maintained that the "authenticity" of the Greeks and the Germans and the key to their secret bond derived from their exceptional capacity for ontological "rootedness." He esteemed both peoples (*Völker*) as *Kulturträger*: "carriers of culture." In Heidegger's view, their ontological superiority underwrote their "right" to dominate lesser peoples.

As Bambach's remarks suggest, in Heidegger's thought, *Raumpolitik* and *Seinspolitik*—the "Politics of Space" and the "Politics of Being"—went hand in hand. The "Politics of Space" provided Heidegger with a post-Nietzschean, "extramoral" standpoint that grounded his endorsement of the *Volksgemeinschaft* as a "rooted" alternative to the nihilistic "sham culture" (*Scheinkultur*) of the modern West.⁴²

Phenomenology as "Völkisch Science"

The seeds of Heidegger's exaltation of *Raum* and *Boden* were firmly planted during the 1920s. In his Kassel lectures, *The History of the Concept of Time* (1925), in which Heidegger outlined the research program of existential phenomenology, he stressed *Bodenständigkeit*'s indispensability as a methodological desideratum. According to Heidegger, the essence of "things" (*Sachen*) could only be "disclosed" once the *Seinsfrage* had been properly posed; *Bodenständigkeit* played an indispensable role, insofar as it mediated between *Seindes* and *Sein*, "beings" and "Being." In sum, Heidegger regarded "rootedness-in-soil" as an ontological precondition for experiencing Being.

Thereby, Heidegger revised Husserl's transcendental phenomenology in a telling and unsettling manner. During phenomenology's formative years, Husserl had proclaimed "To the things themselves!" (Zu den Sachen selbst!) as the school's guiding methodological precept. Husserl's adage conveyed transcendental phenomenology's aversion to the speculative assumptions of German Idealism, whose unwarranted presuppositions blocked the attainment of "cidgetic" knowledge, or the intuition of "essence."

In *The History of the Concept of Time*, Heidegger lauded Husserl's adage, while insisting that it needed to be radically reformulated. Heidegger feared

that, were phenomenology to accede to "the things themselves" in a manner that conformed with Husserl's directives, it would remain mired in superficiality. Hence, in opposition to Husserl, Heidegger reenvisioned phenomenology's mission as one of restoring things to their *Bodenständigkeit*. Only by returning to *Bodenständigkeit*, claimed Heidegger, could philosophy reinstate the lost dimension of "Ursprünglichkeit," or "primordiality." On these "grounds," Heidegger reformulated the telos of phenomenology as "*bodenständig ausweisend forschen*": "investigations that disclose the *bodenständig* character of things." Phenomenological research, Heidegger insisted, must "affirm and secure this 'ground' [diesen Boden]."⁴³ "The more originally [*ursprünglicher*] and the less prejudicially the elaboration of what is put into 'preview' is brought about," Heidegger added, "then all the more surely will concrete research into Being attain its ground [Boden] and remain rooted-in-soil [*bodenständig*]."⁴⁴

Heidegger's conflation of "Boden" and "bodenständig" was of paramount epistemological significance. In his eyes, their etymological confluence suggested a metaphysical correlation: that the key to determining the "ground" or "cause" (*Boden*) of a phenomenon was necessarily tied to unearthing its "rootedness" (*Bodenständigkeit*).

The ideological dimension of Heidegger's approach emerged when he trained his sights on Descartes's "ego cogito sum": a precept that Heidegger rejected because of its alleged "Geschichtsfeindlichkeit," its "aversion to history." Accordingly, Heidegger accused Descartes's cogito of having provided philosophy with a "false origin": a "ground that is no ground" (*ein Boden, der kein Boden ist*). This fateful misstep, he added, resulted from Descartes's attempt to base philosophical inquiry on the "*bodenlos*" (rootless) "I think."⁴⁵

Heidegger held that modern philosophy's *Bodenlosigkeit* reflected a more far-reaching and acute condition of cultural "decline": a crisis of European nihilism, which Heidegger viewed ideologically as an expression of "degeneration," or "Entartung." These concerns informed his critique of "discourse" (*Rede*) and "propositional truth" in *Being and Time*. As Heidegger admonished, "It is possible for every phenomenological concept and proposition that is derived from genuine origins to *degenerate* [Entartung] when communicated as a statement. It gets circulated in a vacuous fashion, loses its rootedness-in-soil [*Bodenständigkeit*] and becomes a free-floating thesis."⁴⁶ "The lack-of-rootedness [*Bodenlosigkeit*] of contemporary life," he remarked, "is the basis of its growing decline [*Verfall*]. Unless we succeed in returning to the essential and

sustaining powers that derive from our native soil [*aus heimatlichem Boden*], all attempts at renewal and improvement will remain hopeless."⁴⁷

Heidegger believed that the remedy for this predicament was to redirect fundamental ontology toward its "primordial" (*ursprünglich* and *anfänglich*) bases in *Boden* and *Erde*. In this way, alone, might it recover the *depth dimension* it had forfeited by following the "bodenlose" paths of "consciousness" and "subjectivity." Heidegger's remedy for the problem of "dissociated subjectivity" entailed "replacing the self-reflection of consciousness and the rational norms that derive therefrom with the blind power [*Macht*] of rooted tradition," hence with a philosophical approach that openly courted the risk of cognitive and ethical regression.⁴⁸

Heidegger's yearning for "primordiality" was accompanied by a nostalgia for a mythical *Urzeit*. As Stefan Günzel has shown in *Geophilosophie*, this yearning was already discernible in Heidegger's treatment of "Tradition" (*Überlieferung*), "Repetition" (*Wiederholung*), and authentic "historicity" (*Geschichtlichkeit*) in *Being and Time*, Division II. In a revealing avowal, Heidegger described fundamental ontology's mission as a quest for "those primordial experiences [*ursprüngliche Erfahrungen*] in which we achieve our first ways of determining the nature of Being."⁴⁹ Both of these assertions suggest that Heidegger—in a manner that was consistent with the "reactionary modernist" fascination with "prehistory" as a guarantor of experiential integrity—equated "authentic experience" with "primordial experience."

Ontological Rootedness and Authenticity

A recurrent leitmotif of Heidegger's early lecture courses was the idea that the superiority of ancient Greek thought derived from its *Bodenständigkeit*, in stark contrast with the "lack-of-rootedness" (*Bodenlosigkeit*) that characterized the thought paradigms of Western modernity.

Thus, in *The Basic Concepts of Aristotelian Philosophy* (1924), Heidegger claimed that the conceptual integrity of Aristotle's thought stemmed from "the way in which the various conceptual moments are *bodenständig*." On these grounds, he urged his contemporaries to "seek out the *Bodenständigkeit* of this [Aristotelian] conceptual skein." "We need to examine," Heidegger continued, "how the Greek manner of thinking [*die griechische Begrifflichkeit*] emerges in its *Bodenständigkeit*. Only if we proceed in this way can we be certain of discov-

ering the true nature of Aristotle's philosophical approach."⁵⁰ These assertions demonstrate that, during the mid-1920s, Heidegger regarded *Bodenständigkeit* and *Eigentlichkeit* as necessary corollaries. Increasingly, he perceived "rootedness-in-soil" as a precondition and guarantor of "authenticity."

There is a direct line of continuity between Heidegger's reflections on the *Bodenständigkeit* of Greek thought in *The Basic Concepts of Aristotelian Philosophy* and his manifestly ideological treatment of these themes, nine years later, in the *Rektoratsrede*. "For the Greeks," Heidegger insisted, "science [*Wissenschaft*] was not a 'cultural treasure' [*Kulturgut*], but the innermost determining center of their *völkisch*-political *Dasein* [*völkisch-staatlichen Daseins*]. Science is not simply the means of making the unconscious conscious, but the power that keeps all of existence in focus and embraces it."⁵¹

In *Being and Time*, Heidegger explored the idea of *Bodenständigkeit* as a guarantor of *Eigentlichkeit* in his discussion of the recently published Graf Yorck-Wilhelm Dilthey correspondence. Heidegger credited Yorck's "dynamic" understanding of *Geschichtlichkeit* with having transformed his own view of "historicity." Consequently, Heidegger praised Yorck for having developed the ontological distinction between the *ontic* and the *historical*: history as something "present-at-hand" (*vorhanden*) as opposed to history qua *Existenz*. Thereby, Yorck anticipated Heidegger's own conception of *Geschichtlichkeit* or "authentic historicity."

Yorck's conception of *Geschichtlichkeit* as a "reanimation" of the past clarified Heidegger's understanding of the link between *Bodenständigkeit* and German "destiny." Thus, "By reconfiguring German identity in terms of *Bodenständigkeit* . . . Yorck . . . pointed to an essential dimension of Germanic *Dasein*: its rootedness in an Earth whose authentic meaning was *historical* rather than geological or topographical. . . . Yorck's understanding of the native earth and the local landscape as determining forces in the shape of German historical destiny provided Heidegger with a model for a way of thinking through a connection between *Bodenständigkeit* and history."⁵²

In *Being and Time*, Division I, Heidegger had analyzed *Dasein* from the standpoint of *Zeitlichkeit*, or "temporality." In Division II, conversely, he treated *Dasein* "essentially" or "authentically": as belonging to a "Volksgemeinschaft," or "historical community." Hence, in Heidegger's sketch of authentic *Geschichtlichkeit* in *Being and Time*, Division II—especially, paragraphs 74–77—the *völkisch* stamp of Heidegger's existential ontology acceded to prominence.

Yorck's treatment of *Bodenständigkeit* was disturbingly anti-Semitic. In "Katharsis," Yorck denigrated Jews as "a tribe that lacks the feeling for a psychic and physical ground or soil": a widespread, anti-Jewish canard that repeatedly reemerged in Heidegger's work.⁵³

Following Yorck's lead, Heidegger claimed that, in order to be genuinely "geschichtlich," or "historical," a *Volk* must *actualize* its heritage. However, in order to do so—and, hence, to qualify as "authentic"—it must be *bodenständig: existentially rooted*. Consequently, Heidegger perceived *Bodenständigkeit* as an ontological capacity that allows one to distinguish "historical" from "nonhistorical" peoples. "Historical" peoples are capable of *actualizing* their heritage, whereas "nonhistorical" peoples notably lack this capacity: yet another example of the way that *Seinsgeschichte* and *Seinspolitik* were entwined in Heidegger's work.

Heidegger viewed nonhistorical peoples as a living anachronism, insofar as they ceased to be meaningful historical actors. In Heidegger's view, they failed to contribute positively to the narrative arc of *Seinsgeschichte*. More seriously, this meant that, from an ontological-historical standpoint, they had forfeited their "right to exist."

Here, an illustration drawn from Heidegger's work may prove helpful. Lecturing in 1940 on "Nietzsche and European nihilism," Heidegger claimed that France's humiliating blitzkrieg defeat at the hands of the *Wehrmacht* was not merely a *military* or *political* victory on Germany's part. Instead, he viewed it as an *Ereignis*: an "Event" that was replete with *metaphysical significance*. According to Heidegger, the French defeat expressed "a mysterious law of history which states that one day a people [i.e., the French] no longer measures up to the metaphysics that arose from its own history."⁵⁴ In sum, France's downfall attested to the obsolescence of Descartes's "metaphysics of subjectivity" and of the triumph of the *Seinsgedanke*. As Robert Minder summarized Heidegger's interpretation in *Dichter in der Gesellschaft*, "[Heidegger] triumphantly perceived the French collapse [of 1940] as a confirmation of his view that it was not the French generals who had lost the war, but Descartes!" Consequently, he "disqualified French philosophy since Descartes as a lifeless *Vermunftdenken*. German philosophy since Leibniz, conversely, yielded organic and vital knowledge."⁵⁵

In the case of the European Jewry, the metaphysical stakes of Heidegger's negative ontology of "bodenlose Völker" (rootless peoples) were raised considerably. As Louis Valencia-Garcia affirms in *Far-Right Revisionism and the End*

of History, "*Bodenständigkeit* was a belief propagated by . . . Martin Heidegger, as well as Nazi eugenicist Hans Günther, who believed that what distinguished Germans from Jews was the German *connectedness-to-the-soil*, as opposed to the supposed 'uprootedness' of the Jews. . . . In essence, without 'Being,' those who are 'unbound' from the soil are denied their humanity."⁵⁶

According to Heidegger, world Jewry's "lack of roots," or *Bodenlosigkeit*, rendered the Jews not merely "ahistorical" but also an *ontologically disintegrative force*. World Jewry's ontological-historical role as "carriers" of "machination"—a force that was inherently destructive of "rootedness" and "tradition"—meant that, in Heidegger's eyes, Jews were emissaries of the Anti-Christ. As Heidegger remarked in the *Black Notebooks*, "The Anti-Christ must, like any 'anti-matter,' originate from the same essential ground as that against which it is 'anti'—namely, like 'the Christ.' . . . In the era of the Christian accident or metaphysics [world Jewry] has been the principle of destruction."⁵⁷

In Schmittian parlance, the Jews were not merely the "enemy" (*hostis*); they were a "scourge" (*inimicus*): *the enemy of humankind*. Hence, from the standpoint of *Seinsgeschichte*, their extermination was an ontological-historical imperative: a view that helps to explain Heidegger's refusal, following the war, to condemn their annihilation. (Moreover, to combat the "Anti-Christ" is, presumably, to do God's work.) When Heidegger deigned to address the Nazi "Endlösung," he trivialized it as merely another instantiation of the evils of modern technology, hence comparable to the dislocations of "motorized agriculture and the blockading of nations."⁵⁸ Here we have another example of Heidegger's penchant for pseudoexplanations: insights that, instead of shedding light, rationalize or "explain away." By attributing responsibility for the Holocaust to "Western metaphysics," Heidegger conveniently abstracted from the developmental pathologies of the German *Sonderweg*.

In paragraph 77 of *Being and Time*, Heidegger endorsed Graf Yorck's contention that the central debility afflicting modern philosophy was its inability to conceive of thought "as a manifestation of life." Yorck maintained that, as a result of this failing, philosophy had degenerated into the "'expectoration' [sic] of uprooted thinking [*bodenloses Denken*].'" "The uprootedness of thinking [*Bodenlosigkeit des Denkens*] and the belief in such thinking," Yorck contended, "was [itself] a historical product." Yorck's accusation of *Bodenlosigkeit* functioned as a *Kampfbegriff*: a conceptual "weapon" that trained its sights on the deficiencies of modern subjectivity. In *Being and Time*, Heidegger approvingly cited Yorck's

remark that “‘modern man’—man as he has existed since the Renaissance—would be better off dead and buried [*ist fertig zum Begrabenwerden*.]”⁵⁹

In *The Role of Consciousness and History*, Yorck commented that Jewish monotheism’s superficiality was a consequence of the Jews’ “extraterritoriality”: *their lack of historical rootedness*. As Yorck explained, “It has often been remarked that the extraterritorial character of Jewish exile is responsible for the Jewish conception of God. Hence, since Jewish life is characterized by *absence of soil* [*Bodenlosigkeit*], absence of land, and absence of power, resulting in the Jews’ abstract conception of God, the Jews are, to all intents and purposes, *a people without history*.⁶⁰ Since Yorck, under the influence of Social Darwinism, regarded history as “*a struggle between historical and ahistorical peoples* [*Völker*],” he held that the future of civilization depended on the Jews’ demise (*Untergang*).⁶¹

In *Citizenship and Nationhood in France and Germany*, Rogers Brubaker remarks that, in Germany, the “ideas of 1789” provoked a “‘holy war’ of ethno-national resistance”: a struggle that entailed the elevation of “feeling over desiccated rationality; of unconscious, organic growth over conscious, artificial construction; of the vitality and integrity of traditional, rooted folk cultures as over against the soullessness and artificiality of cosmopolitan culture.”⁶² The discourse of *Raum* and *Boden* that Heidegger, in fealty to Graf Yorck von Wartenburg’s understanding of “historicity,” embraced was entirely consonant with such views. It urged eliminating “free-floating” approaches to knowledge that had prevailed under political liberalism—a worldview that, by perpetuating the confusion and disorientation of *Bodenlosigkeit*, prevented the attainment of “essence.”

Two years later, in *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics* (1929–30), Heidegger lamented the “groundlessness of philosophy” (*Bodenlosigkeit der Philosophie*) and the correlative triumph of “free-floating speculation.” Heidegger viewed both of these phenomena as expressions of ontological “decline.” They culminated in an *Existenz* in which “no one stands with anyone else and no community [*Gemeinschaft*] stands with any other in the rooted [*wurzelhaften*] unity of essential action.”⁶³

In 1930, expatiating on “the essence of truth” at the Baden *Heimattag*—an annual patriotic gathering that was held at the provincial seat in Karlsruhe—Heidegger proclaimed that truth is beholden to the “roots of the *Heimat*.” Truth’s mission and purpose, claimed Heidegger, come to fruition in “strength-

ening the *Heimat*.” The following day, a local newspaper summarized the philosophical gist of Heidegger’s address as follows: “Heidegger sought to establish the foundations for the essence of truth with concepts such as ‘sincerity’ and ‘rootedness-in-soil’ [*Bodenständigkeit*]. . . . ‘Truth’ and ‘reality’ [*Wahrheit und Wirklichkeit*] unite on the soil of the *Heimat* [*auf dem Boden der Heimat*]. . . . Thereby, one surmounts the abyss of human existence. ‘Angst’ in the face of the ‘Nothing’ reflects modern man’s lack of ‘rootedness.’”⁶⁴

Heidegger’s evolution as a “geophilosopher” tracked the radicalization of the German ideology between the Great War and the Nazi seizure of power. This trajectory culminated in his celebration in the *Rektoratsrede* of the “powers of earth and blood” (*erd- und bluthaftigen Kräfte*) that had emerged in the course of the “German Revolution.” Heidegger welcomed the Nazi seizure of power as a form of ontological “deliverance”: as an existential “Event” that presaged a “decision” for “primordiality” and “origin,” a *Heimkehr* that augured the reintegration of *Bodenständigkeit*, *Volk*, and *Erde*. The “Beginning [*Anfang*] is not behind us,” Heidegger exulted; “it lies before us!”⁶⁵ In keeping with the widespread reactionary modernist quest for “origins”—an understanding of historicity meant to contest the Enlightenment narrative of (linear) progress—Heidegger was convinced that the “way forward,” of necessity, passed through “prehistoric” as a locus of “Ursprünglichkeit.” Consequently, in *Being and Time*, Heidegger defined authentic historicity as the capacity to retrieve historical events in the “primordiality of their Being [*Ursprünglichkeit seines Seins*].”⁶⁶

The day after the *Rektoratsrede*, Heidegger presented his controversial Schlageter-*Rede*, in which he glorified acts of sabotage by the Freiburg native and Nazi martyr Albert Leo Schlageter. In the course of his remarks, Heidegger glossed the attributes of *Boden* and *Erde* as they manifested themselves in the local Schwarzwald landscape: Schlageter’s *Heimat* as well as Heidegger’s.

Heidegger’s discourse was couched in the “heimisch,” or “nativist,” idiom of the *Jugendbewegung*, which, during the pre-World War I period, had been a crucible of *Schollenromantik* ideology: the “romanticism of native soil.” In his address, Heidegger, true to the semantics of “rootedness,” highlighted the correspondences between *Boden* (native soil) and *Heldentum*, thereby suggesting that Schlageter’s “heroism” had been forged by the rugged provincial topography: “Students of Freiburg! German students! When on your hikes and outings you set foot in the mountains, forests, and valleys of this Black Forest, which is the *Heimat* of this hero [Schlageter], experience this and know: the mountains

among which the young farmer's son grew up are of primitive stone, of granite. They have long been at work hardening the Will."⁶⁷

In *Logic as the Question Concerning the Essence of Language* (1934), Heidegger revisited the thematics of *Erde* and *Boden* as the "ground" of authentic "historicity." The academic context required Heidegger to formulate his views with greater rhetorical circumspection and philosophical precision than the *Schlageter-Rede*.

