



Introduction

Martin Heidegger's engagement with National Socialism was a philosophical engagement, even though it appeared—and more than appeared—to be an abdication of philosophy. Accosting Heidegger on a tram after his early resignation of the rectorship of Freiburg University, Wolfgang Schädewaldt asked his colleague, “Back from Syracuse?” But this question mistakes the philosophical character peculiar to Heidegger's engagement. Unlike Plato, Heidegger had not sought out the political realm as the open space for the implementation of a preconceived philosophy of the ideal state. What Heidegger desired in 1933, and what he imagined he could effect by running the university in collaboration with the new regime, was, on the contrary, the irruption of the nonideality of the political realm into philosophy. He confessed as much to Karl Löwith in Rome in 1936, explicitly identifying his concept of historicity as the basis for his engagement.¹ The political realm, in its essential historicity, was itself to philosophize under National Socialism, albeit without diverging from its anti-philosophical character as the realm of the contingent and the finite. Philosophy, as it had previously interpreted itself, was to be stood on its head. Heidegger's politics are incomprehensible and irrecoverable as an act of expansion on the part of a metaphysics of eternity, since it is in his critique of just such a metaphysics and of the timeless, abstract presence of the Platonic Idea and its avatars that an early susceptibility to a “folkish” politics can be discerned.

Arguably, for Heidegger, the year 1933 promised that overturning of the foundation of philosophy on whose necessity for the question of Being he expatiates in *Being and Time*. The subject, on which liberalism and modern metaphysics had been raised, was to give way to the people. As the

liberal subject, in *truly* giving way, can but carry with itself the presence that is its own foundation, National Socialism was to offer the concrete possibility of a fundamental ontology. The regime extolled a return to the rootedness in the *Volk* (people), and in Heidegger's ears, this was taken to announce the repudiation of that abstraction from historicity in which the subject comes to itself in its autonomy and self-presence. Heidegger does not formulate the choice at issue here as a choice between autonomy and heteronomy, but rather as a choice between the alleged autonomy of the subject and the historicity in which Being is understood as other than presence. Inasmuch as it comes to itself and is thus present to itself, the autonomous subject fixes on Being only in its presence and thereby cannot think the originary Being of the time in which presence is first able to be presence. With respect to an understanding of the ecstatic character of time, the subject is constricted by the atomism of liberal thought. That Heidegger was politically reactionary is generally accepted as evident from the anti-liberalism of his engagement with National Socialism. That his notion of historicity, which he himself admitted to be the basis for his engagement, is consequently reactionary is nonetheless disputable.² What has to be ascertained and not assumed are the relations between historicity and nationalism and between the historicity of a people and the people of historicity. This is to ask after that which was to be conserved in Heidegger's conservatism and uncovered in his destruction of the metaphysics of presence.

If Heidegger joined the NSDAP without any prior dealings with the movement (or, for that matter, with any political movement whatsoever), the step can nevertheless not be said to have been entirely unforeseeable. There was a shared privileging of historicity that, to begin with, concealed the divergence in the understanding of historicity. Heidegger's initial responsiveness to the Hitlerian demagogy was at once naïve and calculated, because what Heidegger chose to hear in it was the long anticipated resolution of the impasse of Cartesian subjectivity. Within the anti-liberal and "folkish" pronouncements of the new regime, he was prepared to hear an echo of his own philosophical demotion of the subject in favor of historicity. The self-assertion of the German people from under the frail and allegedly imported liberalism of the Weimar Republic took on the appearance of the possibility of a disclosure of the ontological foundations of the *cogito sum* and of its certainty in self-presence. What Descartes, in the inauguration of the metaphysics of subjectivity, leaves unthought, and yet nev-

ertheless presupposes in abstracting from it, is what Heidegger discusses in *Being and Time* under the name of “world” (*Welt*). It is the existential, historical thickness of world that is flattened to the monotony of the Cartesian *res extensa* and that must first be flattened in just this way if the ahistorical and peopleless subject is to be able to assure itself of its own ontological transparency. In a space that can pass for the substratum of every object because it is always and everywhere only ever present, the subject does not encounter any challenge to its understanding of Being as presence. The year 1933 was to repoliticize the space of metaphysics by reversing its suppression of historical world.

