The German verb «übersetzen» is used in several ways. Most of the time, it means «to translate,» as in translating from one language into another. The English word «to translate» also has several meanings, but it does not signify what by virtue of its Latin root, transferre, it might be expected to mean and what the German übersetzen may in fact mean, namely, to carry somebody over a river or an ocean. Thus, in probably all German lexica on Greek mythology one reads that Charon setzte the souls of the dead über the Styx to carry them to the doors of Hades. However, as one is promised in the Welcome Area of John F. Kennedy Airport, not every Übersetzung over a body of water is an Übersetzung into death. By coming to the «New World,» the United States, many begin a new life; they have new experiences, can change themselves or can become what for this or that reason they couldn’t be in the «Old World» they came from. When Michel Foucault setzte über from France to the United States, he too changed. An American expert in such Übersetzungen from Europe, Richard Rorty, refers to a European expert, Vincent Descombes, to point out that in France Foucault is considered to be a Nietzschean, but in the United States he is viewed as a liberal democrat.¹ With Jim Miller’s biography of Foucault,² a further Foucault setzte über. At least this is what, if I am not mistaken, a commentator on New York Public Radio maintained when he concluded his review of Miller’s book by saying—probably against Miller’s intentions—that Foucault was a fascist just as Heidegger was a Nazi.

Foucault was by no means a fascist. However, Heidegger was a Nazi, and he was strongly involved in National Socialism. This has to be admitted after Victor Farías’s and Hugo Ott’s intensive research, the results of which have
been published in several articles since 1983 and, in 1987 and 1988, in two books. But does this mean that Heidegger’s writings bear some relation to his political commitment? Farias’s and Ott’s research completely changed the terms of the debate. Already prior to their work, literature on the political aspects and implications of Heidegger’s writings had been published, notably, Alexander Schwan’s book in 1965 and Pierre Bourdieu’s L’Ontologie politique du Martin Heidegger in 1975. However, since Farias and Ott, countless texts on the subject have been produced, and the debate has often become highly controversial. In 1987 Jacques Derrida published his De l’esprit: Heidegger et la question, which David F. Krell hailed in the strongest terms. For Richard Wolin, however, the book is «awry,» and it as well as Derrida’s other writings on the issue are a «quasi-exoneration» of Heidegger. In his own book, Wolin argues that Heidegger’s commitment to National Socialism «was rooted in the innermost tendencies of his thought» (PB 66), that is, of his book Being and Time. Tom Rockmore also maintains that Heidegger turned to National Socialism «on the basis of his philosophy,» and he traces the issue of Nazism even in Heidegger’s latest works. In 1993 a Heidegger scholar and Heideggerian philosopher as distinguished as John D. Caputo published a book entitled Demythologizing Heidegger. Meanwhile, the ship of Heidegger’s philosophical politics seems to have reached less turbulent waters. Fred R. Dallmayr was even «struck by . . . the complete absence of any sinister fascist overtones,» though he leaves it a little bit up in the air whether fascist overtones—or, for that matter, clear fascist voices—are by definition sinister or not.

To me it seemed necessary to give a very detailed interpretation of section 74 of Being and Time. In doing so, I refer to only three texts—with the exception of section C of chapter 5, where I draw on several sources—that deal with that section in more detail, texts that, as far as I know, are representative of the American literature on this section. One of the three is Wolin’s book, The Politics of Being: The Political Thought of Martin Heidegger (PB), whose thesis I have already mentioned. The second is an article by Charles Guignon, “History and Commitment in the Early Heidegger” (HC), according to which Heidegger develops a theory of the political in Being and Time that is neutral regarding the specific political options available at Heidegger’s time. Third, I refer to Peg Birmingham’s article, “The Time of the Political” (TP), in which she presents Heidegger as a kind of anarchist. In other words, at least in my understanding of her article, according to her, Heidegger politically belonged neither to the Center nor to the Right but definitely to the Left.