In the quotation that follows, Heidegger reflected on the relationship between "geopolitics" and "historicity," emphasizing that "national histories" remain unintelligible apart from the elemental forces of *Raum*, *Erde*, and *Boden*: "We say that a stretch of land is rich in history. In this way, Earth and Soil [*Erboden*] also become part of history. Not, however, as geology would have it, as a chronological sequence. Instead, *national histories* [*die Geschichte der Völker*] are lodged in the soil [*geht in den Boden ein*], and peoples [*Völker*] 'make history' insofar as they produce space and soil [*den Raum und Boden schaffen*]."⁶⁸

Implicit in Heidegger's assertion that "national histories are lodged in the soil" is the related claim that a *Volk*'s "Raumbezogenheit"—its "relationship to space"—is an existential determinant of racial and national "difference." Heidegger explored this theme in earnest in *Nature, History, and State* (1933–34), observing, "Every *Volk* has a space that belongs to it. People who live by the sea, in the mountains, and on the plains are *different*." "Space [*Raum*]," Heidegger stipulated, "belongs to the concrete Being of a *Volk*." On these grounds, Heidegger insisted that the idea of a "*Volk ohne Raum*"—a "people without space"—was an ontological impossibility, since *Volk* and *Raum* are mutually determinative.⁶⁹

Heidegger's observations about the interrelatedness of *Volk* and *Raum*, as well as his related assertion that "peoples 'make history' insofar as they produce space and soil," dovetailed with the expansionist designs of the völkisch geopolitical school. As Wilhelm Volz, director of the Leipzig-based *Stiftung für deutsche Volks- und Kulturbodensforschung*, declared in "Lebensraum und Lebensrecht des deutschen Volkes" (1925), "Every space has its *Volk*. . . . Space is co-determining for history. . . . The *Volk* makes the space its own but space also creates its *Volk*."⁷⁰

On first blush, Heidegger's claims concerning the ontological correspondences between *Volk* and *Raum*—as represented by his assertion that "every *Volk*

has a space that belongs to it. . . . People who live by the sea, in the mountains, and on the plains are *different*"—might appear to be little more than a descriptive affirmation of environmentally conditioned cultural differences. However, a closer examination reveals that Heideggerian *Raumpolitik* was predicated on an inflexible, metaphysical conception of "ontological difference." This explains Heidegger's conviction that differences between *Völker* reflected different "ontological capacities," or "Seinsweisen." As Heidegger affirmed, "Relationship to space [*Raumbezogenheit*], that is, the mastery of space and being marked by space, belongs to the essence and ontological distinctiveness [Seinsart] of a *Volk*".⁷¹

Heidegger's views reflected the escalating ideological symbiosis between *Lebensphilosophie* and the *Volksbegriff*. According to this perspective, "the very capacity to think and see nature as a 'whole'—the art of so-called *Ganzheitsbe trachtung*—was a trait peculiar to the 'Indo-Germanic' mind, while the Jewish mind was fundamentally analytic, dissolutive, and materialistic."⁷² As Anne Harrington remarks appositely in *Reenchanted Science*, insofar as "the German and the Jewish races had radically different ways of experiencing and interacting with the natural world—ways apparently rooted in their *different biologies*—then one possible conclusion was that . . . truth, by definition, always carried the stamp of a particular *Volk* and *Blut* and served that *Volk*'s 'political reality' and 'fateful struggle.'"⁷³

Heidegger fully subscribed to this view. He held that *geopolitical differences* entailed *racial differences*: they accounted for a *Volk*'s "ontological specificity," or "Seinsart." In Heidegger's eyes, Germany's *ontological superiority*—its loftier "Seinsweise"—justified the Third Reich's geopolitical and territorial entitlements. Conversely, Heidegger denigrated "unrooted" peoples. He adjudged them ontologically deficient, insofar as they lacked a symbiotic relationship with their environment. As paragons of such ontological deprivation, Heidegger singled out "Jewish nomads," who, "having been made nomadic by the desolation of wastelands and steppes," lacked a fixed relationship to "space" and "soil."⁷⁴

Heidegger held that a *Volk*'s "Raumbezogenheit," or "relationship to space," combined with its ability to "produce space and soil," determined its capacity for *Geschichtlichkeit* and *Eigentlichkeit*: "historicity" and "authenticity." In his view, the ultimate determinant—the aspect that distinguished *historical* from *unhistorical* peoples—concerned a *Volk*'s ability to "master space": Heidegger's

euphemism for the ontological and Social Darwinist imperatives of geopolitical "self-assertion." Whereas authentically historical peoples *succeeded* in this task, unhistorical peoples *perished*. Accordingly, during the 1930s, Heidegger increasingly justified his commitment to the "metaphysics of German Dasein" via references to political geography and the "politics of space."⁷⁵

The Entitlements of *Lebensraum*: The "Law of Expanding Spaces"

Following the Great War, the "politics of space" devolved into a febrile discourse of revanchist nationalism. Geopoliticians dismissed international law as a baseless, insubstantial "abstraction," hence a doctrine that violated the state's "natural right" to increase its power via the quest for *Lebensraum*. As Karl Haushofer (1869–1946), the doyen of the German geopolitical school, put it, "Among life forms struggling for *Existenz* on the face of the Earth, the lofty vocabulary of international law has no relevance or meaning." Instead, it was necessary to supplant this outmoded idiom—an atavism of Enlightenment "natural right" discourse—with the nebulous concept of "biologically correct borders."⁷⁶

Proponents of geopolitics rejected the claims of international law as inherently ideological: a stalking horse for Western aggression and territorial expansion, hence little more than an ideational smokescreen for Western "interests." Conversely, they argued that the "politics of space" offered an "objective," nonideological alternative to the West's moral-legal hypocrisy, especially with respect to "indemonstrable" claims of modern natural law.

To remedy these subterfuges and injustices, German *Raumpolitiker* proposed that, henceforth, the criterion of legitimacy in international politics should be the "law of expanding spaces." As formulated by Haushofer, the "law of expanding spaces" sanctioned the entitlement of so-called "large-space nations" to dominate "small-space nations."

The "politics of space" advanced by the German geopolitical school transposed Social Darwinist arguments to the plane of interstate relations. At base, its champions merely reprised the idea of the "right of the strongest." The geopoliticians dismissed approaches to international law predicated on norms of equity and fairness as little more than humanitarian hypocrisy. They claimed that the only realistic, nonideological solution to politics among nations would be to replace existing international law with the unvarnished brutality of *Machtpolitik*.

The "law of the growth of spaces" and the "right" of "large-space peoples" to rule "small-space peoples" harked back to Friedrich Ratzel's *Lebensraum* doctrine. According to Ratzel (1844–1904), the cornerstone of geopolitics was "the law of movement from narrow to broad spaces."⁷⁷ Nations that failed to expand their boundaries "degenerated." Hence, geopolitical expansion was deemed a matter of life or death. Nations that shunned the "law of expanding spaces" jeopardized their own survival.

The proponents of National Socialist *Raumpolitik* regarded the continuous expansion and growth of states as an existential imperative. In the dog-eat-dog world of Great Power *Machtpolitik*, a *Volk* that ignored this imperative was destined to perish (*unterzugehen*). Territorial aggrandizement was viewed as a sine qua non for the survival of "large-space nations," which were simultaneously extolled as the "carriers" of culture or civilization.

The geopolitical school claimed that *Raumpolitik* presaged a new era of legal "objectivity." However, in keeping with the tradition of German Romanticism, its proponents elevated *Boden* and *Erde* to the rank of supernatural powers: entities that were *alive* or *ensouled*. As Adolf Grabowsky observed in *Staat und Raum* (1933), "If we can no longer attribute all progress to the intervention of great personalities, as a more naïve time did, and can, therefore, no longer unreservedly profess a heroic worldview, we can still render the Earth itself a hero . . . as the mighty foundation that man battles to subdue and upon which he remains, in the last analysis, ever dependent."⁷⁸

In essence, the geopolitical standpoint provided a series of threadbare rationalizations for predatory acts of German self-assertion. It sought to replace "normative" approaches to dispute resolution, such as Hans Kelsen's doctrine of "peace through law," with racially driven imperialism. One of the primary reasons for geopolitics' ascendancy derived from its opposition to the emerging consensus in favor of cosmopolitan law as a peaceable alternative to unregulated armed conflict. By reducing international politics to a single, arbitrary and subjective variable—the acquisition of "territory," or *Raum*—geopolitics simplified, at great cost, the complexities of international law.

By equating "history-making" with the "production of space and soil," Heidegger fused fundamental ontology with the worldview of the German geopolitical school, whose leading exponents were Haushofer, Ratzel, and Hans Grimm (1875–1959). Heidegger's geopolitical "Turn" sought to address the dilemma—to invoke Grimm's thesis—of a *Volk ohne Raum*. It was a challenge

that Heidegger and the German geopoliticians sought to resolve via the quest for *Lebensraum*, a notion that Heidegger defined euphemistically as the way that a "Volk that lacks sufficient *Lebensraum* [achieves] its positive unfolding."³⁹

The Dilemmas of a "Volk ohne Raum"

Going back to Kant and Herder, the relationship between geography and philosophy had been a prominent feature of German *Geistesgeschichte*. Since the age of German Romanticism, discussions of *Erde* and *Raum* had been oriented toward "holism," the cosmological interconnectedness of "life" in its totality. According to this perspective, human cultural evolution could not be thought apart from natural history. Instead, the two spheres were regarded as mutually complementary.⁴⁰

During the late nineteenth century, the field of geopolitics was significantly influenced by the *Lebensphilosophie* vogue—an orientation that profoundly impacted the work of Ratzel, the de facto founder of the German "geopolitical school," who coined the term *Lebensraum*. Ratzel's understanding of political geography internalized German Romanticism's holistic understanding of space. Ratzel's approach was significantly influenced by Nietzsche's vitalism and the rising tide of Social Darwinism.

Ratzel viewed the "state" as a "space organism": as an organic "life form" whose roots were planted firmly in the soil, or *Boden*, and whose survival depended on successful adaptation to its geophysical environment. Ratzel maintained that

it was natural and desirable for a healthy "space organism" to add to its strength through territorial expansionism. . . . Hence, the growing state will tend to absorb the less successful ones and will also aim to expand into what is strategically and economically the most valuable territory. . . . Every state needs to grow in this way if it is to flourish or it will decline and eventually disappear, incorporated into the territory of another more successful state. . . . The acquisition of *Lebensraum* makes the dynamic state more powerful; it will also make its people stronger and more enterprising: fit to dominate ever larger territories.⁴¹

Heidegger's understanding of geopolitics displayed a familiarity with Ratzel's doctrines. For the most part, however, his understanding of geopolitics derived from his esteem for Hans Grimm's novel *Volk ohne Raum* (1926).

Heidegger singled out Grimm's work for praise in a March 1932 letter to his brother, Fritz. "Are you familiar with Hans Grimm's *Volk ohne Raum*?" inquired Heidegger. "Whoever does not already know about the meaning of *Heimat* and the fate [*Schicksal*] of our Volk learns about it here."⁴²

Grimm's long-winded novel faithfully anticipated Nazi *Grossraum* doctrine: the abandonment of *Weltpolitik* (overseas colonialism), which had prevailed during the *Kaiserreich* (1871–1918), in favor of "continental imperialism"—a standpoint that was predicated on the Social Darwinist entitlement of large-space nations to subsume "small" nations. In *The Ideological Origins of Nazi Imperialism*, Woodruff Smith summarized *Volk ohne Raum*'s central thesis as follows: "If the German people are to survive without losing the fundamental spiritual and material elements of their culture . . . [and] if Germany as a political entity is not to be destroyed by foreign enemies and internal division, Germans require 'large spaces' for expansion."⁴³ Franz Neumann, reflecting on Grimm's towering influence—the Nazis' promotion of Grimm's novel helped propel it to best-seller status—remarked, "With *Volk ohne Raum*, we are given a popular, emotional treatment of geopolitics. The entire 1200 pages constitute one long outcry against British power and the preparation for German imperial expansion."⁴⁴

In the *Black Notebooks*, Heidegger revisited Grimm's theses in *Volk ohne Raum*. He praised Grimm's "dynamic" understanding of "space"—a euphemism for *Lebensraum*—as a genuine ontological breakthrough. Grimm's singular achievement, Heidegger gushed, was having facilitated the "opening and upsurge of Being."⁴⁵

Heidegger maintained that pre-Socratic ontology—especially Heraclitus's understanding of Being as "polemos," or "war"—provided a metaphysical writ for German territorial aggrandizement: the *Drang nach Osten*, or "push to the East." As Otto Pöggeler aptly commented in "Heidegger, Nietzsche, and Politics," "Heidegger linked the beginning of philosophizing to the teaching of Heraclitus on 'war as the father of all things' and the depths of *physis*. . . . It was the study of the pre-Socratics . . . , combined with the study of Nietzsche, that led Heidegger to choose National Socialism."⁴⁶ In Heidegger's mind, Heraclitus's conception of Being as *polemos* and Grimm's depiction of the Germans as a *Volk ohne Raum* became inextricably fused.

During the 1930s, Heidegger attempted to combine Heraclitus's notion of Being qua *polemos* with Carl Schmitt's controversial "friend/enemy" distinction.

"The pinnacle of Great Politics," claimed Schmitt in *The Concept of the Political*, "is the moment when the enemy comes into concrete clarity as the enemy."⁸⁷ Heidegger, impelled by his reading of Schmitt, reinterpreted *polemos* in light of the "metaphysical" value of "standing against the enemy. . . . standing firm in confrontation [Stehen gegen den Feind, . . . das Durchstehen in der Auseinandersetzung]."⁸⁸

However, the aspect of Schmitt's doctrine that made the deepest impression on Heidegger was Schmitt's treatment of the "domestic enemy," or "inneren Feind." In *The Concept of the Political*, Schmitt argued, "The requirements of internal peace compel [the state], in critical situations, to decide upon the domestic enemy. Every state provides some kind of formula for the declaration of an internal enemy."⁸⁹ Consequently, Heidegger sought to merge Heraclitus's ontological treatment of "*polemos*" with Schmitt's justification of the state's entitlement to suppress the "internal enemy."

Heidegger's concerns pertained especially to German Jews. Since 1929, Heidegger had been increasingly disturbed by the "Jewification of the German spirit [*Verjudung des deutschen Geistes*]."⁹⁰ Inspired by the views of Schmitt and Heraclitus, Heidegger asserted, "It is a fundamental requirement to *find the enemy, to unmask the enemy . . .*, so that this standing-against-the-enemy may happen and so that Dasein does not lose its 'edge.'"⁹¹ Heidegger contended that, in light of the unique risks that German Jews, as the "domestic enemy," posed to the unity and homogeneity of the *Volksgemeinschaft*, the ultimate goal in combating this threat must be "total annihilation." As Heidegger explained,

The domestic enemy can attach itself to the innermost roots of the Dasein of a Volk; it can set itself against the Volk's own essence and act against it. The Kampf is all the more fierce and all the more difficult . . . since it consists in a mutual coming to blows. It is often far more difficult and wearisome to catch sight of the [domestic] enemy as such, to bring the enemy into the open, to harbor no illusions about the enemy, to keep oneself ready for attack, to cultivate and intensify a constant readiness, and to prepare the attack, looking far ahead with the goal of total annihilation [völlige Vernichtung].⁹²

Thus, some eight years prior to the Wannsee Conference, at which the "Final Solution" to the Jewish question was set in motion, Heidegger, inspired by this amalgamation of Schmitt and Heraclitus, donned the mantel of a prophet of "völlige Vernichtung," or "total annihilation."

Heidegger's appropriation of Heraclitus's Fragment 53—"war is the father of all things"—for National Socialist purposes was hardly original. In a speech of July 1927, Hitler demonstrated that he, too, appreciated the value of Heraclitus's maxim as a writ for "struggle" and the quest for *Lebensraum*. The Führer's Social Darwinist reading of Heraclitus's adage did not differ qualitatively from Heidegger's interpretation:

Struggle [Kampf] is the father of all things. This means the selection of the best results through struggle. Without struggle the world suffocates through the overgrowth of the mediocre and the inferior.

Imperialism is the *Kampf* for the survival of the Volk, . . . and whoever refuses to struggle surrenders his future. He is no longer the hammer but instead the anvil. Whoever does not want to be either hammer or anvil . . . will be crushed between hammer and anvil.⁹³

It was Haushofer—a retired army general—who, from his perch at the University of Munich, did the most to endow the nascent field of geopolitics with an aura of academic legitimacy. In 1924, following the Nazis' ill-fated Munich Beer Hall Putsch, Haushofer became a habitué of Landsberg prison, where he found an attentive disciple in Rudolf Hess, the Führer's second in command. In effect, he became Hess's political mentor. In 1934, Haushofer dedicated his influential primer on geopolitics, *Weltpolitik von Heute*, to Hess. During the 1930s, the Nazis, under Haushofer's tutelage, established the Reichstelle für Raumforschung (National Office for Research on Space), whose findings were published in the journal *Raumforschung und Raumordnung*.⁹⁴

The extent to which Haushofer came into direct contact with Hitler at Landsberg prison during the composition of *Mein Kampf* is a matter of dispute. Be that as it may, the fruits of Haushofer's tutelage were readily apparent in the book's penultimate chapter, "Eastern Orientation and Eastern Policy," in which Hitler lauded geopolitics as a template for restructuring the political boundaries of Mitteleuropa. "A nation's sustenance," Hitler declared, "is assured by the amount of its existing soil [Boden], . . . which, ultimately, . . . is determined by military-geopolitical [wehr-geopolitische] considerations." He conceived his mission as Führer as "leading this Volk from its present, restricted *Lebensraum* to new land and soil."⁹⁵ Hitler repeatedly stressed the "metapolitical" entwinement of *Boden*, *Volk*, and *Raum*. Viewed as an ensemble, this admixture proved to be a lethal semantic cocktail: a sinister template for Nazi *Bevölkerungspolitik*.

Germany's aspirations to continental predominance were predicated on a nebulous confluence of geopolitical, demographic, and racial-cultural factors. Like Nazi race doctrine, "geopolitics" was fundamentally a pseudoscience: ideological camouflage that served as a pretext for the colonization of the Third Reich's eastern neighbors.

The concepts of "location" (*Ort*) and "space" (*Raum*) constituted the ideological cornerstone of *Raumpolitik* doctrine. "Location" referred to the dangers of the German *Mittellage*: a notion that invoked Social Darwinist arguments to justify Germany's claims to central European hegemony. The ideology of *Raumpolitik* suggested that, the greater Germany's "endangerment," the more it was entitled to pursue an aggressive foreign policy—purportedly, on the grounds of "self-defense."

Haushofer's influence proved decisive in reorienting Germany's quest for *Lebensraum* away from the goals of *Weltpolitik*, or "overseas colonialism," toward the benefits of "continental imperialism." As we read in *Mein Kampf*, "It is not in colonial acquisitions that we must see the solution to the problem of [Lebensraum], but exclusively in the acquisition of a territory or settlement, which will enhance the area of the Motherland. . . . Should it fail to extend its soil [*Boden*], a great *Volk* is doomed to destruction. This is especially true when not some little negro nation or other is involved, but the Germanic Mother of Life, which has provided the contemporary world with its cultural model."⁹⁵

In *An Introduction to Metaphysics* (1935), Heidegger restated, nearly verbatim, the ideology of the German *Mittellage*, which, by this point, had become the central justification for Nazi continental expansion and the *Drang nach Osten*. As Heidegger observed, in another example of his confluence of *Seinsgeschichte* and *Seinspolitik*, "Today, [Germany] is caught in a pincer. Situated in the middle, our *Volk* incurs the severest pressure. It is the *Volk* with the most neighbors, and, hence the most endangered *Volk*, and for all that, the most metaphysical 'Volk.' As a historical *Volk*, our *Volk* must move itself, and thereby the history of the West, . . . into the primordial realm of the powers of Being. If the great *Entscheidung* [decision] regarding Europe is not to bring annihilation, that *Entscheidung* must be made in terms of new spiritual energies unfolding historically from out of the middle."⁹⁶

Heidegger's "pincers" metaphor alluded to Germany's long-standing fear of geopolitical "encirclement." On one side stood the Western powers; on the other side, the threat of "Jewish Bolshevism." From a Social Darwinist perspective,

Germany's *Mittellage* entailed a right to "self-defense." As we have seen, it was widely believed that, in the predatory sphere of interstate relations, nations that failed to expand ultimately perished. Heidegger's ruminations on the German *Mittellage* reflected this dilemma. The influence of geopolitics also explains his claim that the only alternative to national "self-assertion" is "annihilation."