However enthusiastically Heidegger declared his allegiance to the new regime, he was always cautious to interpret the *Volk* on parade in the streets as no more than the promise of a reversal of the suppression of historicity. Out of opposition to the flattening of the world of the people in the Cartesian foundations of liberalism, Heidegger aligned himself with National Socialism. Even beyond his disillusionment with the regime, his thinking undertook to grasp the historical thickness of the world of the German people. The “chauvinism” of the *Volk* was to be thought through to its essence. For Heidegger, this was a question of an understanding of historicity rather than eugenics. The conservatism of the regime had markedly less to do with the contestation of presence through an attention to historicity than with the preservation of breeding lines in the ahistorical manipulation of genetic material. In its abstraction from historicity, the regime amounted only to a variation on liberalism. Increasingly, for Heidegger after 1934, the singularity of the German people on which National Socialism insisted was precisely that which contested the covert liberalism of the regime. The grounds for Heidegger’s engagement with National Socialism are the grounds for his disengagement: the people of the question of Being were, in the end, too political for the *Weltflucht* (flight from the world) of Nazism.

Heidegger’s disillusionment with National Socialism is not a disillusionment with the notion of the *Volk*. What is the sense of “*Volk*” for Heidegger? And why should it be thought in conjunction with historicity and fundamental ontology? It is clear from the text of his “Address on 11 November in Leipzig” that in 1933 Heidegger interpreted the self-assertion of the German people under National Socialism as a precondition of the knowledge of the Being of beings. The address in question, first published in the volume *Bekanntnis der deutschen Universitäten und Hochschulen zu*

Adolf Hitler und dem nationalsozialistischen Staat (Dresden, 1933) offers the coup d'état an ontological vindication:

We have renounced the idolatry of a rootless and impotent thinking. We behold the end of its servile philosophy. We are convinced that the luminous rigor and the befitting confidence of the inexorable and simple questioning concerning the essence of Being are returning. The originary courage either to grow or to shatter thereon in the confrontation with that which is constitutes the innermost impetus of the questioning of a folkish science.³

The idolatry of a rootless and impotent thinking has been replaced by the questioning of a “folkish” science. Following this account, what distinguishes a “folkish” science (*völkische Wissenschaft*) is its rootedness. Heidegger does not say that a “folkish” science is rooted in a *Volk*. Rather, he says that a “folkish” science endangers itself in its confrontation with that which is. The two assertions are not synonymous. In his declaration of loyalty to the new regime, Heidegger adopts the National Socialist term *völkische Wissenschaft* but refers thereby, not to a science that with its rootedness in a people has grown certain of its stability, but rather to a science that has become all the more vulnerable. Situating the rootedness of a “folkish” science in its originary courage either to grow *or to shatter* on the question of Being, Heidegger does not make of the “folkishness” of a “folkish” science an orienting frame of reference, a paradigm or *weltanschauung*. The “folkishness” of a “folkish” science calls itself and the science as a whole into question, since for Heidegger the rootedness of a “folkish” science is the originary that is conferred upon it in its questioning concerning the originary understood throughout his writings as Being. Heidegger does not oppose to a rootedness in the *Volk* a rootedness in the question of Being, because implicit in Heidegger’s Leipzig address is a definition of the *Volk* that proceeds by reference to the question of Being. Heidegger ascribes the brittleness of a “folkish” science to its questioning concerning the essence of Being, rather than to its deficiencies according to the criteria of modern science. The rootedness of a “folkish” science is not a supplement appended to the notion of modern science that renders it more robust. It is the fragility, intolerable to modern science, whereby the latter would open itself (precisely in and by means of its inability to begin by constitutively flattening the existential, historical thickness of world) to that which it could not otherwise think. This rootedness is the obscurantism with relation to the universality of correct claims in which the more pernicious obscurantism of modern science in its relation to Being might

itself be surmounted. Here the question of Being becomes the “matter” of knowledge and the guarantor of a “folkish” science in the face of its cosmopolitan simulacra.

