Death and History
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Illustrations: Teodora COSMAN, Université Libre de Bruxelles, Faculté de Philosophie et Lettres, Académie Royale des Beaux-Arts de Bruxelles
CHAPTER I

Human Finitude and History*

Prolegomena to the Possibility of a “Philosophy of History”\(^1\) and Ontology of History

*Motto:

“...to seem to speak well of the gods to men
is far easier than to speak well of men to men.”

Plato\(^2\)

For a start, some clarifying words must be said about the title of the study. First of all, about the word “and” which, as a conjunction, connects “death” and “history”. This “conjunction” here connects things which on the one hand are indeed and essentially interconnected – and as such, strive towards each other – but their interconnectedness, or the nature of their relationships, on the other hand, is for the time being very little known. Therefore the “and” in the title intends to be precisely the connecting and thematizing name of this question. The “and” is therefore a question which must first be explicitly and articulately: asked. And this means exactly that we must explicitly take it on ourselves, as inquirers, precisely in its pertinence to ourselves. In order for the “and” – in the thematic articulation and determinateness of death and history – to be able to reach its own nature as an element of connection, of bonding, to which then death and history pertain, and find each other through their pertinence to us.

However, “history” is allegedly primarily something which belongs to the past and which is dissected especially by historiology or the specialized branches of other disciplines. And indeed, when inquiring about something like “death and history”, the

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1 The quotation marks around the expression “philosophy of history” are to highlight the fundamental situation that the subject of what follows here is not the “philosophy of history” in any kind of disciplinary sense – that is, as a particularly outlined and defined “branch” of philosophy or philosophical research – but precisely the nature of philosophical inquiry about history – together with its thematic peculiarities, outlines, weight and motivations – as outstandingly a mode of being, which existentially and ontologically pertains to the inquiring subject itself, to its being, with particular regard to the possibilities of this being. This is why I added the term ontology of history as clarification, without quotation marks.

first obstacle to face would be precisely the historiological research of death and the results, data, problems revealed by it, as a relatively new development of historiology starting in the 1960s and 1970s. Therefore the title could be understood in passing as if it were about some historiological “problematization” of death, and that it would be in fact (only) a summary of the data, theories, hypotheses, and difficulties formulated by it. However, such an inquiry would usually only remain at the superficial recognition that, similarly to all other “human things” – institutions, people, war, eating, clothing, art, sex, sciences, religion, technology, etc. – and also to all other things of “nature”, wildlife, universe, etc., death also “has” its history. As a result, it has, or must have, its historiology. Which will then hopefully reveal, sooner or later, and despite all difficulties, how we stand and have been standing with it.

Such a discipline of course meets all kinds of so-called epistemological problems all the time. That is to say, how something like “death” can be historically accessed, based on which sources or documents, or interpretation of these, etc.? Beyond this, the particularity of the historiological investigation of death is ultimately to figure out why we – living humans! – struggle with it? Why do we, living humans, strive to painstakingly answer the question, with laborious and methodologically complicated “scholarly” work, of how people who are no longer alive, who are now dead, once, in their “all-time” “humanity”, thought of, acted, or made arrangements about death or in issues regarding death? And why we strive, also, to find out reliably how they once died?

Nonetheless, living humans are probably concerned also thematically with how the living once died because somehow they also know – or at least feel – themselves to be mortal. That is to say, death and dying is a “problem” or question for them which, although always pertaining to the future, is still very timely, being-in-action, and very much alive; in other words, one that is precisely and certainly about to come. Therefore, since living humans are threatened by death and their own deaths in and from their own future at all times, or always in the present, this is probably why they turn, while alive, toward the research and understanding of past events related to death. This is in fact the case with any kind of historical research. The living actuality of the theme, the “problem” – that is: its question-like being-in-action – is what forms, creates and sustains the historical or historiographic interest in it, at all times, and in the very depth of things. Even if this actuality belongs in fact to the “history of effect”…

In addition, it also becomes a question whether the historical research of death may have some kind of thematic as well as ontological and structural privilege over
historicality, the essence of historicality itself? Which is only represented by the historiological research of death – or, more precisely, by the simple existence of such efforts – rather than thematized or articulated. It is clear now that our inquiry points to two directions. First, the direction of the historicality and historical problems of death, and second, the equally problematic direction of historicality itself.