A discussion of a major work in German and its English translations will necessarily often refer to German terms. To avoid a proliferation of italics, all German and other foreign words are set in roman type. Italics are used only for titles of books and for emphasis, either my own or, in quotations, that of the original. Quotations from translations often include insertions,
emendations, or comments by the translator, typically enclosed in brackets. My own insertions and comments, such as the German wording in a translation or explanatory material, are enclosed in curly brackets ({})) throughout.

Quotation marks present another complication in any discussion of Heidegger’s work. To avoid confusion, I have used guillemets («») as my quotation marks throughout. Thus, the quotation marks used in the texts cited are reproduced here exactly, except that the inverted guillemets used in German texts have been changed to American double quotation marks as is standard practice. Regular quotation marks are also used for article and chapter titles as well as for titles of songs and poems. If an English translation of a German text is not followed by a reference to an English edition, the translation is my own. Sometimes, I insert the German word or phrase into an English translation without commenting on the translation. These insertions are meant as a reminder of similar vocabulary of different authors or of different texts by the same author that don’t surface in the English translations but that should not be overlooked.

_Being and Time_ was published in 1927. As Rockmore says, the book «as a whole culminates» in sections 72–77, that is, in the chapter entitled “Temporality and Historicality” (BT 424ff.; SZ 372ff.). Within this passage section 74 is crucial. It consists of four parts, in the first of which Heidegger returns to a notion he has developed at length in sections 61–63 (BT 349ff.; SZ 301ff.), namely, that of «anticipatory resoluteness» (BT 434ff., «Dasein factically has its . . . as a basic attribute of care,» SZ 382f.). Subsequently he considers authentic Dasein as it chooses a possibility (BT 435–437; «As thrown, Dasein has . . . that is to say, authentic historicality,» SZ 383–385). In this part Heidegger develops the concepts of heritage, fate, destiny, community of the people, and struggle. In the third part of this section, he elaborates the theme of the second part in terms of the notion of repetition («It is not necessary . . . indifferent to both these alternatives,» BT 437f.; SZ 385f.). The fourth part, the remainder of section 74, more or less summarizes the preceding passages.

Toward the end of the third part Heidegger uses three German words with the component «wider,» namely, the verb «erwidern» and the nouns «Erwiderung» and «Widerruf» (SZ 386), which have been translated as «[to make a] reciprocative rejoinder,» «rejoinder,» and «disavowal»: «Rather, the repetition makes a reciprocative rejoinder to the possibility of that existence which has-been-there. But when such a rejoinder is made to this possibility in a resolution, it is made in a moment of vision; and as such it is at the same time a disavowal of that which in the “today”, is working itself out as the ‘past’» (BT 438). This very short passage has been singled out in the literature as crucial to the significance of the entire section and, therefore, to the political import of _Being and Time_—and rightly so. Indeed, how one reads this passage can
determine whether the entire section on historicality ends up on the Right or the Left or is neutral toward both as well as toward the Center. Unfortunately, Macquarrie and Robinson’s translation of this short passage is, at best, misleading, if not simply wrong. What is more, the passage is one of the very few in the entire book to which the translators have added a note in which they not only comment on Heidegger’s German text but also offer an interpretation of the passage based on their extremely questionable, if not wrong, translation (BT 438, n. 1). Yet most of the American literature on this section has been based on their translation and their commentary. The fault is not so much with the translators, because Heidegger’s language at that point is even more intricate than in other passages. Nevertheless, one might wish that one or the other of the native German speakers whom the translators thank in their preface (BT 16) might have insisted on a more detailed note pointing out that their rendering of the sentences and the meaning they suggest are by no means the only possible ones. In this sense, my entire book is just a continuation of their note. However, this is certainly not the only reason why the entire section 74 requires a very detailed interpretation. In chapter 1 of this book, I mainly interpret the third part of section 74. In section A, I begin with some comments on the two notions of which the phrase «anticipatory resoluteness» is an amalgam, namely, those of «anticipation of death» and «resoluteness,» which characterize Dasein when it becomes authentic. In section B, I comment on the sentence with the verb erwidern («[to make] a reciprocative rejoinder») and the various meanings of this verb in German. In section C, I discuss the passage on repetition in the third part and some aspects of the second part of section 74, and in section D, the sentence with «reciprocative rejoinder» and the one with «disavowal» from the third part of section 74.