It is in the questionableness of Being that Heidegger’s exposition of “folkish” science differs from the racist doctrine of science advocated, for example, by Heidegger’s Marburg colleague Erich Jaensch.⁴ Having tied his notion of “folkish” science to Being rather than to the ahistorical presence in which the race knows itself as race, Heidegger is not guilty of Jaensch’s inconsistency in challenging the hegemony of a science whose exactitude and universality rest on a suppression of the organic and the human, while nonetheless desiring that unimpugnable, and thus universally recognizable, distinctness of the people which is the dream and clandestine cosmopolitanism of racism. For Heidegger, the world of a people does not possess the atomistic quality that Jaensch attributes to it, by reason of which the latter is structurally bound to retain the cosmopolitan as the negated universal from which these distinct particular worlds have won an uneasy independence. If “folkish” science is the science of Being as such, it is because it seeks, rather than the derivative correctness of a rootless thinking, the Being of the world that must be known—not ontically as race, values, and character, but ontologically—if anything appearing against the background of world is to be known in its presence as well as in the abyssal foundations of its presence. The liberal conception of science, which bases its claim to scientific status on the darkness in which it remains with regard to its own rootedness, is never equal to the task of thinking Being in its worldliness. It is this worldliness of Being that favors the rooted thinking of a “folkish” science and whose appearance Heidegger wills to announce itself in the self-assertion of the national. The people of Heidegger’s “folkish” science is to appear without becoming present.

Since Heidegger himself in the Leipzig address declares his allegiance to both Hitler *and* the question of Being, the prehistory of his political engagement is but sketchily reconstructed by commentaries that fasten on the lone instance of the word “*Volk*” in §74 of *Being and Time*. It is within the question of Being that Heidegger addresses the notion of *Volk* in 1927, just as it is within the question of Being that he confesses his loyalty to Hitler in 1933. To clarify the sense of “*Volk*” in *Being and Time* by its sense in National Socialism is hence reductive and of dubious worth polemically. An interpretation of the use of “*Volk*” in *Being and Time* that does not simultaneously consider the question of Being is, irrespective of its inten-

tion, even apologetic, because it isolates a suspect lexical element in Heidegger's thinking as a whole and delivers it up on its own to judgment. The step from *Volk* to Hitler is certainly one that Heidegger took, but schematized in this way, Heidegger's engagement ceases to be a scandal for philosophy, because the distance between his thinking and the intellectual squalor of the regime has been minimized. The question of the relation between nationalism and fundamental ontology is thereby settled without having first been examined.

Heidegger's nationalism is the nationalism of the rootedness of the *Volk*. It is not, however, an insurrection of the particular against the universal, if only because such an insurrection is always doomed to failure. Heidegger should not be seen to be translating Kierkegaard's anti-Hegelian individualism for the NSDAP. A *Volk* that insists on its singularity, on its condition as "this" *Volk*, is in the end, as Hegel had shown in his analysis of sense-certainty, always betrayed to the universal by its very "thisness," by the abstractness of singularity as such. A reprise of the nominalist cult of the particular does not describe Heidegger's reaction to Hegel's panlogism, since his critique of the universal pursues a different course from the beautiful soul's pathos-laden avowals of the particular's independence. Heidegger's rejection of cosmopolitanism and his engagement with a nationalistic political movement are grounded in his treatment of the universal within the question of Being. A demonstration of this can at least be attempted through a consideration, within the context of its critique of traditional ontology, of the following excerpt from the Introduction to *Being and Time*:

Being, as the basic theme of philosophy, is no class or genus of entities; yet it pertains to every entity. Its "universality" is to be sought higher up. Being and the structure of Being lie beyond every entity and every possible character which an entity may possess. *Being is the transcendens pure and simple.* And the transcendence of Dasein's Being is distinctive in that it implies the possibility and the necessity of the most radical *individuation*.⁵