In addition, by exalting *Deutschum* as "the most metaphysical 'Volk,'" Heidegger sought to furnish an ontological justification of the Third Reich's drive for continental hegemony. Heidegger's endorsement of Nazi Germany's "push to the East" emerged directly from his doctrine of the "history of Being." According to this narrative, Russia and the United States were the preeminent representatives of planetary *Machenschaft*. Their influence resulted in "the boundless etcetera of Indifference and Always-the-sameness, . . . the domination of . . . the indifferent Mass, [combined with] an active onslaught that destroys all Rank and every world-creating impulse of Spirit." As Heidegger concluded, "This is the onslaught we call *the demonic* (in the sense of *destructive evil*)."⁹⁷ As exemplars of "European nihilism," the United States and Russia posed a significant stumbling block to Germany's prospects of realizing "another Beginning." For these reasons, Heidegger felt compelled to provide an ontological-historical rationale for their elimination.

"State-Founders" as the "Violent Ones"

Heidegger's geopolitical "Kehre" also conditioned his understanding of the transformative role that art and poetry played in the process of "state-founding" (*Staatschaffen*): that is, their contribution to establishing the ontological parameters of the *Volksgemeinschaft*. Thus, in "Hölderlin and the Essence of Poetry" (1930)—whose composition predated the advent of the Nazi dictatorship by three years—Heidegger designated "Dichtung" as the "Primordial language [*Ursprache*] of a historical *Volk*."⁹⁸ "Language," declared Heidegger, "is the Ur-poetry [*Urdichtung*] through which a *Volk* poeticizes Being. . . . By virtue of great poetry, a *Volk* enters into history."⁹⁹

Heidegger apotheosized "Poets, Thinkers, and Statesmen" as an existentially privileged caste. They embodied an *ontological elite* that Heidegger lionized as the "three creative powers of historical Dasein." Heidegger charged this guild—the "shock troops" of fundamental ontology—with the mission of establishing "fundamental attunement as the truth of a *Volk* [*die Grundstimmung als Wahrheit eines Volkes*]."¹⁰⁰

In all of these respects, "Poets, Thinkers, and Statesmen" played an indispensable role in furthering the ends of *Seinsgeschick*, or the "destining of Being." As Heidegger explained, "The historical Dasein of *Völker*—their rise, their pinnacle, and their decline—originates from poetry; out of poetry there arises a proper knowing in the sense of philosophy; and from both of these, the construction of the Dasein of a *Volk* as a *Volk through the State*—i.e., politics. The primordial, historical epoch of *Völker* is the epoch of *Poets, Thinkers, and Statesmen* [*Dichter, Denker, und Staatsschöpfer*], those who authentically [eigenlich] ground and establish the historical Dasein of a *Volk*.¹⁰¹

Thereby, Heidegger reprised a leitmotif that derived from the political philosophy of German Romanticism: the trope of the "Aesthetic State."¹⁰² Heidegger held that Hölderlin's distinct contribution to the ethos of "Staatsschaffen" was exemplified by the poem "Der Tod fürs Vaterland" (1800). By lauding the "*Volk* of this Earth as a historical *Volk*," remarked Heidegger, Hölderlin highlighted the essential nexus between "rootedness-in-Earth" and "historicity."¹⁰³ Heidegger claimed that "Earth-related" (*Erdbezogen*) *Völker* were ontologically superior to "unrooted" or "ungrounded" peoples. This superiority conferred on them the prerogatives of "Herrschaft": the right "to rule" or "to dominate."

As I indicated in chapter 3, Heidegger's *völkisch* appropriation of Hölderlin as the "Stimme des Volkes" (voice of the *Volk*) meshed seamlessly with the protofascist interpretations of Hölderlin's work that had been pioneered by George-Kreis luminaries such as Norbert von Hellingrath and Max Kommerell. From Kurt Hildebrandt to Alfred Baeumler, one finds the same apotheosis of Hölderlin as the "embodiment of the German *Volksgeist* and the *Führerprinzip*": the "antagonist of an alien, excessively Westernized, rationalistic Idealism" and the "redeemer of a Germanic-Greek *Mythos* that derives from the essential root and ground of humanity."¹⁰⁴ As Baeumler observed in "Hellas und Germanien" (1937), "By honoring Hölderlin, we honor . . . the man of our destiny. His path established the fateful path of the German spirit [*Schicksalsweg des deutschen Geistes*]. By way of *Hellas*, it finds its way back to *Germanien*.¹⁰⁵ Faithful to these interpretations, in Hölderlin's Hymns "Germanien" and "Der Rhein" (1934), Heidegger lauded Hölderlin as a prophet of "German destiny" and as the "poet of the Germans." In order for the Germans to fulfill their appointed "mission," claimed Heidegger, it was imperative for them to acknowledge Hölderlin as the foremost "power in the history of our *Volk* [*die Macht in der Geschichte unseres Volkes*]."¹⁰⁶

Heidegger's bellicose Hölderlin interpretation exalted the ethos of the "community of the trenches," or *Grabenschutzmenschen*, that, in *Being and Time*, had served as the "ontic" point of reference for the concept of "Being-toward-death." Similarly, in his lectures on Hölderlin, Heidegger proclaimed, "The basis for *Frontsoldaten* camaraderie . . . is the proximity of death, each man's sacrifice in the face of the same Nothingness." "Death and a readiness for sacrifice," Heidegger continued, "produce the space of community [*Raum der Gemeinschaft*] from which camaraderie springs." Thereby, *Angst* in the face of death metamorphosed into a touchstone of existential profundity. It facilitated what Heidegger described as a "metaphysical proximity to the unconditioned." "Were it not for death as free sacrifice," Heidegger concluded, "camaraderie would not exist."¹⁰⁷

Heidegger's "metapolitical" instrumentalization of Hölderlin as a "German Homer" or a "German Tyrtaeus" was accompanied by a litany of geopolosophical aperçus that exalted the imperatives of "historicity," "rootedness," and "dwelling." "As founding [*Stiftung*]," claimed Heidegger, "poetry secures the ground of possibility so that human being can settle upon the Earth . . . [and] become historical [*geschichtlich*], which means: to be a *Volk*." "This authentic *Being-settled and rooted-in-soil* [*bodenständig zu sein*], this 'dwelling,'" he continued, "is grounded in and through poetry." Highlighting the "metapolitical" value of these insights, Heidegger claimed that they epitomized "politics in the highest and most genuine sense."¹⁰⁸ As interpreters, we would be remiss if we declined to take Heidegger at his word.

During the 1930s, Heidegger reprised this conception of the "state-founding" capacities of poetry and art in a wide variety of contexts. These efforts were part of a more general effort on his part to develop an aestheticized political ontology. As Heidegger declaimed in *Hölderlin's Hymns "Germanien" and "Der Rhein"*, the *Volk*'s "Being [*Seyn*] is founded poetically. . . . [It is] rooted in the deeds [*Täterschaft*] of the State-Founders of the Earth [*Staatsgründer der Erde*], and in historical space [*Raum*.]¹⁰⁹ Heidegger elevated the poet, by virtue of his capacity as a "Staatsgründer" or "state-founder," to the pantheon of "Halbgötter," or "demigods." Thereby, Heidegger sought to provide an ontological warrant for the *Führerprinzip*. Heidegger clearly regarded himself as a philosophical Führer, a latter-day "philosopher king." As Heidegger observed, "The true and only Führer points the way, by virtue of his Being [*Seyn*], to the realm of the demigods. *Führersein* [Being-a-Führer], as a form of finite Being, is a 'fate.'"¹¹⁰

Since the poet's "mission" was to mediate between the spheres of "gods and men," he metamorphosed into a "Dichter-Führer."

Heidegger's attempt to enlist *Dichtung* in the service of "state-founding"—a recurrent leitmotif of his *Denken* during the 1930s—coalesced with National Socialism's self-understanding as a "national aestheticism." Nazi leadership cadres were rife with self-styled "artist-statesmen." Prior to emigrating to Germany, Alfred Rosenberg, who was born in Reval, Estonia, studied architecture in Riga and Moscow. Goebbels, for his part, trained as a Germanist at the University of Heidelberg under the supervision of Max von Waldberg and Georg-Kreis loyalist Friedrich Gundolf. He was also the author of a novel, *Michael*. Hitler, who viewed himself as a great architect, had tried his hand at painting during his "wilderness years" in Vienna. He had also sought to enroll—unsuccessfully—in the Vienna Academy of the Arts.

According to Manfred Frank, the Nazi elite's training in the arts was a "legacy of nineteenth-century German Romanticism, which approached social issues through the lens of art-theory and art-as-religion [*Kunst-Theorie und Kunst-Religion*], and which—as the cases of Rainer Maria Rilke and Stefan George demonstrate—viewed *Dichtung* as a substitute for *Myth*.¹¹¹ The "crypto-aesthetic" orientation that was shared by the NSDAP leadership suggests that they regarded the shift to politics later in life as a second career choice.

During the 1920s, the longing for a New Religion and a New Mythology profoundly influenced the discipline of geopolitics: a fact that helps to account for the gnostic features that distinguished the field.¹¹² In geopolosophers' search for holistic explanations, they sought to discern the subterranean forces that determined life and history behind the scenes. As one prominent *Raumpolitiker* declared during the 1920s, "Our time is an epic of dissolution that recalls the collapse of the ancient world, the Reformation, and the Renaissance. It is the longing for a New Religion that spills over into the social and political doctrines of the day."¹¹³

For similar reasons, proponents of geopolitics often insisted that their discipline was closer to "art" than to "science." Writing in *Die Tat* in 1925, Erich Günther asserted that geopolitics embodied a "synthesis of art and science." Hermann Lautensach, one of the most influential political geographers of the 1920s, proposed that geopolitics bore greater resemblance to a "Kunstlehre" than to a science.¹¹⁴

Heidegger's fascination with the idea of an "Aesthetic State" crested with his treatise on "the origin of the work of art." There, Heidegger invoked the inter-

play between "Earth" and "World" to illustrate the dynamic of "concealment" (*Verborgenheit*) and "unconcealment" (*Unverborgenheit*) that he viewed as the ontological precondition for the emergence of truth qua "alētheia," or "unveiling." Faithful to the ideology of German exceptionalism, Heidegger construed *Deutschum*—whose singularity derived, in part, from its status as a nation of "Dichter und Denker"—as the uniquely "historical" *Volk*. "Unconcealment," Heidegger insisted, "does not transpire somewhere in and of itself or as a property of things. *Being* happens as the history of human beings, as the history of a *Volk*."¹¹⁵

Heidegger's claim that "unconcealment" and the "happening of *Being*" are tied to "the history of a *Volk*" reinforces the view that *Seinsgeschichte* was predicated on the ideology of "racial difference." Heidegger held that ontological capacities reflected differences in the racial constitution—the "ontological nature," or *Seinsart*—of a *Volk*. Moreover, Heidegger repeatedly insisted that the German *Volk* possessed privileged access to the mysterious "sendings of *Being*" (*Schickungen des Seins*) and that, consequently, the advent of "another Beginning" was inextricably linked to the unique ontological capacities of *Deutschum*. As Heidegger declared in the *Black Notebooks*, "The anticipatory and essential moment of *Entscheidung* concerning the essence of history is reserved to the Germans."¹¹⁶ Conversely, the most one could expect from ontologically, hence racially, inferior races or *Völker*—Slavs, Jews, and "Negroes"—was that they obediently heed the commands of their German *Herrschers* (rulers).

The philosophical inspiration underlying Heidegger's reflections on "state-founders" as "violent ones" (*Gewalt-tätige*) was Nietzsche's portrayal of "state-creators" in *The Genealogy of Morals* as "unconscious artists." Nietzsche characterized "state-creators" as individuals who are "*violent by gesture and deed*"; men who "create and imprint forms instinctively." "Where they emerge," remarked Nietzsche, "new . . . structures of domination [*Herrschafts-Gebilde*] arise." According to Nietzsche, the "state-creators'" "shaping of a population" necessarily occurred through "acts of violence": acts that Nietzsche described as "a terrible tyranny that continues working until the raw material of people and semi-animals has been . . . kneaded and made compliant." "The word 'State,'" Nietzsche stipulated, means "a pack of blond beasts of prey: a conqueror and master race, which, organized on a war footing, . . . unscrupulously lays its dreadful paws on a populace."¹¹⁷

Heidegger and the "Law of Expanding Spaces"

In keeping with the Social Darwinist conception of "life" as a "Kampf um Existenz" (struggle for existence), Heidegger maintained that *Völker* who shunned the challenges of territorial expansion—"die über Heimatgebundenheit hinaus nicht vorstossen"—risked forfeiting their "Volkheit," or "peoplehood." In sum, they risked forfeiting their *wölkisch* "authenticity" or "substance." Heidegger claimed that the risks of such forfeiture were especially grave among "Volksdeutsche," or "ethnic Germans." As Heidegger explained, although "ethnic Germans" possess a "German *Heimat*, they do not enjoy the prerogatives of belonging to the State or Reich." Consequently, they are in constant danger of "forfeiting their ontological authenticity" [*so ihrer eigentlichen Seinsweise entbehren*], since the latter is contingent on belonging to a State.¹¹⁸

Heidegger's arguments furnished an ontological warrant for Nazi *Lebensraum* doctrine, which demanded (1) the political incorporation of *Volksdeutsche* within the expanded German state, or *Grossdeutsches Reich* and (2) the subordination of the Slavs, who were perceived as racially inferior, to German interests. Heidegger's account of Slavic racial inferiority was ontologically conditioned.

Heidegger held that a *Volk*'s spatially conditioned predisposition for "historicity" manifested itself in its potential for "self-assertion." Its capacity for "self-assertion," in turn, determined whether or not a particular *Volk* was *authentically historical*. A tragic fate awaited peoples or *Völker* that lacked this capacity, who were unable to "project themselves into space." Such peoples were demonstrably "unhistorical." As such, they were destined to perish (*untergehen*).

Nevertheless, in Heidegger's quest to determine the constituents and parameters of *Raumpolitik*, he, like other representatives of the geopolitical school, ran up against a contradiction. On the one hand, in keeping with the tenets of Nazi race doctrine, Heidegger exalted the ontological superiority of peoples who were *bodenständig*, or rooted-in-soil. However, a potential inconsistency arose as Heidegger sought to reconcile the demands of "rootedness" with the "right to conquest": two desiderata that, on first view, seemed irreconcilable. One emphasized the primacy of "place" (*Ort*), in keeping with geopolitics' embrace of racialized, romantic environmentalism. (The German Romantics, for example, regarded "landscape" as an expression of the German "soul," a perspective that was consistent with eighteenth-century natural philosophy.) The

other, conversely, stressed the necessity of transcending rootedness in keeping with the ends of colonial self-assertion, thereby satisfying the geopolitical imperative to "master" spaces inhabited by inferior, "unhistorical" peoples.

Heidegger conceived of an imaginative way to resolve this quandary by relying on an approach known as "dynamic geopolitics." The advantage of "dynamic geopolitics" was that it surpassed the environmental determinism that had bedeviled geopolitics' more traditionally minded, Anglo-American exponents. Advocates of dynamic geopolitics insisted that peoples were not simply at the mercy of environmental factors such as climate, topography, and location. Instead, they maintained that *Volk* and *Ort*, "people" and "place," were "codetermining": they stood in a relationship of mutual reciprocity.

In keeping with the dynamic geopolitical model, Heidegger claimed that it was incumbent on "historical" peoples to surmount the geographical limitations of "location" in order—as Heidegger euphemistically put it—to "strike out" and "interact with wider expanses." In this way alone might historical peoples, such as the Germans, actualize their ontological-historical "right" to self-assertion: an entitlement that Heidegger equated with the "right to conquest." As Heidegger explained in *Nature, History, and State*, "It is not proper for a *Volk* that is rooted-in-soil and nurtured-by-soil to perceive its unique ideal in the 'settled' nature that finds its realization in the *peasantry*: in its [the peasantry's] expansion, growth, and, health. Equally necessary is the domination of territory and space [*Beherrschung des Bodens und des Raumes*], the act of striking out and interacting in wider expanses. The concrete manner in which a *Volk* interacts with space and shapes it necessitates both aspects: rootedness-in-soil and interaction [*Bodenständigkeit und Verkehr*]."¹¹⁹

In Heideggerian *Raumpolitik*, the role of the state was paramount, since its power and prowess determined the *Volk*'s effectiveness in its efforts to "master" its geopolitical environment. Consequently, Heidegger held that the state's role was crucial for a *Volk*'s self-understanding, insofar as it determined the *Volk*'s "willingness and power to strike out and expand. . . . We can only genuinely speak of the state," Heidegger continued, "when, in addition to *Bodenständigkeit*, the will to extend its reach, to interaction, also becomes a factor."¹²⁰

However, the task of "striking out and interacting in wider expanses" was problematic in the case of peoples for whom "space" and "state" failed to coincide. Therefore, although in such cases the *Volk* in question may possess a *Heimat*, for want of a state, it lacked the capacity to *expand*. Thereby, a *Volk*'s

Dasein and survival were placed at risk, since it lacked the political means of safeguarding and protecting its *Existenz*.

Heidegger explained the existential divide between *Heimat* and state as follows:

I possess a *Heimat* by virtue of my birth. . . . *Heimat* is expressed by virtue of being rooted-in-soil and rooted-in-the-earth [Bodenständigkeit und Erdgebundenheit]. . . . *Heimat* becomes the ontological modality of a *Volk* when it strikes out into wider expanses . . . in the form of a state. . . . Peoples or population groups that fail to expand the borders of their *Heimat*-spaces . . . are in constant danger of losing their *Volk* identity and perishing. This is the great problem of the Germans who live beyond the borders of the Reich, who have a German *Heimat*, but who do not belong to the German state or the German Reich, and who are, therefore, deprived of their ontological authenticity. . . . The space of a *Volk* and the soil of a *Volk* extends as far as the members of the *Volk* have found a *Heimat* and have become *bodenständig*. The space of the state and its territory find their borders by striking out into wider expanses.¹²¹

Faithful to the ideology of the *Großdeutsches Reich*, Heideggerian *Raumpolitik* endorsed the goal of unlimited German territorial aggrandizement.

The *Großdeutsches Reich* was a geopolitical fiction: a rationalization of the German drive toward eastward colonial expansion. Proponents of the *Drang nach Osten* (push to the East) justified their expansionist designs by dramatizing the plight of the *Volksdeutsche* or “ethnic Germans”—as Heidegger phrased it, “the great problem of the Germans who live beyond the borders of the Reich”—as a pretext. However, as a rule, advocates of Germany’s “push to the East” neglected to mention that many of the *Volksdeutsche* had migrated to the east centuries earlier, no longer spoke German, and had little desire to return to the “Fatherland.”

Sidestepping these inconvenient truths, Heidegger highlighted the predicament of the *Volksdeutsche*, whom he described as “Germans who live beyond the borders of the Reich, who have a German *Heimat*, but who do not belong to the German state or the German Reich.”¹²² He supplemented these traditional justifications of German expansion by adorning them with a “metaphysical” claim concerning the imperative of restoring the “ontological authenticity” of the “stateless” *Volksdeutsche* by reincorporating them within the Reich.

Heidegger’s contention that ethnic Germans who lived beyond the Reich’s borders “have a German *Heimat*” was an ideological fiction that had been fabri-

cated by archaeologists, ethnologists, and demographers who sought to prove that Slavic peoples were inherently *kulturlos*—“incapable of culture”—and that, historically, they had been dependent on their German overlords for whatever meager trappings of “civilization” they had acquired.¹²³ By exaggerating the archaeological significance of ancient German settlements in the East, these nationally inclined scholars prepared the way for a German “reconquista.”