In *Being and Time*, Heidegger unfolds a drama in three acts, the drama of Dasein’s historicality. In the first act the necessary conditions of the dramatic conflict are developed. In the second act, a critical situation develops that calls for a dramatic solution, which is presented in the third act. The third act of the drama is section 74. As I show already in chapter 1, the solution of the drama consists in authentic Dasein stepping out of the world in which it has been living as ordinary Dasein, turning back to this world, and canceling it. Authentic Dasein does so because it has been called upon by the past to rerealize the past, which has been pushed aside by the world in which Dasein has been living as ordinary Dasein. The rerealization of the past requires that authentic Dasein cancel, destroy, or disavow the world it has been living in as ordinary Dasein. Ordinary Dasein is living in a downward plunge in which it is falling away from and has left behind or canceled a world in which the principle—Montesquieu might say, the spirit—of the past—or, in Heideggerian terms, «what-has-been-there»—has been properly realized. At some point in the downward plunge the second part of the drama begins, and a buzzing in the air—the «anschwellender Bocksgesang,» the emerging tragedy,
song of the he-goats—indicates a crisis. The solution of the crisis lies in the
cancellation of the downward plunge and the world of ordinary Dasein so as
to make room for a world in which the past and its principle are revitalized
and properly present.

In chapter 2, I present the main features of the entire drama and work out
the details of its final resolution in section 74. In section A, I look at some more
general notions of Heidegger's in *Being and Time*—those of origin, primordial
temporality, authenticity, and wholeness—and their dynamics in regard to the
concept of historicality. In section B, I take up passages and notions from Divi-
sion One of *Being and Time* as well as from the section on historicality prior
to section 74—such as the work of ambiguity and the different meanings of
«world» and «history»—by means of which Heidegger makes clear that,
indeed, at the beginning of section 74 we are in the second part of the drama
of historicality, that is, at the point in the downward plunge where the buzzing
in the air begins. In section C, I show how in the second part of section 74—
the part on heritage, fate, etc.—the second part of the drama is briefly summa-
rized and the third part begins to unfold whose conclusion at the end of the third
part of section 74 I have discussed in my chapter 1.

Though a huge amount of literature on the topic has been published, to
my knowledge no one—neither critics of Heidegger nor, as it were, his defend-
ers—has undertaken what is most naheliegend, obvious, namely, a detailed
comparison between Heidegger's text and other texts on history and politics
of his time. This is done in chapters 3 and 4. In chapter 3, I relate Heidegger
to rightist authors and in chapter 4 to leftist authors. In section A of chapter
3, I summarize Adolf Hitler's thoughts on history and politics in *Mein Kampf*
(MK; MKe), the first book of which, 406 pages long, was published in 1925
and followed by the second and last one, 376 pages long, in 1927. The begin-
ing of World War I was regarded by many rightist authors as a major oppor-
tunity for realizing their agenda. According to their view, God, fate, destiny,
or providence had sent World War I in order to call on the German people
to put the rightist agenda to work. Thus, in section B of chapter 2 I present
an enthusiastic hymn on World War I, 483 pages long, by Max Scheler, *Der
Genius des Krieges und der Deutsche Krieg* (The genius of war and the Ger-
man war) (in PPS), the preface of which is dated November 1914 and which
was published in early 1915. How could Scheler finish such a long book a
mere three months after the beginning of the war? The answer is simple.
According to Scheler, World War I was both the «natural» outcome of and
the equally «natural» break with modern history; a break every «true» Ger-
man and every member of the «true» European community of culture had
hoped for and desired. He presented the conceptual framework of modern
history in his well-known book *Formalism in Ethics and Non-Formal Ethics
of Values: A new Attempt Toward the Foundation of An Ethical Personalism*
(FFe; FE). The first part of that work was published already in 1913 and the
second one was finished in manuscript form in the same year, as Scheler emphasized in the preface to the first edition in 1916 (FEc xvii; FE 9).