Being is to be sought higher up than any class or genus because its "universality" places it beyond them. It transcends them because it is nothing else than transcendence. "*Being is the transcendens pure and simple.*" In a marginal note to the *Hüttenexemplar* (the copy of *Being and Time* that Heidegger kept in his hut at Todtnauberg) Heidegger clarifies this statement: "transcendens to be sure not—despite every metaphysical echo—scholastic and Graeco-Platonic κοινόν, but rather transcendence as the ecstatic—

as temporality.”⁶ Being is to be sought higher up as that which transcends class and genus. For Heidegger, Being is that which transcends purely and simply, because it is time in its overreaching of the discrete “now” of Zeno’s paradoxes. Being nowhere comes to rest in identity with itself and can therefore scarcely be inferred from the categories as their “principle” and law. Only if Being is grasped as the presence of beings, as the ostensible honesty with which beings give themselves up as they are to the categories (e.g., as so much and neither more nor less, as in such and such a place and not elsewhere), does Being stand in a relation to the categories that leaves the latter intact. The questionability of Being as presence, and not the independence of the particular, is what Heidegger brings up against traditional logic.

Aristotle also denies that Being is a genus, but it is by means of a different argument. In Book B of the *Metaphysics*, neither Being nor the One is admitted as the genus of what is, since the differences of each genus have to be, just as each difference has to be *one*.⁷ Even if the scope of a genus is defined by the diversity of its subordinate species, the genus per se—as the unity and common character of its species—cannot contain this diversity within itself: otherwise, the species of a given genus would be interchangeable. Being and the One are more universal than any genus because they can be said of species not only with respect to what they share but also with respect to that by which they differ. For Aristotle, the “universality” of Being and the One thus does not at all imply a fundamental homogeneity of what is. Being and the One cannot be taken for granted as constants. Heidegger, in his 1931 lecture course *Aristoteles, Metaphysik θ 1–3*, accordingly stresses that for Aristotle, Being is still questionable in a radical sense: “All that is later thrust aside by the thesis: Being is the most self-evident of all things. (This questionability is a long way from the image that one generally has of Aristotle when one pictures his philosophy in the manner of the academic preoccupations of a medieval Scholastic or a German professor).”⁸ In relation to Aristotle, Heidegger sees his task, not as the refutation of a “system,” but rather as the resumption and elaboration of a questioning concerning the essence of Being. Being and the One, for Aristotle, are both said in many ways. But the multiplicity by which Being distinguishes itself from a genus does not contest the legitimacy of the notion of genus. Being is to be sought higher up than any genus, yet it is not to be sought higher up than the One, since Being is not said in a way that would not also be *one*. Aristotle does not include among the many ways of Being a way

in which Being is not *one*: despite his own cautions, the multiplicity of Being will remain for the subsequent history of philosophy effectively under the sway of the understanding of Being as οὐσία, as the substance that is the propriety and decidability of the genera. Where Aristotle speaks of an analogy between the ways of Being but leaves the ground of this analogy unilluminated, Heidegger names this ground the understanding of Being as presence and sets out its limitations. The Being of the differences that are always *one* is not Being as such in its transcendence and impropriety, but rather Being reduced to the substantiality of presence and thereby to the propriety that it can share with the One. The difference that *is*, but is not *one*, is the unrecognized and unrecognizable difference of transcendence from the One. *Not All is One.*⁹ It is a difference that cannot be collected into any oneness without ceasing to be transcendence. Such a difference, because it does not give itself up to be known in unity, is unintelligible for Aristotle. The basis for intelligibility lies paradoxically in a blindness to the originary transcendence of time.