Heidegger’s endorsement of the *Drang nach Osten* harmonized with Hitler’s discussion of Nazi foreign-policy goals in *Mein Kampf*. Celebrating Germany’s *Sendungsbewusstsein*, or “special mission,” Hitler justified the Third Reich’s colonial entitlements in terms of *Deutschum*’s *völkisch* and racial superiority. “The basic ideas of the National Socialist movement are *völkisch*,” claimed Hitler, “and *völkisch* ideas are National Socialist. If National Socialism wants to conquer, it must unconditionally espouse this truth.”¹²⁴

Hitler vindicated Nazism’s “right to conquer” in terms of the racial inferiority of Germany’s Slavic neighbors. As the Führer explained,

The organization of a Russian state formation was not the result of the political abilities of the Slavs. Instead, it was a wonderful example of the state-forming efficiency of the German element in an inferior race. . . . Inferior nations, led by German organizers and overlords, have, on more than one occasion, evolved into mighty state formations that have endured as long as the racial nucleus of the creative state-race maintained itself. Whereas, for centuries, Russia drew nourishment from the German nucleus of its upper leading strata, today . . . it has been replaced by the Jew, . . . [who] has no talent for organization, but is instead a ferment of decomposition.¹²⁵

Hitler’s characterization of “the Jew” as a “ferment of decomposition” confirmed that, among the champions of Nazi race thinking, world Jewry’s disintegrative influence was an ever-present obsession. As the alpha and omega of the Nazi worldview, the *Judenfrage* rarely receded from view.

Nazi “Nomadology”

In *Nature, History, and State*, Heidegger broached the “Jewish Question,” relying on the precepts of the German geopolitical school. The constraints of an academic setting necessitated recourse to euphemism. Thus, instead of speaking of Jews directly, Heidegger relied on the negative stereotype of “Semitic

nomads." Heidegger's discussion was intended as a parable concerning the deleterious influence of Jewish "nomads" on German *Boden*.

In the discourse of anti-Semitism, the denigration of Jews as "nomads" had a long and unsavory pedigree. The Austrian Orientalist Adolf Wahrmund's 1883 tract *The Law of Nomadism and Contemporary Jewish Dominance* (*Das Gesetz des Nomadentums und die heutige Judenherrschaft*) established a fatal precedent. Wahrmund, who was a professor of Arabic, stressed the cultural affinities between Jews and Arabs as Semitic peoples. On the basis of these affinities, he characterized the Jews as a "desert people," thereby reinforcing the prejudicial image of Jews as "nomads." Wahrmund argued that the Jews, as "non-Aryans," represented an alien ethnic presence amid the "Indo-European" cultural landscape. As racially undesirable trespassers, they could only have an influence that was corrosive and malign.

Among conservative revolutionaries, Werner Sombart's (1863–1941) treatise *The Jews and Modern Capitalism* (*Die Juden und das Wirtschaftsleben*; 1911) proved especially influential in popularizing the image of Jews as shifty cultural interlopers. Opposing Max Weber's thesis in *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1905) that the Protestant Reformation had unleashed the "demons" of modern entrepreneurialism, Sombart reasserted the Jews' centrality in the developmental history of capitalism, thereby reconfirming one of the ideological linchpins of modern anti-Semitism. In order to make his case, Sombart relied on Wahrmund's portrayal of the Jews as nomads. He argued that the Jews' rootless, protean nature was especially conducive to their geographical and social mobility under capitalism.

For the most part, Sombart's characterizations rarely rose above the level of base and indemonstrable stereotypes. "In the desert," claimed Sombart, "where the shepherd's flock of sheep could grow quickly and be destroyed with equal rapidity by disease or hunger, the idea of unlimited acquisition and production took root among the Jews as it never could in a settled agricultural community."¹²⁶ In contrast with races that possessed a meaningful attachment to place, Sombart alleged that the Jews, as perennial meddlers and go-betweens, were able to flourish in trades such as banking and commerce that required transcending the constraints of national borders.

Sombart alleged that Jewish "rootlessness" was especially well suited to an economic system in which the free circulation of money and capital was central. Hence, money united "both factors of the Jewish essence: *desert* and wan-

dering, *Saharism* and *nomadism*."¹²⁷ Reprising yet another widely held stereotype, Sombart claimed that the Jews' nomadic heritage provided them with a distinct advantage with respect to intellectual vocations such as journalism, law, and scholarship—professions that rewarded cleverness and a capacity for abstract thought, rather than deep conviction.

Hitler included a barbed discussion of Jewish nomadism in *Mein Kampf*. He claimed that, although in many cases, nomads successfully assimilated to their host cultures, with the Jews, things were different. Unlike other peoples, the Jews as a race were fundamentally *inassimilable*. He added that, whereas many nomadic peoples displayed a positive attitude toward work, the Jews, conversely, remained unregenerate "parasites": "freeloaders, who extended their influence more and more like a deadly bacillus." Ultimately, claimed Hitler, "through systematic racial defilement, the Jew consciously poisons the blood of the host nation."¹²⁸ Hence, to exterminate the Jew was a matter of life or death.

According to Heidegger, the *Bodenlosigkeit* and peripatetic habitudes of nomadic peoples produced overwhelmingly disintegrative consequences and effects, hence his claim that the character structure of nomads was permanently contaminated by "the desolation [*Trostlosigkeit*] of the desert and steppes." Consequently, "they frequently leave behind deserts in cases where, at an earlier point, they had discovered fruitful and cultivated land." Conversely, "rooted peoples know how to create a *Heimat* out of the wilderness."¹²⁹

Heidegger's conviction that the ontological interrelatedness of *Volk* and *Raum* accounted for variations in the racial aptitude or cognitive capacity among *Völker* also played a key role in his disquisition on Jewish nomads, hence his assertion that, whereas Slavic peoples might find it difficult to fathom the nature of "German space," in the case of "Semitic nomads," comprehending "German space" was an *ontological impossibility*: "On the basis of a *Volk*'s specific knowledge of the nature of its space [*Raum*], we first experience the way that nature is revealed [in] it. The nature of our *German* space [*Raum*] is revealed in a distinctly different manner to a Slavic *Volk* than it is to us. In the case of Semitic nomads, *it will perhaps never be revealed at all*."¹³⁰

Heidegger's critique of the Jews' racial-cognitive failings coalesced with the Nazis' exorciation of the Jews as a "Gegen-Rasse," or "antirace," an allegation that underlined the seriousness of the threat they posed to the cultural-political integrity of all races or peoples. Heidegger's endorsement of "Nazi nomadology" confutes defenders who claim that he consistently rejected Nazi race doctrine.

As Sander Gilman has affirmed in "Cosmopolitan Jews vs. Jewish Nomads," an anti-Semitic commonplace alleged that Jews were incapable of grasping the "notion of a national or particularistic Space"—precisely the point that Heidegger sought to make in *Nature, History, and State*.¹³¹ Hence, owing to the Jews' *Bodenlosigkeit*, in their case, the fruitful reciprocity between *Volk* and *Raum* was entirely absent. Among anti-Semites, the Jews' existential taint meant that they were condemned in perpetuity to inauthenticity and alterity. Consequently, the Jews could never become *echt deutsch*, or authentically German, since to belong to the *Volk* and to share in its "destiny" hinged on the entwinement of *Volk* and *Raum*: a capability that Jews, as eternal aliens, or *Fremdlinge*, endemically lacked.

Heidegger's disparagement of Jewish "nomadism" in *Nature, History, and State* was an inherently racial critique. What mattered was not the "real-world" conduct of actual Jews but, instead, their status in the political imaginary of Nazi race doctrine. In the words of one scholar, proponents of anti-Semitism "did not respond to 'real' developments. . . . The nature of their ideas tended to detach them from real events, instead of compelling them to take new developments into consideration."¹³²

Heidegger's critique of Jewish "extraterritoriality," or *Bodenlosigkeit*, was a natural outgrowth of his "existential" affirmation of *Raum* and *Erde*, "space" and "earth." As Heidegger, echoing Sombart's disparagement of Jews as untrustworthy meddlers and go-betweens, observed in the *Black Notebooks*, "Contemporary Jewry's temporary increase in power has its basis in the fact that Western metaphysics—above all, in its modern incarnation—offers fertile ground for the dissemination of an empty rationality and calculability, which in this way gains a foothold in 'spirit,' without ever being able to grasp from within the hidden realms of decision."¹³³

Heidegger's denigration of Jews as the primary carriers of "an empty rationality and calculability" coalesced with *Lebensphilosophie*'s growing tendency to interpret the modern struggle of "life" versus "mechanism" in terms of "a racial struggle between Germans and Jews: a conceit that had been popularized in the early decades of the [twentieth] century by people like [Houston Stewart] Chamberlain and subsequently adopted by Rosenberg and Hitler." The upshot was that "Jewishness, as a racial condition, became a flesh-and-blood metaphor for the only apparently divergent ideas of *chaos* and *mechanism*: a force at once *disorganizing* and *sterilizing*, to be contained and conquered by the racial power of German-Aryan Wholeness."¹³⁴

Heidegger's reflections on the ontological shortcomings of Slavs and Jews underlines the fundamental affinities between fundamental ontology and the *Rassengedanke*. It illustrates the extent to which Heidegger had internalized the *völkisch* understanding of racial hierarchy, the ontological gulf separating *Germanentum* from lesser races. The "law of expanding spaces" required that "existentially" superior peoples, such as the Germans, increase their "mastery" of adjacent spaces at the expense of racial inferiors. From the standpoint of *Seinsgeschichte*, it mattered little if the "small-space" peoples who were "displaced"—Poles, Czechs, and Serbs—were annihilated or destroyed.

The threat posed by "Jewish nomads," conversely, was of an entirely different order. In 1933–34, when Heidegger offered his seminar *Nature, History, and State*, some five hundred thousand Jews still resided within the Reich. The Nazis claimed that these Jewish *Fremdlinge* constituted an internal threat to the integrity of the *Volksgemeinschaft*. Hence, the "Final Solution" to the Jewish Question needed to be comprehensive and all-encompassing. As we have seen, Heidegger demonstrated his receptiveness to the notion of an *Endlösung* to the "Jewish Question" when, in 1933–34, he endorsed the idea of the Jews' "völlige Vernichtung": their "total annihilation."¹³⁵

Jewish "Worldlessness": An Indelible Ontological Stain

Heidegger supplemented his condemnation of "Semitic nomads" as an insidious and destructive "counterface" with an equally harsh denunciation of Jewish "worldlessness." In Heidegger's existential ontology, Jewish "worldlessness" functioned as a corollary to Jewish "rootlessness": the Jews' incapacity to establish a symbiotic relationship to "environment" and "place," *Raum* and *Ort*.

Heidegger's assessment of Jewish "worldlessness" emerged in conjunction with his critique of "Machenschaft": Heidegger's term for the West's maniacal and single-minded preoccupation with the ends of technological world "mastery." Heidegger contended that such developments threatened to reduce Being in its totality to mere "stuff of domination"—"standing reserve" (*Bestand*)—and that the Jews were the *Gegen-Rasse*, or force orchestrating this process from behind the scenes. As he asserted in the *Black Notebooks*, "One of the stealthiest forms of Gigantism and perhaps the most ancient" is "the fast-paced history of calculation, pushiness, and intermixing whereby [world] Jewry's worldlessness is established."¹³⁶

As we have seen, in *Being and Time*, Heidegger defined the distinctive nature of Dasein, or "human being," in terms of its capacity to "have a world." As Heidegger explained in *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*, "Man is not simply regarded as part of the world within which he appears and which he makes up in part. Man also stands over against the world. This standing over against is a 'having' of world as that in which man moves, with which he engages, which he both masters and serves, and to which he is exposed. Thus, man is, first, a part of the world; and second, as this part, he is at once master and servant of the world."¹³⁷

In *Being and Time*, Heidegger identified the capacity to "have a world" as a hallmark of authentic Selfhood.¹³⁸ He held that beings or peoples that were divested of this capacity suffered from a deep-seated and irremediable ontological deficiency. Ultimately, this debility rendered them *subhuman*. To illustrate his point concerning the existential primacy of "Being-in-the-world" and "having a world," Heidegger asserted that stones and plants, in contrast with Dasein, were "worldless." Their inability to "have a world" and to develop constructive "world relations" underlined their ontological impoverishment: their incapacity for authentic "temporality" (*Zeitlichkeit*), or what Heidegger called "projection" (*Entwurf*). According to Heidegger, this profound existential "lack" distinguished stones, plants, and animals from *human* Being-in-the-world. As Heidegger explained,

Man has world. But then what about the other beings which, like man, are also part of the world: the animals and plants, the material things like the stone, for example? Are they merely parts of the world, as distinct from man who in addition has the world? Or does the animal too have world, and if so, in what way? In the same way as man, or in some other way? And how would we grasp this otherness? And what about the stone?

However crudely, certain distinctions immediately manifest themselves here. We can formulate these distinctions in the following theses: (1) The stone (material object) is *worldless*; (2) The animal is *poor-in-world*; (3) Man is *world-forming*.¹³⁹

On the basis of these remarks, it is clear that, by characterizing Jews as "worldless," Heidegger, in effect, ascribed to them an ontological deficiency that they shared with lower forms of organic and inorganic life: plants, stones, and animals. The upshot of this rather crude normative scheme, in which the capacity to have a "world" (*Weltlichkeit*) proved decisive, is that Jews as a people were

deemed devoid of a *raison d'être*. In fact, in the existential hierarchy established by Heidegger, Jews ranked below animals: whereas Heidegger deemed animals "poor-in-world," Jews, as "worldless," were afflicted by a more profound ontological void.

Hence, by characterizing Jews as "worldless," Heidegger subjected them to an even greater existential sleight. Because of their "worldlessness," Jews were incapable of acceding to "authenticity" as well as "historicity." The end result of Heidegger's phenomenology of Jewish "worldlessness" was his denial that the Jews as a people have a compelling ontological reason to be.

Bodenständigkeit was also an integral component of *Raumpolitik*, which, during the 1920s, increasingly gained a foothold among *völkisch* and pan-German intellectual circles. In *Mein Kampf*, Hitler, too, stressed the necessary entwinement of *Bodenständigkeit*, *Volk*, and *Raum*:

The strength of our *Volk* is maintained by preserving the *Boden* of its *Heimat* in Europe and not in the colonies. We must never consider the Reich to be truly secure until it can guarantee every individual descendant of our *Volk* his own piece of land for centuries to come. We must never forget that the holiest right on this earth is the right to the soil [*Boden*] . . . and that the holiest sacrifice is the blood [*Blut*] that one sheds for this soil [*Boden*].

Only a sufficiently large space [*grosses Raum*] on this earth guarantees that a nation is free to continue to exist. . . . Obtaining new land and soil [*Boden*] must be the aim of our foreign policy. . . . A *Volk* that protects its own soil [*Boden*] becomes heroic. With parasites, conversely, things are different. It leads to lying hypocrisy and malicious cruelty.¹⁴⁰

The semantic stipulations of the *Volksbegriff* decreed that peoples who were *bodenständig* were existentially and racially superior to those who were "unrooted" or "uprooted," *boden-* or *wurzelos*. Thereby, *Bodenständigkeit* reinforced a series of ideological prejudices against "the West" as a geopolitical "site" that had been culturally and politically "deformed" by Latinate influences, the Enlightenment, and the "ideas of 1789." Accordingly, in "The Origin of the Work of Art" (1935–36), Heidegger lamented that the "Latinization of Greek concepts" had culminated in the wholesale "uprootedness of Western thought [*Bodenlosigkeit des abendländischen Denkens*]."¹⁴¹

The National Socialist employment of *Bodenständigkeit* was both ideological and polemical. It was instrumental in the construction of *Feindbilder*, or

projections of "enmity." Under Nazism, the racial distinction between "rooted" and "rootless"—*bodenständig* and *bodenlos*—peoples underwrote the subjugation and annihilation of races and groups deemed lacking in "roots": socialists and communists, Jews, Sinti and Roma, and so forth. Advocates of the *Völkerbegriff* consistently disparaged *bodenlos* peoples and *mentalités* as remaining in thrall to nebulous and superficial abstractions: cultural self-understandings that, purportedly, were profoundly lacking in "substance" and "depth."

Mythos versus Nous

Heidegger maintained that the existential affinities between the Greeks and the Germans were grounded in the material semantics of *Erde* and *Boden*. It was the subterranean, ontological-historical kinship between these two *Völker*, Greeks and Germans, that served as the basis for Heidegger's doctrine of "another Beginning." Heidegger regarded the Greeks and the Germans as the only two authentically "historical" peoples, in the sense of Heideggerian *Geschichtlichkeit*. As such, they shared a common ontological-historical *Schicksal*, or "destiny."

According to Heidegger, the ontological kinship between Greeks and Germans meant that they were "stammverwandt": "racially" or "ethnically" related.¹⁴² This judgment followed from his conviction that "blood and race [*das Blut und das Geblüt*] are essential determinants of man." "The voice of blood [*Stimme des Blutes*]," Heidegger asserted, "derives from the fundamental attunement of man [*Grundstimmung des Menschen*]."¹⁴³ The racial idiolect that Heidegger utilized in such passages was well "attuned" to the precepts of National Socialist *Rassen-* and *Bevölkerungspolitik*.

The heightened terminological prominence of "Erde" in Heidegger's thought bespoke a deepening of ideological elements in his *Denken*. It reflected Heidegger's engagement with the work of contemporary *Zivilisationskritiker* such as the former George-Kreis loyalist Ludwig Klages, Leopold Ziegler, Oswald Spengler, and Max Scheler—all of whose writings reinforced Heidegger's perception of the historical present as a nihilistic age of "decline."

During the 1920s, disputes over the ideological valences of "Erde" among spiritual reactionaries metamorphosed into a veritable *Kulturmampf*. The debate pitted a coalition of protofascist, conservative revolutionary thinkers against champions of *Aufklärung* such as Thomas Mann, Sigmund Freud, and Ernst

Cassirer. Widespread disillusionment with the nineteenth-century idols of "progress" and "science" had precipitated a longing for the "primordial." Increasingly, the stakes of the debate concerned the historical status of "myth." Right-wing *Zivilisationskritiker* exalted a return to "myth" as a panacea for the ills of modernity.¹⁴⁴ A flashpoint in the developing controversy over the cultural status of myth was the Bachofen-Renaissance of the mid-1920s.