In other writings of the time around World War I, for instance, his book entitled *Ressentiment* (RE; in UW), Scheler spelled out in more detail the implications of his work on formalism for a theory of modern history and the emergence and decline of capitalism. I turn to these writings in section D of chapter 3. By the end of that section it will have become clear, I hope, that the general framework of Hitler’s and Scheler’s theories on history and the task of politics is the same. Modernity—that is, society or Gesellschaft—is a downward plunge in which the «real» principle of history—namely, Gemeinschaft or community—has been pushed aside by the former. At some point in this downward plunge—with the beginning of World War I, for instance—fate raises its voice and demands that people demolish Gesellschaft in order to rerealize the proper Gemeinschaft.

At the beginning of section E, I point out the two major directions of thinking on the Right. Hitler and Scheler belong to what one might label the revolutionary rightists. Revolutionary rightists and conservative rightists both share the above-mentioned concept of history and politics in terms of fate, Gesellschaft, and the rerealization of Gemeinschaft. They differ insofar as conservative rightists want to rerealize the respective Gemeinschaft more or less in its premodern state, that is, without modern technology, etc. Revolutionary rightists, however, insist that the rerealization of the community must integrate features—modern technology and private property of means of production on a large scale—that, historically, have developed along with modern society. However, by that point in section E it will already be clear that there are great differences between the specifics of revolutionary rightist politics in Hitler on the one hand and in Scheler on the other. As I will point out in section F, these differences enabled Scheler in the twenties to abandon any rightist politics and to turn to the center and the social democrats. With Heidegger it is different.

In the remainder of section E, I present the entire narrative of section 74 in light of the preceding presentation of Hitler and Scheler for two purposes. First, section 74 of Heidegger’s *Being and Time* is as brilliant a summary of revolutionary rightist politics as one could wish for. Second, there were not only National Socialists but other revolutionary rightists as well. Several of the latter had indeed strong conceptual means to distance themselves from National Socialism. As was mentioned, Scheler finally even turned away from all rightist politics. However, any such conceptual means that would have enabled Heidegger to distance himself from National Socialism and criticize its basic assumptions are not only absent from *Being and Time* but are also explicitly criticized by him. It is in this sense that one has to say that Heidegger’s *Being and Time* makes a direct case for the most revolutionary right-
ists, the National Socialists, and their Gemeinschaft, namely, the Volksge-
meinschaft, the community of the people.

In chapter 4, I discuss leftist theories of history and politics of Heidegger’s time. In section A—the section on Georg Lukács’s book *History and Class Consciousness* (HI; GK), published in 1923—it is shown that liberals, social democrats as well as communists, relied on a notion of history that is the exact opposite of the rightist one. They were not concerned with a repetition of this or that past; rather, each of them maintained that history and politics were about the realization of a state of society, Gesellschaft, that was unprecedented and in which there was no room for a revitalization of this or that Gemeinschaft. As I show in section B of chapter 4—the one on Paul Tillich’s *The Socialist Decision* (SD; SE), published in 1933—it was precisely in this negative relation to the past and the powers and needs embodied in its different Gemeinschaften that Tillich saw the basic flaw of leftist politics and the reason for the disastrous losses of the Left and the massive gains of the National Socialists in the elections in the last years of the Weimar Republic. On the basis of the fundamental difference between the Right and the Left, Tillich proposed to the Left a revision of its politics, and at the same time proposed to the Right to end its decisionistic politics, that is, to end its disavowal of Gesellschaft and its principle, and to acknowledge that the Right can realize its own ends only through Gesellschaft and the principle of Gesellschaft, which in Tillich’s words, is the demand for justice.