That even the One is transcended by Being, by the Being of the time that exceeds and encompasses the presence of the One, is no more acknowledged by later thinkers. When Kant, in his refutation of the Ontological Argument for the existence (*Dasein*) of God and within the understanding of logic laid down by Aristotle, says that existence is not a real predicate, this distinction reformulates Being's difference from a genus but still in terms of a complementarity instead of an antagonism. For Kant, existence is not a real predicate whereby the possibility or actuality of a thing could be distinguished within the concept itself, but the bare positing of a thing.¹⁰ Kant's polemic against an aspect of medieval theology is the occasion for an exposition of Being within a theory of representation. Earlier in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant humbles the understanding in its claim to totality and sets bounds on the use of its concepts through an account of the nonconceptuality of the a priori intuitions. Kant grounds the a priori intuitions in human finitude and assigns to existence an essential role in the determination of knowledge. That which is thereby shown to be irreducible to the concept is less an impetus for the question of Being than the surety of representation and the propriety of the concepts of the understanding. In the *Critique*, Kant thus devises a defense of the concepts of the understanding from their limitations regarding existence:

By whatever and by however many predicates we may think a thing—even if we completely determine it—we do not make the least addition to the thing when we

further declare that this thing *is*. Otherwise, it would not be exactly the same thing that exists, but something more than we had thought in the concept; and we could not, therefore, say that the exact object of my concept exists.¹¹

As the existence incorporated in a concept's set of predicates is, for Kant, not the existence of the object itself, it marks the untruth of the concept. The Kantian concept relinquishes existence as a real predicate and resigns itself to representing its object. By this modesty, it acquires something exterior to it, something nevertheless entirely tractable and tamed in advance by the a priori intuitions of time and space, and in its correspondence to this object, the concept lays claim to its truth. Furthermore, for the sake of the traditional understanding of truth as adequation, the equivocation of Being is to be "clarified" by a distinction between the copula of logic (the "is" of propositions of the kind "God is omnipotent") and the Being of existential positing (the "is" of propositions of the kind "There is a thaler in my hand"). Kant cannot rest content with rejecting the definition of Being as a predicate in favor of Being as positing. In the absence of a distinction between the logical positing of the concept of an object and the existential positing of the object itself, the concept ceases to be purely representative of its object: the concept simply *is* its object and is therefore neither true nor false in relation to it. The exteriority of Kantian existence is its intelligibility. Like Aristotle's Being, Kant's *Dasein* threatens the oneness of neither that which is to be subsumed nor that under which it is to be subsumed. Kant even surrenders Aristotle's insight into the equivocation of the many ways of Being. The equivocation between the ways of Being, which the Ontological Argument employs in its transition from the being of thinkability to the being of real existence, and as whose "ground," as the "sense" of the categorial interconnections of ontology, Heidegger will propose *Dasein*, is simply shut down. In existence, as the bare positing in the presence of the light of truth as adequation, the Aristotelian coextensiveness of Being with the One does not become questionable.

Through holding apart the "What it is" of a being from its "That it is," Kant wanted to place a check solely on the conceptual enthusiasm of theology, whereas Kierkegaard, in response to Hegel's sublation of the distinction, set out to interpret the extralogical character of existence as an antagonism to logic. But with Kierkegaard, the reformulation of the question of Being is stillborn, since the antagonism of existence to traditional logic is not substantiated in an account of temporality and the differentiability of Being but left to the inadequate resources of an obstinate nominalism: "Ex-

istence is always the particular; the abstract does not *exist*.”¹² Kierkegaard’s nominalism, which is dictated by his attention to the Christian doctrine of the incommensurability of the human soul, is of less importance for Heidegger than what inspired it. By neglecting the philosophy of nature, Kierkegaard gave vent to his polemics against traditional logic entirely within the question of what it is to be human. The human existence that, in Kierkegaard, eludes the universal on account of its particularity becomes the human existence (Dasein) that, in Heidegger, eludes the universal on account of its finitude. As a result, Kierkegaard’s confrontation with logic is renewed on a more originary ground. Heidegger reformulates it as a confrontation with Plato’s subordination of finitude to the Ideas in the founding of metaphysics. That by means of which a particular instantiation of a single universal differentiates itself from its universal is set forth as the transitoriness and perishability—the existence—in which the particular is just as much *not* present in an identity with its universal. Existence is to be understood by reference to another temporality than that in which the Ideas stand fast in the eternity of their presence. And it is to be understood as human because, for Heidegger, it is human beings alone who, in their projects and in the determinative exposure to the truth of their outstanding deaths, resist any description that would reduce them to what can be apprehended in presence. The human being, less as a particular than as the Being of ecstatic temporality, is the basis for a polemic against traditional logic.