In "Der Mythos und das Als Ob" (Myth and the As If; 1927), the neo-Kantian philosopher Hans Vaihinger expressed his misgivings concerning myth's rising cultural currency among right-wing literati and *Kulturkritiker*. "For some 25 years," Vaihinger cautioned, "there has been a noticeable increase in the voices demanding a positive evaluation of myth and mythical thinking, in general. Formerly, myth was regarded as part of the study of ancient history and folklore [*Altertumswissenschaft und Volkskunde*]. Today, conversely, myth has emerged as an increasingly important component of *Kultur*. In myth, one discovers forms of representation that no longer belong exclusively to the past; instead, they have assumed an independent role and an essential function in contemporary spiritual life. Hence, the summonses—often quite violent—for a 'New Myth' of the future."¹⁴⁵

One tenet that united the "spiritual reactionary" camp was the idea that the "way forward" required a return to "prehistory": the revival of a mythical, primordial past that predated the diremptions and lacerations of Western modernity. Representatives of this view held that, by tapping into the values a mythological *Urzeit*, it would be possible to surmount the disintegrative influences of "Enlightenment," "progress," and the legacy of "1789."¹⁴⁶

Among reactionary modernists, Nietzsche's exaltation of the cultural superiority of myth in the *Birth of Tragedy* (1872) became an obligatory point of reference: a powerful allegory concerning the failures of Enlightenment rationalism and the growing demand for cultural "wholeness." Nietzsche claimed, "Without Myth, all cultures lose their healthy, creative, natural energy. Only a horizon surrounded by Myths encloses and unifies a cultural movement. Only by Myth can all the energies of fantasy and Apollonian dream be saved from aimless meandering. The images of Myth [are] . . . the daemonic guardians under whose tutelage the young soul grows up and by whose signs the grown man interprets his life and his struggles; even the State knows of no more powerful unwritten laws than the Mythical fundament which guarantees its connection with religion and its emergence from Mythical representations."¹⁴⁷

In the *Myth of the State* (1945), Ernst Cassirer interpreted the revival of myth as a negative cultural caesura: "Among Enlightenment thinkers, myth was viewed as something *barbaric*: an indistinct mass of confused ideas and superstitions; fundamentally: a monstrosity." Conversely, the contemporary advocates of political myth radically contested the idea of human self-determination. In doing so, they sacrificed the goal of *Mündigkeit* (autonomy) on the altar of an obscurantist "higher necessity." In light of fascism's repressive instrumentalization of political myth, Cassirer termed the reemergence of myth a "pathology of symbolic consciousness."¹⁴⁸

Representative of the heightened esteem for prehistory and myth was the Romanian historian of religion Mircea Eliade's *The Myth of Eternal Return*. During the 1930s, Eliade was an avid supporter of Corneliu Codreanu's fascist "Legionnaire" movement: a filiation that confirms the important nexus between political myth and fascist ideology. In *The Myth of Eternal Return*, Eliade extolled the "longing for a periodic recourse to a mythical age of primordial origins": an era that, in comparison to the degradations of the historical present, stood out as an "Age of Greatness." According to Eliade, such epochs were distinguished by a "metaphysical 'valorization' of human existence" that had disappeared with the advent of political modernity. The outstanding characteristic of "archaic societies," Eliade alleged, was their uncompromising rebellion against history and temporality: "Although they are conscious of a certain form of 'history,' [archaic societies] make every effort to disregard it. In studying these traditional societies, one characteristic has especially struck us: *their revolt against concrete, historical time*, their nostalgia for a periodical return to the mythical time of the *beginning of things*—to the 'Age of Greatness.' . . . In our opinion, it is justifiable to read in this depreciation of history and in this rejection of profane, continuous time, a certain metaphysical of 'valorization' of human existence."¹⁴⁹

Similarly, in *Cosmogonic Eros* (1923), Klages, a Bachofen enthusiast with whose work Heidegger engaged in *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics* (1929), glorified "primal history" as a site of *Urbilder*: "archaic images" that facilitated a mystical communion between "dead souls"—"spirits" of a bygone *Urzeit*—and inhabitants of the historical present. Klages maintained that only an exceptionally gifted cenacle of "spiritual clairvoyants" would be able to reconnect with these enigmatic *Urbilder*. In *Cosmogonic Eros*, Klages—who once claimed that "logic is organized darkness"—remarked,

In the ecstatic surging, life marches toward liberation from intellection [*Geist*]. Perfection consists in the awakening of the soul and . . . seeing the reality of the archetypes [*Urbilder*]. With archetypes, the souls of the past reappear. Yet, in order to appear, they need the connection with the blood of physically living beings. This occurs in the act of "seeing," which is a mystical marriage between the . . . soul of the seer and the generating demon. Upon awakening, the ecstatic knows . . . that the world of facts is merely a fantasy . . . [and] that the world of bodies signifies a world of *symbols*: . . . the monstrous products of "seeing" fertilized by the primeval world.¹⁵⁰

In the *Heritage of Our Time*, Ernst Bloch disparaged Klages's infatuation with the "reactionary usefulness of 'myth' [lodged] in the collective-archaic unconscious" as a regressive "Tarzan philosophy."¹⁵¹

In a manner similar to Klages, Heidegger, too, equated "authentic experience" with "primordial experience." In the years that followed the publication of *Being and Time*, Heidegger's appeals to "Ursprünglichkeit" and "Urgeschichte"—"primordiality" and "primal history"—became increasingly frequent. As Stefan Günzel has shown in *Geophilosophie*, Heidegger's longing for a return to "primal history" reflected his conviction that, in order to recapture "primordial experience," it would be necessary to reconnect with a pristine, mythical *Urzeit*: an age that preceded the decimation of Being by Western metaphysics.¹⁵² As Frank Edler has remarked in an article that reconstructs Heidegger's path to the pre-Socratics, as kindled by his interpretation of Hölderlin, "If the second part of *Being and Time* was supposed to include a dismantling of the Western philosophical tradition in order to uncover a more originary understanding of Being, then the dismantling or deconstruction (*Abbau*) would have to deal with the problems of explicating *mythic Dasein* and *scientific Dasein* as two fundamental possibilities of Being-in-the-world, [thereby] retrieving a more originary understanding of the relationship between mythos and logos, and reconstructing the conditions for the possibility of the transformation of the historical existence of a people."¹⁵³

Rejecting Kant's caveat in the concluding paragraphs of *The Critique of Pure Reason* concerning the perils of philosophical dogmatism ("The critical path alone is open to us"), Heidegger increasingly came to regard "cognition" (*Erkenntnistheorie*) as an obstacle or barrier that interfered with the possibility of reviving "primordial experience."¹⁵⁴ Heidegger contended that the "the model of 'consciousness' . . . obscured the fundamental question of Being. It remained dependent upon a philosophical tradition that Heidegger aimed to overcome."¹⁵⁵

Accordingly, following the completion of *Being and Time*, Heidegger's *Denken* displayed an increasing fascination with the epistemological value of myth.

The new prominence that "prehistory" and "myth" assumed in Heidegger's work emerged in the review essay that he penned, in 1928, of Ernst Cassirer's *Mythical Thought* (1925), the second volume of Cassirer's *Philosophy of Symbolic Forms*.¹⁵⁶ In the review, which Heidegger drafted in preparation for the Davos debate, he voiced his reservations concerning Cassirer's neo-Kantian attempt to devalue myth as an autonomous source of insight and meaning. Hence, in the opening paragraphs, Heidegger reproached Cassirer for his deprecatory treatment of "mythical thinking" vis-à-vis "purely logical thought": as a "manner of seeing" (*Anschauungsform*) that was only appropriate for a bygone, primitive "form of life."¹⁵⁷

In *Mythical Thought*, Cassirer depicted "mythical consciousness" as saturated with "sensuous" and "imagistic" elements. Heidegger, conversely, in a more positive vein, stressed the parallels between "mythical Dasein" and his own concept of "thrownness" (*Geworfenheit*). "Mythical Dasein," asserted Heidegger, "is primarily determined through 'thrownness'."¹⁵⁸ "Thrownness," explained Heidegger, attested to the fact that Dasein was "overpowered" and "intoxicated" (*benommen*) by the world. Thus, according to Heidegger, "thrownness" corresponded to the way that "mythical Dasein" was "delivered over" to and "overpowered" by "mana," or the "sacred": a comportment that, as Heidegger enthusiastically put it, expressed an openness to what "*is always in each case . . . remarkably extraordinary [das überraschende Ausserordentliche]*".¹⁵⁹ "Thrownness" and "mythical Dasein" resembled each other, Heidegger contended, by virtue of their mutual openness to "primordial Being": a receptivity that rational cognition, owing to its intellectualist biases, had foreclosed.

In essence, Heidegger sought to *invert* the priority of *reason* over *myth* that was implicit in Cassirer's Enlightenment-oriented account. In opposition to Cassirer's efforts to consign myth to the realm of "phantasy," Heidegger revalued "*myth [as] an essential phenomenon within a universal interpretation of Being*".¹⁶⁰ In support of his claims concerning the cognitive superiority of myth, Heidegger invoked, as a significant precedent, Schelling's "positive" assessment of myth in *Introduction to the Philosophy of Mythology* (1841–42). Heidegger alleged that Schelling's outstanding achievement in *Philosophy of Mythology* was his understanding of "myth" as an expression of the "destiny of the Volk."¹⁶¹

The correlation between "myth" and the "destiny of the Volk" to which Heidegger adverted in his Cassirer critique presaged the centrality that the conceptual triad of "Schicksal," "Volk," and "Mythos" would attain in Heidegger's later *Denken*. Thus, in *On the Essence of Truth*, Heidegger reconceived philosophy's "task" as the "encouragement, struggle, and veneration of a Volk for the sake of the hardness and clarity of its destiny [*das Fordern, Hadern, und Verehren eines Volkes um der Härte und Klarheit seines Schicksals willen*]."¹⁶²

For Heidegger, the epistemological superiority of myth resided in its greater "proximity" (*Nähe*) to "primordiality" and to "origins." Accordingly, in *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, Heidegger exalted "Mythology" as "knowledge of pre-history [*Wissen von Ur-Geschichte*]." "The authenticity and greatness of historical knowledge," Heidegger continued, "rests with understanding the mysterious character of this Beginning [*Geheimnischarakter dieses Anfangs*]."¹⁶³ Conversely, Heidegger maintained that Cassirer, by consigning myth to a lower rung on the cognitive-evolutionary ladder, had perpetuated philosophy's status qua "Irrnis": a negative continuum of *Seinsvergessenheit*. Heidegger's defense of the ontological value of myth reflected his conviction that only by returning to "pre-history" would it be possible to offset the West's precipitous, headlong descent toward *Untergang*.

Heidegger's reappraisal of myth as an ontological-historical construct sheds light on his abrupt disavowal of first philosophy circa the early 1930s. As he declaimed in the *Black Notebooks*, "We must bring [philosophy] to an end in order to prepare the way for the totally Other: viz., Metapolitics."¹⁶⁴ Heidegger's denigration of metaphysics, owing to its disintegrative and destructive logocentric biases, presaged his pivot toward the "metapolitics of the historical Volk."¹⁶⁵

At Davos, Cassirer was undoubtedly taken aback by the nihilistic, antiphilosophical turn that Heidegger's *Denkweg* had assumed—a development that reflected his growing attraction to *Vernunftkritik*. At one point during their colloquy, Heidegger asserted that essential philosophical questioning "leads man beyond himself into the totality of beings in order to make manifest to him there . . . the nothingness of his Dasein." "Nothingness," Heidegger continued, "is not the occasion for pessimism and melancholy. Instead, it is the occasion for understanding that . . . philosophy has the task of throwing man back into the hardness of his fate from the shallowness of a man who merely 'uses' the work of spirit."¹⁶⁶

Heidegger's denigration of the "spiritual shallowness" of those who shirk the "hardness of fate" was pointedly directed at Cassirer and his fellow

neo-Kantians: a guild that, by devaluing the cognitive potential of myth, remained wedded to the anachronistic, "life-denying" value-ideals of the Enlightenment and Western humanism.

Only in retrospect, or *après coup*, did Cassirer realize that "Heidegger's interpretation of myth in the 1920s not only had significant theoretical implications, but also held a certain responsibility for the actual propagation of the most ominous expression of political myth in the modern period"—that is, Nazism.¹⁶⁷ Cassirer lamented that, under National Socialism, "Germany had renounced all of the ideas that were responsible for the form-giving powers of its *Kultur*. . . . It became a genuine witches' sabbath: a recrudescence of the most primitive images and beliefs [*Auffassungen*], a profusion of the most violent passions, and an orgy of hatred and rage."¹⁶⁸

The instrumentalization of myth for political ends was one of the defining hallmarks of the fascist worldview. In *The Myth of the State*, Cassirer sought to evaluate the crucial role that political myth had played in legitimating fascism as a regime of symbolic power. Cassirer demonstrated that the resurrection of political myth—the "myth of race" in the thought of Comte Arthur de Gobineau; the "myth of the hero" in the work of Thomas Carlyle—had abetted Nazism's efforts to consolidate a seamless web of ideological illusion: an impregnable semantic veil that preempted dissent and manufactured a semblance of totalitarian unanimity.

Cassirer recognized that fascism's aspirations to ideological hegemony were inextricably tied to the "power of myth and myth of power," both of which proved destructive of autonomy and spontaneity.¹⁶⁹ "Nothing," remarked Cassirer, "is more likely to lull asleep all our active forces, our power of judgment and critical discernment, and to take away our feeling of personality and individual responsibility than the steady, uniform, and monotonous performance of the same *rites*. . . . In all primitive societies ruled and governed by rites, individual responsibility is an unknown thing. What we find here is only a collective responsibility. Not the individuals, but the group is the real 'moral subject.' The clan, the family, and the whole tribe are responsible for the actions of all the members."¹⁷⁰

By reconceiving questions of political legitimacy as matters of "faith" or "belief," fascism's instrumentalization of political myth—the "New Man," "Romanità," the "Führer as political Savior"—helped to immunize it against the demystifying powers of reason and critique. The "epistemology of fascism" explicitly scorned science and empirical truth as atavisms of the much-despised

"liberal era." Conversely, it exalted myth as the repository of a superior, "meta-historical" reality. In this way, the manipulation of myth for political ends contributed significantly to fascism's trademark "sacralization of politics."¹⁷¹

It was in this vein that, in *Mythos oder Religion* (1935), Paul Simon—a prescient and indefatigable Catholic critic of the Nazi worldview—perceptively traced National Socialism's ideological origins to the mythological longings of "Bachofen, Nietzsche, Houston Stewart Chamberlain, and Stefan George."¹⁷² Simon maintained that, by consciously mobilizing the semantics of political religion, Nazi ideologues aspired to "mold" the Third Reich into "a Holy Myth." "The Confessional Creed of the SS" (*SS Glaubensbekenntnis*)—a crucial statement of the National Socialist worldview—declared that Nazism's ultimate goal was a "return to the past in order to build once and for all a new future": "We return to our roots: to the roots of the Germanic man, to the roots that shape our destiny."¹⁷³

In the context at hand, it is worth recalling that the most important contribution to the National Socialist ideological canon apart from *Mein Kampf*, Alfred Rosenberg's *Myth of the Twentieth Century*, repeatedly appealed to the regenerative powers of "myth." The "myth" of Rosenberg's title was, of course, the myth of "race."

The Quest for "Primordiality"

In *The Metaphysical Foundations of Logic* (1928), Heidegger refined the positive evaluation of myth that he had outlined in his Cassirer review. Reflecting on temporality's significance for *Seinsgeschichte*, Heidegger highlighted the epistemological entwinement of "myth" and "primal history": a philosophical chess move that culminated in a qualitative transformation of his understanding of "knowledge." Thereafter, Heidegger viewed "mythical thought"—"das Mythische"—as an epistemic modality that, in contrast to theoretical knowledge, permitted access to the experiential fullness of "primal history." Heidegger claimed that the epistemological superiority of myth was reflected in its capacity to facilitate a metaphysical encounter with primordial Being: an encounter that approximated an "epiphany" as opposed to an act of cognition. Such encounters were barred to "first philosophy" qua *Wissenschaft*, or *theoria*.

Heidegger lauded "primordial history"—"Urgeschichte"—as a prelapsarian ontological fundamen: an experiential "ground" that was impervious to the decay and ruination of historical time. Following the publication of *Being and*

Time, "primordial history" became the focal point of Heidegger's recalibration of *Geschichtlichkeit*. As the following passage from *The Metaphysical Foundations of Logic* attests, Heidegger's turn toward "Urgeschichte," as a repository of ontological plenitude, was intimately tied to his exaltation of the "metaphysics of myth": "The entrance into the world by beings is *primordial history* [*Urgeschichte*], purely and simply. From this primordial history, there necessarily develops a region of problems that, today, we are beginning to approach with greater clarity: the region of the Mythic [*das Mythische*]. The metaphysics of myth must come to be understood on the basis of this primordial history: with the help of a metaphysical construction of a primordial age [*Urzeit*], which is the age [*Zeit*] with which primordial history [*Urgeschichte*] itself begins."¹⁷⁴

Heidegger's glorification of the "metaphysics of myth" was profoundly motivated by cultural-political considerations. Heidegger maintained that "prehistority" offered a constructive, "holistic" alternative to the spiritual imperfections of Western modernity. In Heidegger's eyes, myth's experiential superiority derived from the unique access it offered to an Edenic "Ur-Zeit": a "primal past" in which the ontological unity of *Geist*, *Volk*, and *Bodenständigkeit* remained intact. In Heidegger's view, the "perdurance" (*Austrag*) of mythical time contrasted sharply with the disintegrative temporality of the "liberal era," which, following Spengler, Heidegger rejected as a time of *Untergang*.

In *Heidegger in seiner Zeit*, Otto Pöggeler confirmed that Heidegger's turn toward "primordial history" and the "metaphysics of myth" represented a caesura or breach in his understanding of "temporality" and "historicity"—a breach that had begun with his review of Cassirer's study of *Mythical Thought*: "Heidegger's review of Ernst Cassirer's study of myth highlighted the 'overpowering nature' of the Mana-idea that resided in Myth, an idea that divided time and the world into sacred and profane. Hence, in Heidegger's summer 1928 lecture course, he declared that one must comprehend the 'metaphysics of myth' with the help of a 'metaphysical construction of primal history': on the basis of 'primordial fact' [*Urfaktum*] and 'prehistory' [*Urgeschichte*]."¹⁷⁵

Heidegger perceived "primordial history" as the basis or ground of a mythically oriented "counterhistory." It was a perspective that he tasked with overturning the modern narrative of "progress," which he viewed as "lebensfeindlich," or "hostile to life."¹⁷⁶ The heightened prominence of these tendencies in Heidegger's work signified a deepening of the "reactionary modernist" and "zivilisationskritisch" dimension of his thought.¹⁷⁷

Commenting on the politicization of *Lebensphilosophie* during the 1920s, Georg Lukács noted the increasingly prominent role played by the "mythical element." As Lukács noted, "The more militantly reactionary these myths became, the more directly they anticipated fascist myth."¹⁷⁸

In *The Mass Psychology of Fascism* (1933), Wilhelm Reich warned—in terms strikingly redolent of Lukács's reflections—that the reactionary modernist glorification of a mythologized "primal past" openly courted the risk of collective-psychological regression. In Reich's view, such retrograde yearnings for a mythological *Urzeit* paralleled fascism's longing for "a cultural period in which life had not yet broken away from the harmony of nature." According to Reich, fascism's longing for "brute nature" misleadingly glorified an "unconscious lawfulness that is always lacking in the works of free reflection." Prophetically, Reich perceived the central danger of fascism as the collective desire "to escape the difficulties of responsibility and the actualities of everyday life . . . by seeking refuge in ideology, illusion, mysticism, or brutality."¹⁷⁹

In *Pariser Rechenschaft* (1926), Thomas Mann voiced similar misgivings concerning myth's expanding cultural currency among conservative revolutionary intellectuals. During World War I, Mann had been one of Germany's most prominent *Zivilisationskritiker*, as his proto-Spenglerian lamentations about Western "decline" in *Reflections of a Nonpolitical Man* (1918) demonstrate. However, the brutal assassination of the Weimar Republic's Jewish foreign minister, Walter Rathenau, in 1922, by right-wing thugs, compelled Mann to reassess his earlier "antiliberalism."¹⁸⁰

Reflecting on the retrograde nature of the escalating appeals to "primordiality" and "myth," Mann concluded that it would be politically irresponsible "to expose the Germans to such 'night terrors' [*Nachtschwärmerei*]: this entire Joseph Görres—complex of *Earth*, *Volk*, *Nature*, *Prehistory*, and *Death*, this *revolutionary obscurantism* . . . that, lately, has gained such currency."¹⁸¹ Little did Mann realize how prophetic his misgivings would prove to be, only a few years later, with the Nazi *Machtergreifung*.

The "Metaphysics of Myth"

Mann's qualms concerning the potential for cultural regression that was lodged in the widespread appeals to the "night terrors of Earth, Volk, Nature, Prehistory, and Death" had been provoked by his reading of Alfred Baeumler's

Bachofen: Der Mythologe der Romantik (Bachofen: The Mythologist of Romanticism; 1926), a three-hundred-page introduction to a recently published anthology of the—academically discredited—Swiss historian and philologist Johann Jakob Bachofen's (1815–87) writings.

Mann's forebodings correctly sensed that the Bachofen renaissance was symptomatic of a troubling spiritual caesura in the life of the fledgling Weimar Republic: a breach that portended the hardening of an anti-Western, antidemocratic metapolitical orientation among the right-wing intelligentsia. A year earlier, the former George-Kreis adherent Ludwig Klages had edited and introduced a new edition of Bachofen's *Essay on the Funerary Symbolism of the Ancients*.¹⁸² So poorly received was Bachofen's *Essay* when it first appeared in 1859 that, shortly thereafter, the University of Basel revoked his qualifications as a *Privatdozent*.