In chapter 5, I discuss some of Heidegger’s texts dating from the years after Hitler’s Machtergreifung on January 30, 1933: in section A, part of a speech given by Heidegger on November 30, 1933, in Tübingen as well as his usage of some of its terms in later texts up to the fifties; in section B, Heidegger’s lecture course on Hölderlin in the winter semester 1934–35 (HH) and his famous lecture course *An Introduction to Metaphysics* (IM; EM) in summer 1935. In these sections, an indirect proof for the thesis developed in chapters 1 through 4 is offered. For it is shown that the key motif of section 74 of *Being and Time* remains unchanged after the Machtergreifung. For three reasons I turn in section C to Heidegger’s reception in the 1990s in the United States. First, I elaborate on the phenomenon that, in some way, the question of politics in *Being and Time* hinges on how one reads the sentences on Erwiderung and Widerruf at the end of the third part of section 74. Second, I develop some details of my interpretation of section 74, notably those surrounding the concept of Held, hero, as used by Heidegger in section 74 (BT 437; SZ 385). Third, I try to show that, indeed, it is extremely difficult for Americans to understand Heidegger’s notion of historicality and authentic Dasein. For there could not be a more marked difference than the one between the «German» rightist notions of Held and fate on the one hand and the «American» understanding of what it means to be authentic on the other.
In chapter 6, for the same reason as in sections A and B of chapter 5, I turn to the conversation between Karl Löwith, a Jew, and Heidegger in Rome in 1936 and to Heidegger's own Machtergreifung, his rectorate address on May 27, 1933. Section B returns to the beginning of the book, the brown soil of the woods and forests around Langemarck in order to look for an exit other than the one taken by Heidegger and other rightists.

The topic under discussion here is unpleasant and painful. Therefore, I have looked for some relief for myself as well as for the readers and wrote this book as a kind of novel or detective story. One can read it, so to speak, on the subway. (As it will turn out, the case is pretty easy and requires no elaborate arguments. Still, English readers not familiar with German might find the process of securing the evidence in chapters 1 and 2 somewhat laborious. However, from the beginning of chapter 3 on the narrative proceeds very smoothly. Indeed, some readers might want to begin with chapter 3 and read chapters 1 and 2 along with section E of chapter 3.) In addition, a smile or laugh is usually healthy for both mind and body. In fact, smiling is an epistemological category as it carries one into a different Stimmung (mood) and thus allows one to step back, to pause, and to keep a critical distance toward the text and its topic. Thus, here and there I made some jokes. If, in the end, they only have helped me to make the way through, I ask in advance for leniency. Every reader probably knows novels and detective stories that are just too long. However, hermeneutically it is a deeply embarrassing phenomenon that, according to several commentators, whether the concept of historicality, and consequently that of decision goes to the Left, the Right, the Center, or stays neutral regarding all these possibilities hinges on only three sentences. Furthermore, these short sentences determine the content of the section in which the entire book Being and Time culminates. In addition, Being and Time as a whole does not deal with this or that academic speciality but rather has turned out to be one of the major philosophical books of this century. Last but not least, it was published at the dawn of German National Socialism, and what is at stake in the passages in question is the book's contribution to this. Thus, one might acknowledge that it is necessary to look very closely at the words Heidegger uses, even if one maintains I could have done so in fewer pages.