And yet in the excerpt from the Introduction to *Being and Time* cited above, Heidegger writes: “And the transcendence of Dasein’s Being is distinctive in that it implies the possibility and the necessity of the most radical *individuation*.” Is individuation here to be comprehended as a reprise of Kierkegaard’s individualism and in opposition to the *Volk* of §74? To answer tentatively, indicating the line that is to be followed: No. Inasmuch as it is transcendence that is said to imply the most radical individuation, individuation cannot here be identified with the isolation and distinction of one being from other beings. Heidegger attributes to transcendence a more radical individuation than such a process of isolation and distinction. Individuation in the latter sense is an individuation on the level of properties. The individual never completely shares its set of properties with any other, but that which is individuated by its properties is in itself, as a raw unit of presence, always the same. Such individuation is constrained in how much it can differentiate the individual from the universal by the understanding

of Being as presence that the individual has in common with the universal. Heidegger's radical individuation breaks with the repeatable because it breaks with the "now" as the truth of time. Dasein all the more individuates itself the less it holds itself aloof from the existential, historical thickness of world. It is always already individuated by the corruption through which it eludes being apprehended in presence. The peculiar distinctness of the human being, which necessitates a reassessment of the theorization of temporality in order to do justice to the anticipation of death and projects' implication of the future in the present, is obscured in the logical individual abstracted from the world in which alone there can be existence. But does excluding the individual of traditional logic suffice to bring us, as Heidegger's text seems to assume, to the *Volk*? Even if the transcendence of Dasein's ecstatic temporality is overlooked in both the abstract individual and the universal of ahistorical humanity, is the *Volk* alone what remains after the exclusion?

Otto Pöggeler has objected to "the *coup de main* of an immediate introduction of the concept of *Volk*" in §74 of *Being and Time*.¹³ That Heidegger seeks to downplay the abruptness by introducing the *Volk* in an apposition does not mitigate the violence of the *coup de main*. Two responses, at least, can be given. The abruptness can be held fast as an object of analysis and the transition from the question of Being to a "folkish" politics thereby rendered suspect. Such a strategy impedes the use of Heidegger's philosophical authority as an argument for fascist politics. It does, however, make it impossible to understand—in anything but an external sense—how Heidegger was able to see the mission of the *Volk* as his own. If the abruptness can be taken as a challenge to come up with alternatives to the *Volk* that could also, if not better, meet the requirements of the question of Being, it can also be taken as a violence directed against other connotations of the word "*Volk*." With this second strategy for reading Heidegger's *coup de main*, an immanent critique of one of the central concepts of National Socialism becomes practicable.

Between the individual and humanity as a whole, there are social formations besides the *Volk*. Yet Heidegger's conservatism expresses itself in an allegiance neither to the particularist interests of classes nor to the sentimentalist intimacy of the family. Heidegger's political engagement, which in the address in Leipzig, as well as in other texts, he ties to fundamental ontology, is an engagement with that which affords the chance of overcoming the metaphysics of presence. If Heidegger chooses the people—