As mentioned before, historiology has started to study the problem of death only relatively recently, during the 1960s–1970s. These researches are connected primarily to the names of – mostly French\(^1\) – historians such as Philippe Ariès, Louis Vovelle, Vincent-Louis Thomas or Pierre Chaunu. As a result of these investigations, an increasing appetite for further research has been triggered – including historical anthropological and inter- and transdisciplinary inquiries – leading to a great deal of decisive information on death and the ways and social functions of how people related to death in various ages. Additionally, it has led also to information about the more essential aspect that death and the awareness of death proved by burials has played in human’s becoming human, that is, in the actual creation or coming into being of human history. (Pierre Chaunu for instance clearly claims: man only became (“completed”) man when somehow becoming aware of death, that is, a “mortal”.)\(^2\)

This way then the affair also gains – seemingly “by itself” – a dimension of philosophy of history. “Seemingly by itself” because in reality the historiographic problematization of death – unspeakably and unthinkably – represents the most profound and radical challenge possible, mediating it (also) towards the philosophy of history. In other words, it does not only – “simply” or “complicatedly” – becomes the problem of how these ever more important “past” or “present” dimensions and aspects of death can be undertaken and outlined from a historical philosophical point of view, but also one that goes down to the foundations and origins of the philosophy of history and historiology itself. Together with the fact – and also in spite of it – that this case also offers the possibility of a re-encounter with two very distinct traditions represented by Thomas Hobbes on the one hand, and Martin Heidegger on the other. In his main work, *Leviathan* – as we shall see later on – Hobbes understood and explained the fear of death inseparably connected to self-preservation as a fundamental “dynamizing” factor of human society and history, which had a very decisive role in the birth of events articulating historical processes (e.g. war and

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\(^1\) Yet not exclusively the French historians of primarily the *Annales* school, since e.g. Elisabeth Kübler-Ross also conducted her research in the United States at largely the same time as Philippe Ariès, and published her book *On Death and Dying* in 1969.

peace), institutions (the state, various corporations, the church, etc.), and of law and morality. As well as, also, in their actual, continuous, and continuously changing operation. Similarly, Heidegger writes it down without any further delay in Being and Time that: **Authentic Being-towards-death** – that is to say, the finitude of temporality – is the hidden basis in Dasein’s **historicality**.¹

Of course, the historiological research of death also raises several essential problems both in subject and methodology. However, there are quite a few other questions that it raises or only “partly” answers. One of these half-raised questions is, as mentioned before, the following: **Why does in fact** historiology spend so much effort, especially recently, precisely on the research of the “past things” of death? That much is clear still, and it is also a subject of discussion, that death is an unavoidable “companion” of human life, and as such, it counts and proves as a “constant” of history.² One that all humans who were ever born, all generations in history, or in fact making up history itself, have always had to face and continue to do so as **their own** death and dying. This implies, also necessarily, that the historical man – and what other kind of man is there? – faced and undertook, or avoided and denied, the various possibilities and problems of meeting death through highly varied and complex social, community and individual formations, constructions, notions, practices and experiences. In conclusion, the investigation of death means a particular challenge for historiology, as well as any other “discipline”. All the more so since such a historiological research is unavoidably articulated in the area of the fundamental awareness that “...if there existed no death, then probably there would be no society, nor history, nor future or hope...”³ It is clear then – and as we have seen, for historiology too! – that the **historical** importance of death points well beyond its “merely” historiographic importance. Since, on the one hand, it is possibly precisely the **historical** meaning and importance of death which, at a deeper insight, lies at the basis of the interest of other disciplines – like anthropology, psychology, medicine, demography, sociology, “thanatology”, social services, etc. –

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in the subject of death. On the other hand, however, this meaning and importance actually and **precisely** points also to the direction of the origins and essence of historicality. And these are, probably, somehow – that is, existentially and ontologically – also connected to philosophical matters and cases of history, of the philosophy of history. In such a way that it raises the question whether the matter and case of the philosophy of history is indeed only a surfacing and “problematizing” of circumstances and aspects which would only serve to make more comprehensible and fluent the subjects and methodologies and historiology, or rather that of … “man” and being itself? In other words: is the philosophy of history not rather an **ontology**?

In spite of this, and with reference to historiology, all this applies “only” to a thematically sharply outlined way of dealing with, and facing, death “as such”, which has its particular, historically articulated practices, institutions and habits. Such as, for example, the customs, ceremonies and institutions connected to dying, burial, or mourning. These are also quite varied and change according to different ages, peoples, communities, cultures, or organizations. As a result, although primarily encouraged by psychologists and psychological anthropology, historians increasingly speak now about the “system of death”, meaning by this the social, cultural, anthropological, mental-imaginary, as well as institutional and symbolic power structures, mechanisms and networks organized in the course of time around the human matters and questions of dying. As a result or connection, as also mentioned before, death also has its relevance of the philosophy of history. Primarily also thematically, that is, as something which articulates historicality, and particularly its thematically determined aspects. Even more importantly though, there is another aspect worth tackling for the exploration of the relevance of death for the philosophy of history, one in the sense of which death utterly **lays the foundations** of human history and historicality itself. (That is to say: it lays the foundations not only of “historiology” … although, at the depth of things, “human” historiology exists for the same reason as “human” history). For, if “laying the foundations” does not only mean for us some kind of a construct or operation – merely epistemological in nature or aspect –, but also the prerequisite of the logical principle of sufficient argumentation, then the foundation of history means none other in fact than saying **why** and whereby **is** there history at all?! And consequently or derivatively, historiology as well. It