Bachofen had been a promising student of the University of Berlin historian and founder of the historical school of law Friedrich Carl von Savigny (1779–1861). However, in midcareer, he turned his back on “scientific” history in favor of an esoteric, divinatory approach to understanding the past that was inspired by the late Romantic Georg Friedrich Creuzer's conception of the “symbol” as an autonomous fount of insight and meaning: a source whose *arcana* remained inaccessible to the methods of “scholarly” (*wissenschaftlich*) history writing. Instead, the epiphanies lodged in the symbol could only be extracted via the technique of intuitive-imaginary conjuring. By reversing the Enlightenment narrative of “progress” and, thereby, disrupting the linearity of chronological history, Bachofen's “symbolic” approach aimed not merely to *revisit* the archaic past. It sought to *reactivate* prehistory's semantic potentials in the here and now.

Undeterred by the critical acid bath to which *Funerary Symbolism of the Ancients* had been subjected, two years later, relying on his trademark, intuitive-divinatory method, Bachofen published his magnum opus, *Mother Right: An Investigation Concerning Gynocracy in the Ancient World with Respect to Its Religious and Legal Nature* (1861). In *Mother Right* (*Mutterrecht*), Bachofen glorified a prelapsarian age in which humanity and Mother Earth purportedly dwelled in a state of blissful, mutual symbiosis. According to Bachofen, proximity to humanity's chthonic, primordial origins provided a guarantee of cosmological unity. “Generative Motherhood,” proclaimed Bachofen, “is the basis of universal brotherhood among men.” “The development of paternity, con-

versely, caused this condition to disintegrate.”¹⁸³ Thus, in Bachofen's view, the patriarchal warrior societies that superseded ancient matriarchy signified a palpable fall from grace.

The evidentiary basis for Bachofen's conjectures concerning the existence of an archaic-matriarchal Eden was negligible. Following *Mutterrecht*'s publication, whatever remaining credibility Bachofen possessed as a historian and scholar dissipated. As Robert Norton noted in *Secret Germany*, “Poorly printed, cluttered, badly organized, and seemingly formless, [*Mother Right*] came out in only fifty copies and was greeted with stony silence by the scholarly world. Not a single review of the book was ever published. When Bachofen died in 1887, at the age of 72, his passing was barely registered.”¹⁸⁴

Thomas Mann's Baeumler critique in *Pariser Rechenschaft* presciently identified a dilemma or challenge that, within a few years' time, would preoccupy Heidegger's work: a challenge that derived from his efforts to reorient fundamental ontology toward the “metaphysics of myth.”

The Heidegger-Baeumler Alliance

Following the publication of *Being and Time*, Heidegger reconceived *Geschichtlichkeit* so that it might accommodate the “subterranean” experiences of a primordial *Urzeit*. In recent years, a critical consensus has emerged suggesting that Heidegger's reformulation of the *Seinsfrage* was inspired by his encounter with Baeumler's profoundly Nietzschean Bachofen interpretation. In the words of one scholar,

What originally brought [Heidegger and Baeumler] together was their shared concern for the archaic and chthonic sources of Greek culture and its relevance for contemporary Germany. . . . In his essay dealing with the archaic and mythic sources of Western culture [*Bachofen: The Mythologist of Romanticism*], Baeumler set out the principles of a chthonic philosophy of history, a project that caught Heidegger's attention. Drawing on what Bachofen termed “tellurism”—the archaic principle that sees the essential meaning of human life as rooted in and arising from the Earth or Soil—. . . Baeumler focused on the meaning of the Earth in the formation of ancient culture. . . . Rejecting Winckelmann's fable about the “noble simplicity and calm grandeur” of Hellenic culture, Baeumler put forward a forceful account of the *subterranean, telluric, and chthonic elements* that shaped the archaic world of the Greeks that lay dormant in the modern epoch. Only by

recovering the originary power of these chthonic forces, Baeumler argued, could the Germans defeat the new Olympian forces of Enlightenment, democracy, liberalism, and internationalism that threatened to destroy modern Europe.¹⁸⁵

The friendship between Heidegger and Baeumler spanned the years 1928–33. Heidegger read Baeumler's compendious Bachofen introduction in 1928, in preparation for his Cassirer review and the Davos disputation. So impressed was Heidegger with Baeumler's efforts to "actualize" Bachofen's understanding of "primordial history" that he immediately wrote to Baeumler, urging him to apply for the philosophy chair in Marburg that Heidegger had recently vacated in order to accept the Husserl-*Lehrstuhl* in Freiburg.

Baeumler confirmed these circumstances in a letter of 17 May 1928 to Walter Eberhardt: "Heidegger wrote to me spontaneously to ask for my curriculum vita; he would like to propose me as his successor [in Marburg]."¹⁸⁶ In a missive of 3 November, Heidegger informed Karl Jaspers that he had, indeed, nominated Baeumler for the recently vacated Marburg position.¹⁸⁷ Although Heidegger's efforts to install Baeumler as his successor at Marburg came to naught, a few months later, Baeumler was offered an assistant professorship at the University of Dresden.

Prior to becoming a Bachofen enthusiast and exegete, Baeumler had carved out a respectable niche as a scholar of German Idealism. In 1923, his *Habilitationsschrift* on Kant's *Critique of Judgment* was published by the highly esteemed Max Niemeyer Verlag in Halle. However, upon completing his Kant study, Baeumler rejected German Idealism due to its faulty equation of "cognition" with "intellection" and "rational synthesis": a failing that accounted for Idealism's inability to accede, claimed Baeumler, to a "logic of Totality."¹⁸⁸

Thereafter, Baeumler shifted his focus to the late Romanticism of the Heidelberg School: a transformation that Baeumler characterized as a "step from eighteenth-century aesthetics and philosophy to the romanticism of [Joseph] Görres."¹⁸⁹ Baeumler claimed that only a new understanding of history as "myth"—as a counterweight to "scientific" history writing—could reunite humanity with its archaic-cosmological origins, its "ground" in primordial Being. In Baeumler's eyes, by interpreting historical artifacts as "symbols," rather than as a disjunctive compilation of empirical-scientific "findings," Bachofen's intuitive-divinatory method was able to reprise the condition of "primordial oneness" characteristic of the long-lost *Ur-Zeit*.

In 1931, Baeumler published his influential monograph *Nietzsche als Philosoph und Politiker*, which set the tone for the National Socialist canonization of Nietzsche. (Baeumler sent an autographed copy to Hitler, whom he had met a few months earlier at the "Brown House" in Munich.) Baeumler's pivot toward Nietzschean "active nihilism" during the late 1920s—a "turn" that was foreshadowed by his 1928 essay on "Nietzsche and Bachofen"—reflected his new "metapolitical" ambitions. It also paralleled his growing rapprochement with National Socialism.¹⁹⁰

In "Nietzsche and National Socialism" (1934), Baeumler recounted the intellectual trajectory that had led him from "Bachofen to Nietzsche." Baeumler explained that Nietzsche's celebration of "heroism" and "activism" had furnished the elements of "self-assertion" and "will" that were sorely lacking in Romanticism's understanding of "German Existenz." According to Baeumler, in contrast to the Enlightenment,

Romanticism saw man again in the light of his natural and historical ties. Romanticism opened our eyes to the night, the past, our ancestors, to Mythos and Volk. The movement that led from Herder to Görres, to the brothers Grimm, Eichendorff, Arnim, and Savigny is the only spiritual movement that is still fully alive. . . . Nevertheless, today, we have discovered new possibilities for understanding the essence of German Existenz through Nietzsche, the philosopher of heroism . . . [and] activism. . . . "Works" result not from the desire for "display" . . . but from practice, from the ever-repeated deed [Tat]. . . . Thereby, [Nietzsche] reestablished the purity of the sphere of action and the political sphere.¹⁹¹

Baeumler's vitalistic naturalism, coupled with his harsh polemics against "modernity" and "subjectivity," paved the way for his celebration of "race values" (*Rassenwerte*) that had been "decreed by fate" (*schicksalhaft Gegebenes*). Following his conversion to "Nietzsche and National Socialism," Baeumler viewed history as a Heraclitean "polemos," or "struggle," that pitted "creative" Indo-Germanic races against "destructive" races, such as "international Jewry."¹⁹² As Christian Tilitzki explains in his reconstruction of Baeumler's intellectual-political odyssey, "From the Conservative Revolution to National Socialism," "Those who, like Baeumler, were strongly fixated on the metaphysical distinctiveness of the *Volkscharakter*, who attributed the defeat of 1918 to national disunity, . . . who perceived untrustworthy, liberally minded Jewish intellectuals and politicians lurking behind the ideas of 'humanity' and 'humaneness,'

and who regarded Jewish cosmopolitanism as a fifth column, unavoidably came to believe that national unity depended on an ethnically based integration capacity of citizens."¹⁹³

In light of Heidegger's developing fascination with "das Mythische" as a privileged repository of truth, it is not difficult to discern what it was about Baeumler's Bachofen interpretation that aroused his enthusiasm. In solidarity with Nietzsche's rebuke of "antiquarian history" in *The Use and Abuse of History*—as Nietzsche observed, "When the study of history serves the life of the past in such a way that it undermines . . . higher life, when the historical sense no longer conserves life but *mummifies it*, . . . man is encased in the stench of must and mold, . . . in the dust of bibliographical minutiae"¹⁹⁴—Heidegger, too, rejected desiccated, narrowly scholarly approaches to understanding the ancient world. He became convinced that recovering the "primordial past" depended on resuscitating subterranean forms of knowledge: cognitive strategies that paralleled Bachofen's esoteric efforts to reanimate the glories of the archaic past. In all of these respects, Heidegger perceived Bachofen's oeuvre, as elucidated by Baeumler, as a valuable precedent.

In an informative essay on the "Heidegger-Baeumler relationship," Frank Edler has plausibly suggested that Heidegger's interest in Baeumler's Bachofen-*Deutung* was motivated by three insights: "(1) [Baeumler's] radical reinterpretation of the origin of Greek tragedy based on a chthonic Dionysus associated with the cult of dead heroes; (2) his attempt to uncover a new sense of history based on the exegesis of mythic symbols; and (3) [Baeumler's] claim that Hölderlin and Nietzsche represented attempts, in the German tradition, to liberate Greek antiquity from the domination of Roman and Christian interpretations."¹⁹⁵

A cursory glance at Heidegger's *Rektoratsrede* provides support for Edler's claim concerning the pivotal role that Nietzsche played in Heidegger's scheme to resuscitate the Greek "Anfang." Praising Nietzsche as "the last German philosopher," Heidegger reformulated the mission of "science/Wissenschaft" as "obedience to the distant decree of the Beginning [Anfang]." In this way alone, Heidegger insisted—in other words, by heeding the strictures of Nietzsche's critique of "antiquarian history"—might "science become the fundamental event of our spiritual Dasein as a Volk [geistig-volklichen Daseins]."¹⁹⁶

Additional evidence attesting to the value that Heidegger ascribed to Baeumler's "reactionary modernist" Bachofen interpretation stems from a missive that Heidegger wrote, in May 1932, to his trusted correspondent and paramour,

Elisabeth Blochmann, in which he urged Blochmann to consult a text that Baeumler had recently published on Bachofen's theory of natural law. His reservations concerning Bachofen's "methodology," notwithstanding, Heidegger stressed that, in Bachofen's work, "important matters are perceived": "A very useful Bachofen anthology, *Primordial Religion and the Symbols of Antiquity*, has been published by Reclam in three volumes. As you know, much of this is controversial. The methodology is not convincing, nor is it applicable in all places. Nevertheless, *important matters are perceived*. The short text edited by Alfred Baeumler entitled *J. J. Bachofen: Autobiography and Inaugural Address on Natural Law* is excellent on Bachofen himself."¹⁹⁷

In the years that followed, Heidegger internalized the methods of "subterranean philosophizing" in order to reanimate the repressed, chthonic dimension of pre-Socratic Dasein: a component of archaic *Existenz* that was rooted in *Erde* and *Boden* and that had been obfuscated by the sterile methods of conventional "scholarship."¹⁹⁸ In Heidegger's eyes, the "destinings" (*Schickungen*) of the "Anfang" or "Urzeit" portended a countermovement to contemporary "nihilism." Heidegger perceived the first stirrings and hints of this world-historical "countermovement" in National Socialism's "construction of a world rooted in the *Volk* [*volklich gegründete Welt*]." He perceived National Socialism as an ontological-historical cryptogram: a metapolitical destiny capable of reinvigorating the repressed, "subterranean" trajectory of "Western-Germanic historical Dasein." The task of "science" was to assist in the retrieval and recovery of "origins," a mission that anticipated the West's rebirth following the long night of *Seinsvergessenheit*.¹⁹⁹ As such, Heidegger's commitment to the epistemological value of "myth"—an orientation that had been catalyzed by Baeumler's Bachofen interpretation—would play a pivotal role in his understanding of National Socialism as an *Ereignis*: an "Event" in the "history of Being."

Heidegger's embrace of the "metaphysics of myth" paralleled his turn toward the "metapolitics of the historical *Volk*." However, in order for this "metapolitical" project to become a reality, "the Germans would need to dispense with the complacency of *Altertumswissenschaft* and its scientific model of truth in favor of a new, Nietzschean style of 'subterranean philosophizing': an approach that would retrieve the originality and chthonic forces of archaic *alétheia*. . . . Henceforth, revolutionary upheaval would not be aimed at the history of philosophy, but at the destiny of the Germans within Europe and the West."²⁰⁰

In the illuminating essay "Heidegger's Discovery of Myth," Daniel Meyer has proposed that Heidegger's ontological veneration of "myth" was inherently tied to a discourse of fascist political legitimacy. Meyer convincingly argues that the discourse of Heideggerian *Seinsgeschichte* "embedded the National Socialist *Machtergreifung* in an overarching, historico-philosophical narrative. Thereby, Heidegger's understanding of the Greek '*Anfang*' merged with a philosophical justification of National Socialism's political prospects. On these grounds, Heidegger exalted National Socialism . . . as a recrudescence of Myth."²⁰¹

Heidegger's strategy of "retrieval and recovery" culminated in his Hölderlin lectures of 1934–35, in which he interpreted Hölderlin's *Dichtung* as an ontological-historical cipher: as an augur or portent of gnostic knowledge in which the "subterranean" affinities between the "Greek *Anfang*" and the "metaphysics of German *Dasein*" commingled.²⁰² Hence, Heidegger's celebration of Hölderlin as the "poet of the Germans" (*Dichter der Deutschen*) and as the "founder of German Being" (*Stifter des deutschen Seyns*).²⁰³

Heidegger, invoking a leitmotif that he had imbibed from the Stefan George-Kreis, lauded Hölderlin as the poet of "secret Germany." A similar figure or trope emerged in the *Black Notebooks*, in the course of Heidegger's appeal to the redemptive powers of "die verborgene Deutschheit," or "hidden Germanness."²⁰⁴ For Heidegger, the meaning of "secret Germany" became clear in his Hölderlin-inspired, eschatological vision of a "Greco-German affiliation, . . . a mythic crossing of pre-Socratic philosophy and National Socialist politics."²⁰⁵

Reassessing the "Metapolitics of Myth"

Heidegger's recourse to the metapolitics of myth suggests the timeliness of reconsidering the philosophical stakes of the Heidegger-Cassirer dispute. Cassirer laid the groundwork for this reconsideration in *The Myth of the State*, in which he sought to fathom the causes underlying modern Germany's regression to a politics of full-blown racial idolatry: a moral-cognitive *lapsus* that, during the 1930s, assumed pan-European proportions.

Cassirer based his insights on a spate of recent anthropological findings and noted that, whereas tribal societies typically relied on pragmatic and utilitarian methods of coping with their environments, at times of acute crisis, they re-

gressed to the practices of magic and myth. In Cassirer's view, a parallel situation had emerged in the case of European fascism, one of whose distinguishing traits was a significant recrudescence of political myth. As Cassirer remarked, "In politics, we are always living on volcanic soil. . . . In critical moments of human social life, the rational forces that resist the rise of the old mythical conceptions are no longer sure of themselves. In such moments, the time for *myth* has come again. . . . In desperate situations, man will have recourse to desperate means—and our present-day political myths embody such desperate means. If reason has failed us, there always remains the *ultima ratio*, the power of the miraculous and the mysterious."²⁰⁶

The European crisis had been marked by a widespread and acute loss of self-confidence in modern society's intrinsic problem-solving abilities. As the societal collective's self-confidence waned, traditional sources of political legitimacy—respect for custom, law, and inherited social authority—were radically devalued. As a result, the body politic became increasingly receptive to the twin seductions of charisma and political myth. As Cassirer observed, "The call for [charismatic] leadership only appears when . . . all hopes of fulfilling this desire in an ordinary and normal way have failed. . . . What alone remains is the mystical power and authority of the leader." In this way, "the leader's will is elevated to supreme law."²⁰⁷

Unlike traditional myths, modern political myths are "ideologies" that have been consciously constructed and manufactured. Hence, in comparison with earlier myths, modern political myth is decidedly more complex. As Cassirer noted, "The new political myths . . . are *artificial things* fabricated by very skillful and cunning artisans." In the future, he continued, "they can be manufactured . . . according to the same methods as any other modern weapons: as machine guns or airplanes."²⁰⁸

The "prefabricated" character of modern political myths highlighted yet another regressive feature that accompanied their emergence: a worrisome debasement of the communicative function of language. According to Cassirer, one of the hallmarks of political myth was that the magical use of language superseded its exoteric, denotative capacities. Modern political myth contributed to the mystification of political authority by semantically obfuscating its contours and content. By obscuring social transparency, political myths thwarted the prospects of democratic will-formation and popular sovereignty, desiderata that are the lifeblood of modern democracy.²⁰⁹ As Cassirer remarked,

In the history of human speech, the word fulfills two entirely different functions. . . . These functions are the *semantic* and *magical* use of the word. . . . In primitive societies, the magical use predominates. . . . In the [magician's or the sorcerer's] hands, the word becomes a powerful weapon. Nothing can resist its force.

If we study modern political myths and the use that has been made of them, we find . . . not only a transvaluation of our ethical values, but a transformation of human speech. *The magic word takes precedence over the semantic word.* . . . Nothing is more likely to lull asleep all our active forces, our powers of judgment and critical discernment . . . than the steady, uniform, and monotonous performance of the same [linguistic] rites.²¹⁰

Cassirer's insights concerning the regressive tendencies that are endemic to political myth underline the risks that beset Heidegger's enthusiasm for the "metaphysics of myth": that is, the way that Heidegger's glorification of the "subterranean" powers of *Boden*, *Volk*, and *Erde* informed his perception of the links between *Seinsgeschichte* and *Seinspolitik*.

Heideggerian *Seinsgeschichte* sought to reestablish a "metaphysics of myth." By reconceiving language fatalistically as an emanation of Being, Heidegger seriously undermined the capacities of language as "critique." By denigrating the defetishizing powers of language, Heidegger downplayed the pivotal role that "discourse" (*Rede*) plays in demystifying dogmatic claims to social authority. If, as Hans Blumenberg claimed, the "legitimacy of the modern age" is necessarily tied to the project of human self-determination, Heidegger's "ontological fatalism" presents itself as a stumbling block to the goal of emancipation in all of its modalities and manifestations.²¹¹

Seinsgeschichte glorified "fate" by endowing it with a superior and unwarranted ontological dignity. As a result, Heidegger's "ontological fatalism" systematically devalued inner-worldly learning processes.²¹² Thereby, it sought to subordinate practical reason to a network of compulsory, preordained ontological antecedents: imperatives that were inimical to the goals of human freedom. Thereby, Heidegger—a thinker who once avowed, "Let not ideas and doctrines be your guide. Today, the Führer alone is the present and future *German reality* and its law"²¹³—denigrated the accumulated store of secular human knowledge as an insignificant "blip" amid the continuum of *Seinsvergessenheit*. As Hannah Arendt cautioned in "What Is Existential Philosophy?" (1945), underlying "Heidegger's ontological approach lay a *functionalism* . . . [in which] man is no more than his modes of Being or functions in the world."²¹⁴ In Arendt's view,

Heidegger's degradation of being-human to a series of inert and reified functions was already apparent in his portrayal of "everyday Being-in-the-world" in *Being and Time*. So thoroughly enmeshed was Dasein in mechanisms of social conformity that its existence came to approximate the inanimate being of *things*.