and not just any people but the German *Volk*—it is because, in the *Volk*, temporality as such becomes a question. This is not to deny that other peoples have histories or that classes and families can be chronicled from their emergence to their disappearance. The German *Volk* is the agent of the question of the relations between Being and time, not because it is the people whose history is richest in incident, but rather because, for a specific nationalist discourse, it is the people that, through wanting to distinguish itself as much as possible from the self-evidence and positivism of the nation-states of its neighbors, long defined itself by its absence. Whether such a characterization of the essence of the *Volk* is but the hypostasis of its political backwardness is a question that seemingly does not arise for Heidegger. It is overruled by the question of Being. Heidegger's nationalism will be a nationalism of the assertion of the absence of the *Volk* that knows itself to be absent. In contrast to the class that has either already come to power or whose dialectical lot it is to realize itself as the universal class of the future, and in contrast to the family whose mythic immediacy hardly accommodates an interrogation of the understanding of Being as presence, the German *Volk* is an embarrassment for traditional ontology. It does not take its definition from its recognizability in the light of presence. Such an explanation of Heidegger's nationalism, offered here in advance of a commentary on Heidegger's various texts on the *Volk*, answers one question only to raise another. How is it that Heidegger of all thinkers could have aligned himself with a "folkish" movement that set itself the task of *eliminating* undecidability from the phenomenon of the *Volk*? Perhaps, as Heidegger wrote in his defense in December 1945, he believed that the movement could be led spiritually down other paths.¹⁴ He misinterpreted the prevailing involvement with the notion of the *Volk* as the possibility that the movement could be directed away from a pseudoscientific elaboration and concreteness toward an attempt to grasp that absence of the *Volk* which is Dasein's difference from the present-at-hand. The people of the "folkish" uprising of 1933 will turn out to have been, not the people of the recovery of the world flattened by Descartes to the presence of *res extensa*, but rather a humanity indistinguishable from a thing.

Undoubtedly, this was to be foreseen, and Heidegger did not succeed in preventing it. He did not succeed in making *Being and Time* the bible of National Socialism. Far more clearly than his postwar critics, the prospective ideologues of the movement were able to recognize that Heidegger, lexical convergences aside, had not written a book in their spirit. The

Volk that in 1933 inquires into the essence of Being is less the electorate of the former Weimar Republic than the Dasein of the text of 1927. The Dasein of *Being and Time* has not passed from the singular to the plural, since its definition in the 1927 text as Being-in-the-world precludes any differentiation of Dasein and *Volk* on the basis of traditional grammar. As a multiplicity, as that which is not one, Dasein was already the transcendence of the Dasein of the *Volk*. *Being and Time* is a political text, albeit political in Heidegger's sense. Dominique Janicaud, who argues that *Being and Time* is abstract and hence apolitical because it addresses the possibility for any given political attitude, seemingly invokes the very understanding of possibility that Heidegger criticizes.¹⁵ The possibilities of Dasein do not correspond to the existential neutrality of the abstract concepts of metaphysics, since it is finitude—facticity and Being-with-one-another, in short, the political realm—that grounds possibility for Heidegger.

In §74 of *Being and Time*, in a passage invariably scrutinized by commentators on his politics, Heidegger broaches the question of the people, distinguishing the *Volk* from a leveling aggregation of subjects: "But if fateful Dasein, as Being-in-the-world, exists essentially in Being-with-Others, its historizing is a co-historizing and is determinative for it as *destiny* [*Geschick*]. This is how we designate the historizing of the community, of the people. Destiny is not something that puts itself together out of individual fates, any more than Being-with-one-another can be conceived as the occurring together of several Subjects."¹⁶ The historizing of Dasein is always a co-historizing because human beings are, for Heidegger, essentially political. Their politicality is not one attribute among others and not one that distinguishes them, as it does for Aristotle, from *other* animals. It is destiny that stands here between the notion of the *Volk* and its formulation as a species composed of individuals agreeing in certain attributes. Destiny is therefore not interchangeable with the racial "type" (*Art*). It does not unify what is separate. The *Volk* that it designates knows neither unity nor disunity, because in the transcendence of its historizing, it has always already reached beyond the isolation of individual subjects, as well as the isolation of an individual ethnic group. And yet, precisely because it reaches beyond the presence in which a people could recognize itself in its oneness, the *Volk* can just as little become the humanity that is the oneness of the peoples. For Heidegger, the *Volk* is not a point of indifference, and the "anarchic attitude" that Hans Sluga discerns in the first division of *Being and Time*, §§9–44, cannot accordingly be said to retreat

with the appearance of the *Volk*.¹⁷ The discussion of the notion of the *Volk* acknowledges the possibility and necessity of Dasein's radical individuation and, that is to say, "anarchy."