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1 This is of course not only valid for the “scholarly” “problematization” of death – that is, one undertaken by sciences – but also for art, religion, folklore, mythology, social and economic life, and of course also philosophy.
means therefore the exploration of that on the account of which, because of which, and for the reason (ratio) of which there exists at all such a thing as history.

However, it is only one side and aspect of this that death – especially historically – pertains to life, to human life. And in such a way that it in fact illuminates life. As such, the historical “research” of death can also be counted as a promising “auxiliary subject” or “auxiliary instrument” of the historical “research” of life. As something that outlines historical life, and its truly – that is, mortally – living actuality. Moreover, in another respect, it should also be discussed that death does not only illuminate the historically articulated human life, so-to-say, “externally” – or more precisely, from its end, from an indefinite and aleatory “retrospective” point of view, as a foreign and external element – but it continuously interweaves and, what is more, grounds it in its most essential aspects. To such an extent that probably history exists precisely because there is mortal human life, that is to say, mortal human being who relates by his life to death, to his being-like death and mortality also in a being-like and mode-of-being-like way. In other words, because there is such a life to which death, its own death lends indeed, in all respects, weight, challenge, pressure – grip! – over itself and for itself, and by this a continuous and unavoidable possibility to undertake. So, the – non-human, non-Dasein-like – life which is “finite”, and as such, it is always born, disappears, passes away, comes into being, extinguishes, changes and evolves… well, this life actually does not, and cannot have a history. Just as the “inorganic” regions of being has no history in fact, only in a metaphoric sense. Which of course does not mean that it is not in motion, in change, that it is unrelated with time, or it does not “possess” time, with all the processes and “events”, necessary or incidental, in the sense of their happening and references. These of course are also in touch with human history as challenges, meanings and possibilities, that is, when and if there is a questionable meaning or a question referring to meaning. So they have a story, but do not have a history. To such an extent that this story of beings devoid of history only becomes – or can only become! – a history of being by history.

In accordance with this reasoning, history exists in fact because there is human death, because there are beings who relate – explicitly or implicitly – to death in and with their being, in and with their mode of being, in a being-like way. For whom death, their own death is not a mere givenness, but – by the way they relate to it – is in fact a possibility. Moreover, a possibility which, by its own “substantive” happening which is dying – precisely by it but always beyond it – derives and constitutes, as well as also structures, articulates, permeates and colours all of their
other modes and possibilities of being. In other words, it opens them up truly and really, structures them open in, and precisely because of, its finitude. And by this, it also lends to these a well-defined importance, open towards, and from, this finitude, which also leads in fact to the articulation of these modes of being. If the various modes and regions of human existence as well as their birth and changes in time can prove that their very existence, meaning and change is utterly unthinkable and “absurd” without death, or that death plays a direct or indirect role in their coming into being or changes, then it is also proved that death grounds, originates and constitutes history in the above – that is: essential, ontological – sense.

Relating to death (in a human, Dasein-like way) is always conditioned (and at the same time constituted) by freedom. Any being “devoid” of freedom – namely, one that does not relate to its own death –, although finite, does not die, “only” ceases to exist or gets extinct. So not only is it not free in its termination, neither is it in the “course” of its being. It is not at all so that “there is” freedom but it is “limited”, restricted – and ultimately restricted precisely “by death” –, but on the contrary, precisely because there is human death – that is, there is a being who in the course of his being necessarily relates to death, to his own death – there is also (at the same time) freedom, by it and with it. Therefore the – seemingly controversial – question must be whether death, understood and prevailing as a possibility, has a freedom-structure. Or, the other way round: is it not so that the existential-ontological structure of death is actually and explicitly formed by the structure of freedom understood and prevailing as questioning, or rather as having an actual and explicit existential and ontological structure of question and questioning, and happening as such? At any rate, death as possibility, and being itself, relating to its death and meaningfully constituted and carried by it “contains” and at the same time constitutes freedom, and conversely, human freedom is made indeed human – that is, serious, delightful and dangerous, all at once – by death, mortality, the mortal nature of being. Just as, also conversely, it is also freedom which turns and shapes death into possibility, that is to say, makes it human! With the clarification that naturally neither death nor freedom are mere “concepts” but much rather “problems”, more precisely questions of being to be explicitly thematized. That is to say, factual questions opening onto one another, mobilizing and unfolding in a being-like way. Questions which, of course, have a fundamental importance for the philosophy of history as defined above.