Whereas Kant's moral philosophy foregrounded the nexus between moral autonomy and human freedom, Heidegger, in his haste to disqualify the ideal of self-positing subjectivity, consigned human being to new forms of heteronomy. According to Arendt, the problem with Heidegger's "ontological functionalism" was that it rashly "dispensed with all those human characteristics that Kant . . . had defined as *freedom, human dignity, and reason*." Thereby, Heidegger's philosophy suppressed the capacities of "spontaneity" that, as Arendt put it, allowed men and women "*to reach beyond themselves*": to surpass heteronomous, thing-like *Existenz* in order to become self-actualizing beings.²¹⁵

When pressed in the "Letter on Humanism" to explicate the difference between Being and beings, Heidegger embraced a standpoint that, with breathtaking frankness, glorified humanity's subordination to nameless and mysterious Higher Powers. "*Man does not decide whether and how beings appear, whether and how God and the gods or History and Nature come forward into the lighting of Being, come to presence and depart*," Heidegger avowed. "*The advent of beings lies in the destiny of Being*."²¹⁶

The ontological determinism of Heideggerian *Seinsgeschichte* proved to be little more than an updated version of Greek *moira*: an exaltation of "fate" that contrasted sharply with the humanistic aspirations of the Greek Enlightenment. Socrates and his philosophical heirs proudly concerned themselves with "human things." By sacrificing "autonomy" on the altar of ontological heteronomy, Heidegger's recourse to pre-Socratic "physis" represented a step backward.

Heidegger's understanding of *Seinsgeschichte* consciously rejected Hegel's view of history as "progress in the consciousness of freedom." Instead, Heidegger's *Denken* sought refuge in a "new mythology": a mythology that was predicated on the tropes of *Seinsverlassenheit* and *Gottesverlassenheit*, both of which were atavisms of central European *Kulturpessimismus*. For Heidegger, the modern world was determined by a twofold "absence": the "no longer" of the gods that had fled and the "not yet" of the gods to come. In the postwar period, Heidegger embellished this condition of heteronomy rhetorically qua *Gelassenheit*, or "release-ment," thereby apotheosizing it. As Karl Jaspers concluded appositely, Heidegger's *Denken* remained "unfree, dictatorial, and incapable of communication."²¹⁷

189. Quoted in Klaus Kirin Patel, "Education, Schooling, and Camps," in *A Companion to Nazi Germany*, ed. Shelley Baranowski, Armin Nolzen, and Claus-Christian W. Szejnmann (New York: Wiley, 2015), 186.
190. Martin Heidegger, "Die Universität im neuen Reich," in *Reden und andere Zeugnisse eines Lebensweges*, GA 16, 762.
191. Martin Heidegger, "Seminar über Hegels Rechtsphilosophie," in *Seminare: Hegel-Schelling*, GA 86 (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1998), 177.
192. Heidegger, "Die Universität im neuen Reich," 761–62.
193. For a good account, see Ott, *Martin Heidegger*, 214–23.
194. Ibid., 214.
195. Heidegger, *Sein und Wahrheit*, GA 36/37, 91.
196. Heidegger, "National Socialist Education," 56.
197. See Peter Fritzsche, *Germans into Nazis* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998).
198. Heidegger, "National Socialist Education," 58. See also Guido Schneeberger, *Nachlese zu Heidegger: Dokumente zu seinem Leben und Denken* (Bern: Buchdruckerei A. G. Suhr, 1962), 201.
199. Martin Heidegger, "An die am Ferienlager Todtnauberg (Schwarzwald) teilnehmenden Herren Dozenten und Assistenten," in *Reden und andere Zeugnisse eines Lebens*, GA 16, 170.
200. See Victor Klemperer, *Language of the Third Reich: A Philologist's Notebook* (London: Athlone, 2000), 185.
201. "Festakte der Tagung der badischen Schreinmeister," *Freiburger Zeitung* 240 (4 September 1933); reprinted in Schneeberger, *Nachlese zu Heidegger*, 122.
202. Martin Heidegger, "Zur Eröffnung der Schulungskurse für die Notstandsarbeiter der Stadt an der Universität," 234.
203. Heidegger, "Call to Labor Service," 53–54.
204. Ibid.
205. Ibid.
206. Heidegger, *Logik als Frage nach dem Wesen der Sprache*, GA 38, 128.
207. Heidegger, "Nationalsozialistische Wissensschulung," *Der Alemann: Kampfblatt der Nationalsozialisten Oberbadens*, 1 February 1934, 9; quoted in Schneeberger, *Nachlese zu Heidegger*, 199 (emphasis in original).
208. Heidegger, *Logik als Frage nach dem Wesen der Sprache*, GA 38, 154.
209. Ibid., 100. See also Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, trans. W. D. Ross (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), book 1, 983a: "From wonder, men, both now and at the first, began to philosophize, having felt astonishment originally at the things which were more obvious, indeed, amongst those that were doubtful; then, by degrees in this way having advanced on words, and, in process of time, having started difficulties about more important subjects."
210. Heidegger, *Logik als Frage nach dem Wesen der Sprache*, GA 38, 162.
211. See Winfried Franzen, "Die Sehnsucht nach Härte und Schwere: Über ein zum NS-Engagement disponierendes Motiv in Heideggers Vorlesung 'Die Grundbegiffe der Metaphysik' von 1929/1930," in Pöggeler and Gethmann-Siefert, *Heidegger und die praktische Philosophie*, 78–92.
212. See Ott, *Martin Heidegger*, 244.

213. Anders, "Pseudo-Concreteness of Heidegger's Existentialism."
214. Graham Harmon, "The McCluhans and Metaphysics," in *New Waves in Philosophy of Technology*, ed. Jan Kyrre Berg Olsen, Evan Selinger, and Søren Riis (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 112.
215. Adorno, *Jargon of Authenticity*, 5.

Chapter 5. Earth and Soil

1. Martin Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, GA 2 (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1977), 66; Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (New York: Harper and Row, 1962), 93.
2. Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, GA 2, 150; Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 112.
3. See, for example, Jeff Malpas, *Heidegger and the Thinking of Place: Explorations in the Topology of Being* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2012).
4. Martin Heidegger, *Aus der Erfahrung des Denkens*, GA 13 (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1983), 23.
5. Martin Heidegger, *Wegmarken*, GA 9 (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1976), 421.
6. For a good example, see Don Ihde, *Heidegger's Technologies: Post-Phenomenological Perspectives* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2010).
7. Jeff Malpas, *Heidegger's Topology: Being, Place, and World* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2006), 302–3.
8. Martin Heidegger, "Zum Hochzeitstag von Fritz und Liesel Heidegger," in *Reden und Andere Zeugnisse eines Lebensweges*, GA 16 (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 2000), 53.
9. Hans Jonas, "Heideggers Entschlossenheit und Entschluss," in *Antwort: Martin Heidegger im Gespräch*, ed. Günther Neske and Emil Kettering (Pfullingen: Neske Verlag, 1988), 223.
10. Martin Heidegger, *Einführung in die Metaphysik*, GA 40 (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1998), 43; Heidegger, *Introduction to Metaphysics*, trans. Ralph Manheim (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1959), 39.
11. Martin Heidegger, *Logik als die Frage nach dem Wesen der Sprache*, GA 38 (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1998), 40 (emphasis in original).
12. Walther Darré, *Neuadel aus Blut und Boden* (Munich: Lehmann Verlag, 1930). See also, Anna Bramwell, *Blood and Soil: Richard Walter Darré and Hitler's "Green Party"* (Bourne End, UK: Kensal, 1985). Bramwell's study is a disconcertingly positive evaluation of Darré's legacy. Abstracting from her protagonist's commitment to "race thinking," she portrays Darré as a "dissident" National Socialist who anticipated the environmentalism of the German Green Party. Neither of these claims is genuinely sustainable.
13. Victor Klemperer, *Language of the Third Reich*, trans. Martin Brady (New York: Continuum, 2006), 22.
14. Martin Heidegger, *Anmerkungen I–V*, GA 97 (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 2015), 60.
15. Martin Heidegger, "'Only a God Can Save Us': *Der Spiegel's Interview with Martin Heidegger* (1966)," in *The Heidegger Controversy: A Critical Reader*, ed. Richard Wolin (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1991), 106.

16. Shulamit Volkov, "Anti-Semitism as a Cultural Code," in *Germans, Jews, and Anti-Semites: Trials in Emancipation* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 67–157.
17. Martin Heidegger to Elfriede Heidegger, 19 March 1933, in "Mein Liebes Seelchen!": *Briefe Martin Heideggers an seine Frau Elfriede, 1915–1970*, ed. Gertrud Heidegger (Munich: Deutsche Verlag-Anstalt, 2005), 186.
18. Martin Heidegger, *Überlegungen II–VI*, GA 94 (Frankfurt: Klostermann Verlag, 2014), 164.
19. Martin Heidegger, *Parmenides*, trans. André Schuwer and Richard Rojewicz (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992), 112.
20. Johann Jakob Bachofen, *Der Mythos von Orient und Occident: Eine Metaphysik der Alten Welt*, ed. Manfred Schröter (Munich: C. H. Beck'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1926).
21. Walter Burkert, "Griechische Mythologie und die Geistesgeschichte der Moderne," in *Les Études classiques aux XIXe et XXe siècles: Leur place dans l'histoire des idées*, ed. Willem den Boer (Geneva: Fondation Hardt, 1980), 187.
22. Martin Heidegger, *Zur Bestimmung der Philosophie*, GA 56/57 (Frankfurt: Klostermann Verlag, 1985), 15–17.
23. Martin Heidegger, *Phänomenologische Interpretationen zu Aristoteles*, GA 61 (Frankfurt: Klostermann Verlag, 1985), 170.
24. Martin Heidegger, *Überlegungen XII–XV*, GA 96 (Frankfurt: Klostermann Verlag, 2014), 46.
25. Martin Heidegger, "The Self-Assertion of the German University," in Wolin, *Heidegger Controversy*, 38, 36.
26. Charles Bambach, *Heidegger's Roots: Nietzsche, National Socialism, and the Greeks* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2003), 14 (emphasis added).
27. Quoted in Hans-Jürgen Sandkühler, *Philosophie im Nationalsozialismus* (Hamburg: Meiner Verlag, 2009), 174.
28. Martin Heidegger, *Introduction to Metaphysics*, trans. Ralph Manheim (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1959), 38.
29. Martin Heidegger, "Der Ursprung des Kunstwerkes," in *Holzwege*, GA 5 (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1977), 35.
30. Martin Heidegger, Hölderlin's Hymne "Germanien" und "Der Rhein," GA 39 (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1983), 106.
31. Martin Heidegger, *Vom Wesen der Wahrheit. Zu Platons Höhlengleichnis und Theätet*, GA 34 (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1988), 145 (emphasis added).
32. Heidegger, "Der Ursprung des Kunstwerkes," 28.
33. Martin Heidegger, "National Socialist Education," in Wolin, *Heidegger Controversy*, 56.
34. Heidegger, Hölderlin's Hymne "Germanien" und "Der Rhein," GA 39, 217.
35. Heidegger, "Der Ursprung des Kunstwerkes," 29.
36. Dieter Thomä, *Die Zeit des Selbst und die Zeit danach* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1994), 586.
37. Hannah Arendt, "What Is Existential Philosophy?," in *Essays in Understanding, 1930–1954: Formation, Exile, Totalitarianism* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1994), 181.
38. Heidegger, *Anmerkungen I–V*, GA 97, 47.

39. George Mosse, *The Crisis of German Ideology: The Intellectual Origins of the Third Reich* (New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1964), 16.
40. Quoted in Karl Dietrich Bracher, *The German Dictatorship*, trans. Jean Steinman (New York: Holt, Rinehardt, and Winston, 1970), 10.
41. Bambach, *Heidegger's Roots*, xx.
42. Martin Heidegger, *Sein und Wahrheit*, GA 36/37 (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 2001), 14.
43. Martin Heidegger, *Prolegomena zur Geschichte des Zeitbegriffs*, GA 20 (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1988), 104.
44. Ibid., 423.
45. Martin Heidegger, *Einführung in die Philosophische Forschung*, GA 17 (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 2006), 214.
46. Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, GA 2, 49; Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 61.
47. Heidegger, "Zum Hochzeitstag von Fritz und Liesel Heidegger," 53.
48. See the illuminating discussion of these themes in Sidonie Kellerer, *Zerissenner Moderne: Descartes bei den Neukantianern, Husserl, und Heidegger* (Konstanz: Konstanz University Press, 2013), 202.
49. Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, GA 2, 30; *Being and Time*, 44. See Stefan Günzel, "Heideggers und Deleuzes Geopolitische Leseart von Nietzsche," in *Geophilosophie: Nietzsches philosophische Geographie* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2001), 146–54. As Heidegger observes in *Being and Time*, paragraph 74, "*Repetition is an explicit handing-down [Überlieferung]: the retrogression to the possibility of historically prior Dasein.*" Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, GA 2, 509; Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 437.
50. Martin Heidegger, *Grundbegriffe der aristotelischen Philosophie*, GA 18 (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 2002), 15.
51. Heidegger, "Self-Assertion of the German University," 32.
52. Bambach, *Heidegger's Roots*, 20.
53. Paul Yorck von Wartenburg, *Die Philosophie des Grafen Paul Yorck von Wartenburg*, ed. Karlfried Gründer (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1970), 174–75.
54. Martin Heidegger, *Nietzsche: Europäischer Nihilismus*, GA 48 (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1986), 205.
55. Robert Minder, *Der Dichter in der Gesellschaft: Erfahrungen mit deutscher und französischer Literatur* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1968), 247–48 (emphasis added).
56. Louis Dean Valencia-Garcia, "The Rise and Fall of the Alt-Right in the Digital Age," in *Far-Right Revisionism and the End of History*, ed. Valencia-Garcia (New York: Routledge, 2020), 314.
57. Heidegger, *Anmerkungen I–V*, GA 97, 20.
58. Martin Heidegger, *Die Bremer und Freiburger Vorträge*, GA 79 (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1994), 27.
59. Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, GA 2, 526, 531, 529; Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 450, 454, 452.
60. Paul Yorck von Wartenburg, *Bewusstseinsstellung und Geschichte* (Hamburg: Meiner Verlag, 1991), 46.
61. Ibid. For the controversy surrounding the ideological valences of *Bodenständigkeit* in Heidegger's early work, see Emmanuel Faye, "La 'vision du monde' antisémite de Heidegger à l'ombre de ses *Cahiers noirs*," in *Heidegger: Le sol, la communauté, la race*, ed. E. Faye (Paris: 2014), 307–27; and Dieter Thomä, "Weltlosigkeit und Bodenlosigkeit:

- Der frühe Heidegger und das jüdische Denken," in "Sein und Zeit" neu verhandelt, ed. Marion Heinz and Tobias Bender (Hamburg: Meiner Verlag, 2019), 379–413. Thomas's essay proceeds according to the mistaken assumption that, by successfully contesting Faye's arguments, he can exonerate Heidegger.
62. Rogers Brubaker, *Citizenship and Nationhood in France and Germany* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008), 1, 9.
 63. Martin Heidegger, *Die Grundbegriffe der Metaphysik: Welt, Endlichkeit, Einsamkeit*, GA 29–30 (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1983), 244; Heidegger, *Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics: World, Finitude, Solitude*, trans. William McNeill and Nicholas Walker (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982), 163.
 64. For an account of Heidegger's Karlsruhe address, see Guido Schneberger, *Nachlese zu Heidegger: Dokumente zu seinem Leben und Denken* (Bern: Buchdruckerei A. G. Suhr, 1962), 10–12.
 65. Heidegger, "Self-Assertion of the German University," 32.
 66. Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, GA 2, 395; Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 447.
 67. Martin Heidegger, "Schlageter," in Wolin, *Heidegger Controversy*, 41.
 68. Heidegger, *Logik als Frage nach dem Wesen der Sprache*, GA 38, 80–81.
 69. Martin Heidegger, *Über Wesen und Begriff von Natur, Geschichte, und Staat*, in *Heidegger-Jahrbuch*, vol. 4 (Freiburg: Karl Alber, 2009), 81, 80.
 70. Wilhelm Volz, "Lebensraum und Lebensrecht des deutschen Volkes," *Deutsche Arbeit* 24 (1925): 174.
 71. Heidegger, *Natur, Geschichte, und Staat*, 79, 81.
 72. Anne Harrington, *Reenchanted Science: Holism in German Culture from Wilhelm II to Hitler* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995), 181.
 73. Ibid.
 74. Heidegger, *Natur, Geschichte, und Staat*, 81–82.
 75. Heidegger, *Überlegungen II–VI*, GA 94, 124.
 76. Karl Haushofer, *Grenzen in ihren Geographischen und politischen Bedeutung* (Berlin: Kurt Vowinkel, 1927), 98. For a discussion of Haushofer's book, see David Murphy, *Heroic Earth: Geopolitical Thought in Weimar Germany* (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 1997), 31–32.
 77. Quoted in Richard Hennig and Leo Korholz, *Einführung in die Geopolitik* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1934), 48. For a treatment of the "law of expanding spaces," see Horace B. Davis, "Conservative Writers on Imperialism," *Science & Society* 18 (1954): 310–25.
 78. Quoted in Murphy, *Heroic Earth*, 1.
 79. Heidegger, *Natur, Geschichte, und Staat*, 79, 80.
 80. Immanuel Kant, "Physical Geography," in *Natural Science*, ed. Eric Watkins (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 434–679; Herder's thoughts on geography are contained in Books I and II of *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit*, vol. 1 (Berlin: Aufbau, 1965), 13–46.
 81. Geoffrey Parker, *Western Geopolitical Thought in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Routledge, 2015), 12.
 82. Martin Heidegger to Fritz Heidegger, 2 March 1932, in *Heidegger und der Antisemitismus: Positionen im Widerstreit*, ed. Walter Homolka and Arnulf Heidegger (Freiburg: Herder, 2016), 27.

83. Woodruff Smith, *The Ideological Origins of Nazi Imperialism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 230.
84. Franz Neumann, *Behemoth: The Structure and Practice of National Socialism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1942), 147.
85. Heidegger, *Überlegungen II–VI*, GA 94, 18.
86. Otto Pöggeler, "Heidegger, Nietzsche, and Politics," in *The Heidegger Case: On Philosophy and Politics*, ed. Tom Rockmore and Joseph Margolis (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1991), 133.
87. Carl Schmitt, *Der Begriff des Politischen* (Berlin: Duncker und Humblot, 1963), 67.
88. Heidegger, *Sein und Wahrheit*, GA 36/37, 90.
89. Schmitt, *Der Begriff des Politschen*, 46–47 (emphasis added).
90. See Ulrich Sieg, "Die Verjudung des deutschen Geistes," *Die Zeit* 52 (22 December 1989).
91. Heidegger, *Sein und Wahrheit*, GA 36/37, 90–91.
92. Adolf Hitler, "Wesen und Ziel des Nationalsozialismus," 3 July 1927, in *Reden, Schriften, Anordnungen*, ed. Bärbel Dusik (Munich: K. G. Saur, 1992), 2/1, 406.
93. As Holger Herwig shows in his biography of Haushofer, *Demon of Geopolitics: How Karl Haushofer "Educated" Hitler* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2016), under the Third Reich, Haushofer's upward career mobility was hampered by the fact that he had a Jewish wife, whom he refused to divorce.
94. Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, trans. Ralph Manheim (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1943), 643.
95. Ibid., 653–54.
96. Heidegger, *Einführung in die Metaphysik*, GA 40, 41–42; Heidegger, *Introduction to Metaphysics*, 38.
97. Heidegger, *Einführung in die Metaphysik*, GA 40, 49; Heidegger, *Introduction to Metaphysics*, 46.
98. Martin Heidegger, "Hölderlin und das Wesen der Dichtung," in *Erläuterungen zu Hölderlins Dichtung*, GA 4 (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1944), 44.
99. Heidegger, *Einführung in die Metaphysik*, GA 40, 180; Heidegger, *Introduction to Metaphysics*, 171.
100. Heidegger, *Einführung in die Metaphysik*, GA 40, 174; Heidegger, *Introduction to Metaphysics*, 157.
101. Heidegger, *Einführung in die Metaphysik*, GA 40, 66; Heidegger, *Introduction to Metaphysics*, 62 (emphasis added).
102. For a discussion of the distinctive combination of aesthetics, fundamental ontology, and "state-founding" in Heidegger's work, see Joseph Chryty, *The Aesthetic State: A Quest in Modern German Thought* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), chap. 7, "Heidegger: Ontology and Anarchy," 371–408. For a critique of the romantic approach to state formation, see Carl Schmitt, *Political Romanticism*, trans. Guy Oakes (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1988).
103. Heidegger, *Hölderlins Hymnen "Germanien" und "Der Rhein"*, GA 39, 120.
104. Minder, *Der Dichter in der Gesellschaft*, 250–51.
105. Alfred Baeumler, "Hellas und Germanien," in *Studien zur deutschen Geistesgeschichte* (Berlin: Junker und Dünnhaupt, 1937), 305.