Certainly a suspension of disbelief is required before considering whether the German people is the definitive people of co-historizing, but so long as Heidegger's nationalism is taken to be utterly in agreement with the times, the task of retracing the steps from *Being and Time* to National Socialism has simply not been addressed. Everybody knows who the Germans are, but for a certain strand of German nationalism, of which Thomas Mann's *Reflections of a Nonpolitical Man* can be taken as an expression, this is something that cannot be known without overlooking the Germans' distinctness from their positivistic neighbors. Heidegger's peculiarity within this strand of nationalism will have been to raise the Germans from being one question among others to being the questionable as such. Heidegger's philosophy does not find its way to the *Volk* as to that which would be its validating law. The anxiety and alienation of *Being and Time* are not resolved by an "immersion" in the *Volk*. On the contrary, Heidegger attempts to think the utmost questionability and hence Being of Dasein by means of the *Volk*. The scandal of Heidegger's declarations of the consistency between his philosophy and his affiliation with National Socialism is that he was able to countenance an authoritarian regime for the sake of a suspected shared devotion to such an understanding of "folkishness." These declarations of consistency imply, in defiance of the liberal subject, an understanding of the most radical individuation for which the *Volk* is the "proper" domain.

Dasein's possibility and necessity of the most radical individuation rests with the *Volk*. Existing essentially as Being-with-Others, Dasein individuates itself as Dasein in the co-historizing that is the destiny of the *Volk*. This individuation is not one among others by which Dasein is differentiated. In §72 of *Being and Time*, Heidegger puts forward the thesis of the fundamental historicity of Dasein: "In analysing the historicity of Dasein we shall try to show that this entity is not 'temporal' because it 'stands in history', but that, on the contrary, it exists historically and can so exist only because it is temporal in the very basis of its Being."¹⁸ Dasein as Dasein stands in history and, following §74, that is to say, in co-history. It always individuates itself co-historically and thus, in line with Heidegger's explication of co-historizing, as the *Volk*. Other individuations are secondary. The accretion of exclusive properties whereby the individual persons

“within” the *Volk* achieve distinctness simply obscures Dasein’s radical difference from beings that are present-at-hand. Heterogeneity and homogeneity at the level of properties decide nothing with regard to membership in the *Volk*. The question of which individuals belong and do not belong to the *Volk* is not a question that can be raised without an inappropriate reliance on individuation through properties. In §9, “The Theme of the Analytic of Dasein,” Heidegger writes: “*The essence of Dasein lies in its existence. Accordingly those characteristics which can be exhibited in this entity are not ‘properties’ present-at-hand of some entity which ‘looks’ so and so and is itself present-at-hand; they are in each case possible ways for it to be, and no more than that.*”¹⁹ This disqualification of properties from expositions of Dasein is irreconcilable with the biologism of National Socialism. A people that is biologically recognizable is always a people that is a class of individuals with common attributes, rather than a destiny.

In 1933, however, Heidegger allows himself to be swayed by the NSDAP’s invocations of the *Volk*. Heidegger’s engagement with National Socialism, which never expressed itself in an endorsement of the latter’s biologism, was inseparable from the ambition to reform its thinking in accordance with what Heidegger imagined to be its historical promise. Even after the end of the war, Heidegger admitted a loyalty to this promise, denigrating everyone who was convinced of its unrealizability from the start and who thus contributed nothing to its realization.²⁰ National Socialism, grounding its notion of the *Volk* in biology rather than history, remained as it were a movement without a destiny, a populism without a people. The self-assertion of the German people as the self-assertion of the essential historicity of Dasein did not take place.

But if for Heidegger the *Volk* is necessarily missing from the present-at-hand, how is its self-assertion to be understood? It cannot manifest itself as a visible presence politically. A reply to the question of the nature of the self-assertion of the *Volk* can be extrapolated from Heidegger’s exposition of the differential modes of Being-with-one-another. In §74 of *Being and Time*, to continue an earlier quotation, Heidegger further delineates the notion of destiny by which he defines the *Volk*: “Destiny is not something that puts itself together out of individual fates, any more than Being-with-one-another can be conceived as the occurring together of several Subjects. Our fates have already been guided in advance, in our Being with one another in the same world and in our resoluteness for definite possibilities. Only in communicating and struggling does the power of des-