However, one might justify the length of this volume in a less defensive manner. Many contemporary philosophers have become humble and no longer draw on the gifts of theology and metaphysics, which are often regarded as poisonous. In this situation, two disciplines become especially important, namely, philology and hermeneutics. If one translates the hermeneutical problem of the whole and the parts into a metaphor appropriate to Heidegger, one might say that each sentence, or each section, is a tree in the copse of the text, and the copse of the text is part of a larger forest consisting of all the other texts existing at the same time. One cannot understand the tree without an understanding
of the copse and vice versa. In addition, to understand the copse one needs to
know something of the forest of which it is a part. We no longer live in the
forest of the twenties in Germany, and we are no longer familiar with all the
movements in it. It is National Socialism that separates the Germans from the
twenties, and many Germans did much to pull themselves out of National
Socialism and their involvement with it. For various reasons, after World War
II Heidegger himself, and Heideggerians, practiced, so to speak, negative
philology with regard to Heidegger's trees and copses. They took the trees out
of _Sein und Zeit_ and replanted them in the soil of Heidegger's later writings as
they understood them. In that soil, those trees looked quite familiar to German
philosophers, namely, like a further Entwurf in the series of grand narratives
known from German idealism, albeit with reversed premises. According to this
story, although in _Sein und Zeit_ Heidegger did not yet really get to the point,
he had always been exclusively concerned with the history of Being and the
distinguished position of the pre-Socratics in that history. In his later writings
he added a certain touch of German Besinnlichkeit, pensiveness, a certain smell
of the Feldwege around his Hütte. When he joined the National Socialist
Party, it was his wife, or some other contingent impulse from the world of the
«they,» that dragged him into this. However, as a true philosopher he soon real-
ized that philosophy is, and always has been, incompatible with that sort of pol-
itics. Since the seventies planters and gardeners with more sophisticated tools
have appeared. Often, these gardeners have not only been quite ignorant of the
forest of the twenties in Germany, but they have even cultivated this ignorance
by making procedures of decontextualization their primary tool, and they have
been harvesting the sweet grapes of postmetaphysical plurality and recognition
of the other as irreducible other from the notion of historicality in _Being and
Time_. In this situation, philology, that is, chapters 1 and 2 of my book and also
some passages in other chapters, is necessary to lead us back into the forest of
the twenties and show us that the soil of _Being and Time_ is völkisch. Eigentliche
philology teaches humility! Heidegger would be the first to cheer this sentence.
From the perspective of eigentliche philology, one realizes how often, in neg-
ative philology, one behaves the way in which, according to Heideggerians, the
modern subject behaves, that is, it just forces its own standards onto the object
and the other. Philology teaches respect for the trees and forests and is, so to
speak, environmentally correct. In brief, Heidegger always claimed to respond
to the situation, and one should do him justice. When one reads _Sein und Zeit_
in its context, one sees that, as Scheler put it, in the kairos of the twenties _Sein
und Zeit_ was a highly political and ethical work, that it belonged to the revo-
lutionary Right, and that it contained an argument for the most radical group
on the revolutionary Right, namely, the National Socialists.

Let me mention that in the few years I have known Reiner Schürmann he
didn't like to talk much about philosophy outside the New School for Social
Research. We went out for dinners and movies. Still, it was easy to see how extremely serious he was about sentences such as: «'Heidegger', then, will take the place here of a certain discursive regularity. It will not be the proper name, which refers to a man from Meßkirch, deceased in 1976.»\textsuperscript{17} One day, I briefly explained my understanding of section 74 and other passages in Heidegger. He just smiled—a long and bright smile. Several people have read the first draft of chapters 1 and 2, among them in Berlin, Germany, Lothar Busch, Ingeborg Ermer, Friedrich Glauner, Christa Hackenesch, Konrad Honsel, and Rosalinde Sartorti; here in New York Talal Asad, Kenneth Bronfenbrenner, Felix Ensslin, April Flakne, Aaron Garrett, Agnes Heller, Emilie Kutash, David Taffel, and David Whitaker. I thank them for their comments. Of course, I am responsible for the product in all of its aspects. In addition, I presented much of the material in a lecture course in spring 1995. It was a pleasure to discuss these and related issues with Jack Ben-Levy, as it was always a pleasure to talk to Aaron Garrett. Tom Rockmore recommended that I send the manuscript to Edward Dimendberg at University of California Press, where it was handled by Laura Pasquale and Rose Anne White. Sabine Seiler edited it with extreme diligence and sensitivity. Morgan Meis helped me review the edited manuscript and read the proofs. I thank all of them for their interest and care for the publication. I also thank two anonymous readers for the press. They have pointed out, as it were, the right means to be faithful to the fact that even detectives and other experts in the field appreciate a certain amount of Wegmarken (WM), path markings, signposts, along the way (so to speak, in order not to waste time on Holzwege: \textsuperscript{18} «da bist’e uff’m Holzweg,» you’re barking up the wrong tree). Caitlin Dempsey has gone through the entire manuscript and has corrected my English. I very much enjoyed working with her.

New York City, December 1997
Johannes Fritsche