106. Heidegger, Hölderlins Hymnen "Germanien" und "Der Rhein," GA 39, 144.
107. Ibid., 74. See also Domenico Losurdo, *Heidegger and the Ideology of War: Community, Death, and the West*, trans. Marella Morris and John Morris (Amherst, NY: Humanity Books, 2001). That, in the apologetic literature on Heidegger, Losurdo's indispensable study is rarely cited I regard as further evidence of *Verdrängung* (repression) of Heidegger's "military nationalism."
108. Heidegger, Hölderlins Hymnen "Germanien" und "Der Rhein," GA 39, 216, 214.
109. Ibid., 120.
110. Ibid., 163.
111. Manfred Frank, *Gott im Exil: Vorlesungen über einer neuen Mythologie* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1988), 105–7.
112. On this theme, see Robert Williamson, *The Longing for Myth in Germany: Religion and Aestheticism from Romanticism to Nietzsche* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004).
113. Heinrich Block, "Eurasien," *Zeitschrift für Geopolitik* 3 (1926): 15–16.
114. Hermann Lautensach, "Geopolitik und Schule," *Geographischer Anzeiger* 28 (1927): 342.
115. Martin Heidegger, *Vom Wesen der Wahrheit. Zu Platons Höhlengleichnis und Thäret*, GA 34 (Frankfurt: Klostermann Verlag, 1988), 145 (emphasis added). Heidegger invokes the figure of a nation of "Dichter und Denker" in his *Parmenides* lectures of 1942–43, GA 54 (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1982): "The more primordial Beginning," observes Heidegger, "like the First Beginning, can only be achieved by a Western-historical Volk of Dichter und Denker" (114).
116. Heidegger, *Überlegungen XII–XV*, GA 96, 235. For Heidegger's denigration of "Neugroes" as "geschichtlos" (without history), see *Logik als Frage nach dem Wesen der Sprache*, GA 38, 81.
117. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Zur Genealogie der Moral*, KSA IV (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1980), 324–25 (emphasis added).
118. Heidegger, *Natur, Geschichte, und Staat*, 82.
119. Ibid.
120. Ibid.
121. Ibid. (emphasis added).
122. Ibid.
123. For a masterful account of German *Ostforschung*, see Michael Burleigh, *Germany Turns Eastwards: A Study of "Ostforschung" in the Third Reich* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).
124. Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, 642.
125. Ibid., 598.
126. Quoted in Jeffrey Herf, *Reactionary Modernism: Technology, Politics, and Culture in the Weimar Republic and the Third Reich* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 139.
127. Werner Sombart, *The Jews and Modern Economic Life*, trans. Mortimer Epstein (Kitchener, ON: Batoche Books, 2001), 240.
128. Quoted in Reginald Phelps, "Hitlers Grundlegende Rede über den Antisemitismus," *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 16 (1968): 14.

129. Heidegger, *Natur, Geschichte, und Staat*, 81.
130. Ibid., 82.
131. Sander L. Gilman, "Cosmopolitan Jews vs. Jewish Nomads," in *Heidegger's "Black Notebooks": Responses to Anti-Semitism*, ed. Andrew J. Mitchell and Peter Trawny (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015), 31.
132. Mosse, *Crisis of German Ideology*, 9.
133. Heidegger, *Überlegungen XII–XV*, GA 96, 67.
134. Harrington, *Reenchanted Science*, 181.
135. Heidegger, *Sein und Wahrheit*, GA 36/37, 91.
136. Heidegger, *Überlegungen VII–XI*, GA 95, 97.
137. Heidegger, *Die Grundbegriffe der Metaphysik*, GA 29–30, 262.
138. Martin Heidegger, "Die Weltlichkeit der Welt," in *Sein und Zeit*, GA 2, 85–151; Heidegger, "The Worldhood of the World," in *Being and Time*, 91–147.
139. Ibid.
140. Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, 649, 626, 140.
141. Heidegger, "Der Ursprung des Kunstwerkes," 8.
142. Heidegger, Hölderlins Hymne "Germanien" und "Der Rhein," GA 39, 205.
143. Heidegger, *Logik als Frage nach dem Wesen der Sprache*, GA 38, 153.
144. On this point, see the invaluable study by Hubert Bruntrager, *Der Ironiker und der Ideologe: Die Beziehungen zwischen Thomas Mann und Alfred Baeumler* (Würzburg: Königshausen und Neumann, 1993), 80. For Heidegger's engagement with Klages, Spengler, and Scheler, see "Four Interpretations of Our Contemporary Situation: The Opposition of Life (Soul) and Spirit in Oswald Spengler, Ludwig Klages, Max Scheler, and Leopold Ziegler," in *Die Grundbegriffe der Metaphysik*, GA 29–30, 103–7. For Scheler's role as a prominent advocate of *Zivilisationskritik*, see John Raphael Staude, *Max Scheler: An Intellectual Biography* (New York: Free Press, 1968). On Heidegger's relationship to the Stefan George-Kreis, see Francois Rastier, *Naufrage d'un prophète: Heidegger aujourd'hui* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2015).
145. Hans Vaihinger, "Der Mythos und das Al Ob: Ein Fragment" (1927), quoted in Philipp Teichfischer, *Die Masken des Philosophen: Alfred Baeumler in der Weimarer Republik* (Marburg: Techtum, 2009), 176.
146. For an excellent overview of these tendencies—an account that includes an insightful presentation of Heidegger's work—see Nitzan Lebovic, *The Philosophy of Life and Death: Ludwig Klages and the Rise of Nazi Biopolitics* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).
147. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Das Geburt der Tragödie aus dem Geist der Musik*, in *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 1 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1988), 143.
148. See the discussion in Tobias Beve, *Kulturgeneese als Dialektik von Mythos und Vernunft: Ernst Cassirer und die Kritische Theorie* (Würzburg: Königshausen und Neumann, 2005), 159–61.
149. Mircea Eliade, *The Myth of the Eternal Return* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1954), ix. For a treatment of the political-ontological affinities between Eliade and Heidegger, see David Dubuisson, *Twentieth-Century Mythologies: Dumézil, Lévi-Strauss, and Eliade*, trans. Martha Cunningham (New York: Routledge, 2014), chap. 16, "Metaphysics and Politics: Heidegger and Eliade," 221–33. For a lucid discussion

- of Eliade and political myth, see Robert Ellwood, *The Politics of Myth: C. G. Jung, Mircea Eliade, and Joseph Campbell* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1999), chap. 3, "Mircea Eliade and Nostalgia for the Sacred," 79–126. For Eliade's filiations with Corneliu Codreanu and the Legionnaire movement, see Florian Turcanu, *Mircea Eliade: Le Prisonnier de l'histoire* (Paris: La Découverte, 2003).
150. Ludwig Klages, *Vom kosmogonischen Eros* (Bonn: Bouvier, 1988), 179–80; for Heidegger's treatment of Klages, see *Die Grundbegriffe der Metaphysik*, 105–7.
151. Ernst Bloch, *The Heritage of Our Time*, trans. Neville Plaice and Stephen Plaice (Cambridge, MA: Polity, 1991). Bloch cites the following observation from Klages's three-volume opus *Geist als Widersacher der Seele*: "The earth is steaming with the blood of the slain as never before, and the ape-like element is flaunting the spoils from the smashed temple of life." According to Bloch, "while the first part of the sentence depicts capitalism plus murder, its conclusion illustrates . . . the telepathic theft where 'primeval souls' anticipate genuine ones, and Tarzan prototypes copy mystery" (316).
152. Günzel, *Geophilosophie*, 150–54.
153. Frank Edler, "Alfred Baeumler on Hölderlin and the Greeks: Reflections on the Heidegger-Baeumler Relationship," *Janus Head* 1 (1999), <https://oajournals.blogspot.com/search?q=edler>.
154. Immanuel Kant, *The Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Paul Guyer and Allen Wood (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 704.
155. Jeffrey Barash, "Ernst Cassirer, Martin Heidegger, and the Legacy of Davos," *History and Theory* 51 (2012): 444.
156. Martin Heidegger, "Review of Ernst Cassirer, *Mythical Thought*," in *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, trans. Richard Taft (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997), 180.
157. Martin Heidegger, *Kant und das Problem der Metaphysik*, GA 3 (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1991), 245. Heidegger's Cassirer review originally appeared in the *Deutsche Literaturzeitung* 21 (1928): 1000–1012.
158. Heidegger, "Review of Ernst Cassirer, *Mythical Thought*," 188.
159. Ibid.
160. Ibid., 190.
161. Ibid.
162. Heidegger, *Sein und Wahrheit*, GA 36/37, 12 (emphasis added).
163. Heidegger, *Einführung in die Metaphysik*, GA 40, 164–65; Heidegger, *Introduction to Metaphysics*, 155.
164. Heidegger, *Überlegungen II–VI*, GA 94, 115.
165. Ibid., 124.
166. "Davos Disputation between Ernst Cassirer and Martin Heidegger," in Heidegger, *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, 204.
167. Jeffrey Barash, "Ernst Cassirer's Theory of Myth," in *The Symbolic Construction of Reality: The Legacy of Ernst Cassirer*, ed. Barash (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 115.
168. Ernst Cassirer, *Nachgelassene Manuskripte und Texte*, vol. 9 (Hamburg: Meiner, 2008), 167.
169. See Lebovic, *Philosophy of Life and Death*, 196.

170. Ernst Cassirer, *The Myth of the State* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1946), 284–85.
171. Emilio Gentile, *The Sacralization of Politics in Fascist Italy*, trans. Keith Botsford (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996). See also Stanley Payne, *The History of Fascism* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1967), 215.
172. Paul Simon, *Mythos oder Religion* (Paderborn: Druck und Verlag der Bonifacius-Druckerei, 1935), 111.
173. Quoted in Uriel Tal, "Political Faith of Nazism Prior to the Holocaust," in *Religion, Politics and Ideology in the Third Reich* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 21. For more on Simon, see Ulrich Lehner, "Das Menschliche an der Kirche Christi," *Theologie und Glaube* 106 (2016): 63–69.
174. Martin Heidegger, *Metaphysical Foundations of Logic*, trans. Michael Heim (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984), 209 (emphasis added).
175. Otto Pöggeler, *Heidegger in seiner Zeit* (Munich: Wilhelm Fink, 1999), 127.
176. See Heidegger's comments on modernity as an age of "devitalization" (*Entlebung*), in *Zur Bestimmung der Philosophie*, GA 56/57, 88–89.
177. On the search for "holism" as a distinguishing feature of German "reactionary modernism," see Harrington, *Reenchanted Science*. Heidegger was keenly interested in the work of one of Germany's leading "holistic" biologists, Baron Jakob von Uexküll. In Heidegger's 1929–30 lecture course *Die Grundbegriffe der Metaphysik: Welt, Endlichkeit, Einsamkeit*, GA 29–30, Heidegger discussed Uexküll's work enthusiastically, lauding his vitalistic approach for having rescued biology from the discipline's prevailing mechanistic prejudices. Heidegger also praised Uexküll's exemplary, holistic understanding of "Umwelt," or of the integration of the animal within its environment: an understanding of nature in which the organism's "wholeness is not exhausted through the bodily wholeness of the animal, but rather the bodily wholeness is first itself understood on the basis of an original wholeness [with the environment]" (379–80). In *Reenchanted Science*, Harrington speculates that Heidegger's concept of "Being-in-the-world" may have derived from Uexküll's "Umwelt-Begriff." However, there is an additional connection between Uexküll and Heidegger: they served together on the *Ausschuss für Rechtsphilosophie*, a prestigious and ambitious subcommittee of Hans Frank's Academy of German Law.
178. Georg Lukács, *The Destruction of Reason*, trans. Peter Palmer (London: Merlin, 1980), 533.
179. Wilhelm Reich, *The Mass Psychology of Fascism*, trans. Vincent Carfagno (New York: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 1970), 76, 382.
180. On Mann's development, see Bruntrager, *Der Ironiker und der Ideolog*.
181. Thomas Mann, *Reden und Aufsätze*, vol. 1 (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1965), 470. Görres, known for his veneration of myth, was a leading figure of the Heidelberg school of Romanticism.
182. Alfred Bachtold, *Versuch über die Gräbersymbolik der Alten*, ed. Karl Albrecht Bernoulli and Ludwig Klages (Basel: Helbing und Lichtenhahn, 1925).
183. Alfred Bachtold, *Mutterrecht*, quoted in Georg Dörr, *Muttermythos und Herrschaftsmythos* (Würzburg: Königshausen und Neumann, 2007), 55.
184. Robert Norton, *Secret Germany: Stefan George and His Circle* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2002), 296.

185. Bambach, *Heidegger's Roots*, 275–76.
186. The story is told in *Thomas Mann und Alfred Baeumler: Eine Dokumentation*, ed. Marianne Baeumler, Hubert Brunträger, and Hermann Kurzke (Würzburg: Königshausen und Neumann, 1989), 463. For a detailed account of the fate of the Marburg philosophy chair vacated by Heidegger, see Christian Tilitzki, *Deutsche Universitätsphilosophie in der Weimarer Republik und im dritten Reich*, vol. 1 (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2002), 185–94, 216–18, 545–91. For more on the relationship between Heidegger and Baeumler, see Rüdiger Safranski, *Martin Heidegger: Between Good and Evil*, trans. Ewald Osers (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), 236–37.
187. See Martin Heidegger to Karl Jaspers, 3 November 1928, in *Briefwechsel, 1919–1963*, ed. Hans Saner (Munich: Piper Verlag, 1990), 95.
188. See Tilitzki, *Deutsche Universitätsphilosophie in der Weimarer Republik und im dritten Reich*, 589.
189. Alfred Baeumler to Manfred Schroeter, 4 May 1925, in *Thomas Mann und Alfred Baeumler*, 117.
190. Alfred Baeumler, "Nietzsche und Bachofen," *Neue Schweizer Rundschau* 28 (1928): 323–43; see Max Whyte, "The Uses and Abuses of History in the Third Reich: Alfred Baeumler's 'Heroic Realism,'" *Journal of Contemporary History* 43 (2008): 178.
191. Alfred Baeumler, "Nietzsche und der Nationalsozialismus," in *Nationalsozialistische Monatshefte* 5 (1934): 291, 294–95; reprinted in Baeumler, *Studien zur deutschen Geistesgeschichte* (Berlin: Junker und Dünnhaupt, 1943), 283–94.
192. Quoted in Tilitzki, *Deutsche Universitätsphilosophie in der Weimarer Republik und im dritten Reich*, 573.
193. Ibid., 574–75.
194. Friedrich Nietzsche, "The Use and Abuse of History," in *Untimely Meditations*, trans. R. J. Hollingdale (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 75.
195. Edler, "Alfred Baeumler on Hölderlin and the Greeks." Heidegger's attraction to the "cult of dead heroes" was spurred by his reading of Werner Jaeger's essay *Tyrtaios über die wahre Aretē* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1932); see my discussion of the Heidegger-Jaeger encounter in chapter 3.
196. Heidegger, "Self-Assertion of the German University," 32–33.
197. Martin Heidegger to Elisabeth Blochmann, 25 May 1932, in *Briefwechsel*, ed. Joachim Storch (Marbach: Deutsche Schillergesellschaft, 1990), 50.
198. Martin Heidegger to Werner Jaeger, 12 December 1932, quoted in Frank Edler, "Martin Heidegger and Werner Jaeger on the Eve of 1933," *Research in Phenomenology* 27 (1997): 123–25.
199. Heidegger, *Hölderlins Hymnen "Germanien" und "Der Rhein"*, GA 39, 164.
200. Bambach, *Heidegger's Roots*, 46.
201. Daniel Meyer, "Die Entdeckung des griechischen Mythos: Heideggers geschichtsphilosophische Wende," *Germanica* 45 (2010): 11.
202. Martin Heidegger to Elfriede Heidegger, 19 March 1933, in "Mein Liebes Seelchen," 186; Heidegger, *Überlegungen II–VI*, GA 94, 124.
203. Heidegger, *Hölderlins Hymnen "Germanien" und "Der Rhein"*, GA 39, 214, 220.
204. Heidegger, *Überlegungen XII–XV*, GA 96, 29. See my discussion of this theme in chapter 3.

205. Bambach, *Heidegger's Roots*, 230 (emphasis added).
206. Cassirer, *Myth of the State*, 279, 280.
207. Ibid., 280.
208. Ibid., 282.
209. Claude Lefort, *L'Invention democratique* (Paris: Fayard, 1981), especially chap. 1, "Droits de l'homme et politique," 45–83.
210. Cassirer, *Myth of the State*, 283–84.
211. Hans Blumenberg, *The Legitimacy of the Modern Age*, trans. Robert M. Wallace (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1986).
212. Jürgen Habermas, *Postmetaphysical Thinking*, trans. William Mark Hohengarten (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1993), 42.
213. Heidegger, "Only a God Can Save Us," 96.
214. Hannah Arendt, "What Is Existential Philosophy?," in *Essays in Understanding, 1930–1954: Formation, Exile, Totalitarianism* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1994), 178.
215. Ibid. A disagreement concerning the nature of "spontaneity" in Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* was one of the key elements of dissensus in the Cassirer-Heidegger debate at Davos.
216. Martin Heidegger, "Letter on Humanism," in *Basic Writings*, trans. David Krell (New York: Harper and Row, 1979), 234.
217. Karl Jaspers, "Letter to the Freiburg University Denazification Committee, December 22, 1945," in Wolin, *Heidegger Controversy*, 149.

Chapter 6. From Beyond the Grave

1. Dominique Venner, "Les Manifestants du 26 mai et Heidegger," Dominique Venner's website, accessed 25 June 2020, <http://www.dominiquevenner.fr/>.
2. Alain Ruscio, "Dominique Venner, une 'tête pensante' du fascisme français," *Histoire Coloniale et Postcoloniale*, 22 May 2013, <https://histoirecoloniale.net/Dominique-Venner-une-tete-pensante.html>. According to a news report that surfaced in 2017, *Camp of the Saints* was also one of Steve Bannon's favorite books. See Sarah Jones, "The Notorious Book That Ties the Right to the Far-Right," *New Republic Daily*, 2 February 2018.
3. Jean-Marie Le Pen, *Les Français d'abord* (Paris: M. Lafont, 1984), 181.
4. See Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke, *Black Sun: Aryan Cults, Esoteric Nazism, and the Politics of Identity* (New York: NYU Press, 2002). The symbol of the *Schwarze Sonne* adorned the SS Ordensburg at Schloss Wewelsburg. Goodrick-Clarke remarks on its currency among neo-Nazi cults (149–50). For example, in 1992, it became the logo for the Thule-Seminar website, *Thule-Netz*. (The Thule-Seminar—founded by Pierre Krebs in 1980 and a namesake of Rudolf von Sebottendorf's Munich-based Thule-Gesellschaft—was a leading organ of the German Neue Rechte.)
5. Tim Arago, "Minutes before El Paso Killing, Hate-Filled Manifesto Appears Online," *New York Times*, 3 August 2019.
6. Adam Bala Lough's documentary *Alt-Right: Age of Rage* (Gravitas Ventures, 2018) reproduces Spencer's infamous reenactment of the Nazi "Hitler Gruß."