It is now quite clear in fact how restrictive it is to understand the expression “philosophy of history” as covering only “two different kinds of investigations” – “substantive” and analytical –, as done by Arthur C. Danto and his followers of the
variably fashionable school of analytical philosophy. Danto stresses that the substantive philosophy of history is connected in fact to ordinary historical researches, trying to present something that happened in the past... The analytical philosophy of history is an “applied philosophy” for the particular conceptual problems raised partly by the practice of historical research, and partly by the substantive philosophy of history. However, at a deeper insight, it can be noticed at once that in both interpretations the “philosophy of history” unproblematically presupposes that, on the one hand, “there is” history, and on the other hand, “there is” also historiology. And also that the understanding of the relationship of the two lies in the clarification of some – basically and “merely” – “technical” problems of epistemological and conceptual nature. But first of all it presupposes that neither the being of history or historiology, nor their origins or roots form any kind of actual “problem”.

In a strange, even astounding way, the situation is very similar with the approaches of the philosophy or philosophies of history which one might consider quite different from an analytical way of discussion. Karl Löwith in his rather lightless book, after stating that the expression “philosophy of history” has become so diluted that slowly any kind of concept of history may unproblematically present or pretend itself to be a “philosophy of history”, gives a historical “definition” of the term according to which the “philosophy of history” expression signifies a systematic interpretation of history the principle of which makes a connection between historical events and their consequences and refers them to an ultimate meaning. Clearly, this purportedly very essential and therefore radical approach also starts from the assumption that, firstly, there is, there exists a history, secondly, that it consists of events and their consequences, thirdly, that it does so in a way that enables systematic interpretation, and fourthly, one that allows, or perhaps even requires that we refer the events and their consequences to some kind of ultimate meaning. An ultimate meaning which, in addition, is most times not even a part of “this” history, or rather it is beyond and leads beyond “this” history, even by the idea of “progress”. In this approach, utterly and inevitably, the philosophy of history is always struggling, captured by the patterns of the tradition of, primarily, (Christian or Jewish) theology (salvation history) and, secondly, albeit with few exceptions such as

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2 Ibid.
Nietzsche or Greek philosophy (the eternal return of the same). Therefore, irrespective of the fact that Löwith in his above mentioned investigations tries to prove precisely the untenability of such interpretations – namely, that there can be no sort of transcendent insight in history, that is, one leading beyond it, if starting from within history itself – he treats these patterns with a resigned acceptance of the inevitability, or so-to-say “absurdity” of things. As if there is or there can be no other possibility. Or, as if there is, or there can be no other possibility or condition for the philosophy of history to think about which, on the one hand, could go beyond these patterns, and on the other hand could thus also anticipate these. One which, moreover, focuses on and reveals aspects which, although hidden, are also functional or concealed in the patterns discussed above.

Nonetheless, we can still rightfully ask – and do so indeed –, with respect to our intellectual roots, and their direct or twisted filiations towards the history of effect or otherwise: where does any kind of philosophy of history or any investigation, attitude and position about history come from and why is it the way it is…? Afterwards, depending on the origins and sources revealed and “identified” this way, we could perhaps also claim that no other kind of approach, different from those discussed above, is “truly” “possible”… Meanwhile, we have to keep in mind still that in the course of all this we are always and ever thinking about, or limit ourselves to, a kind of “beginning” and “end” of history. Even if we think about it in the cosmic dimensions of the Ancient Greeks, as an (eternal) return of one and the same thing.1 But meanwhile we have not thought at all about Why? – namely, where and how does history come from?! For it could be the case – as it has been posed before – that history exists precisely because of, or as a result of, something that neither the ancient Greeks nor the theology of the Old Testament or Christianity has given any thought to… Either in an explicit, or in an actual way.

Heidegger’s phenomenological interpretations of Aristotle
Heidegger’s phenomenological interpretations of Aristotle have an outstanding importance from the point of view of the subject discussed in this study. For,

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1 Plato’s Timaeus most unequivocally illustrates this by the myth, the tale of the “creation” of man by the gods, man’s errand on various regions of Earth (e.g., Atlantis), and his perdition, etc. The return is thus “eternal”, but that what returns – that very same – must start over and over, eternally over and over… And must also come to an end! Or else it (the same) could not return again… So, in order to be able to say that the same piece of pottery may break again sometime in the future, that piece of pottery must be made again, it must be created again in the same way… And the breaking of the pot will always mean its end in the same way. But since such a beginning and such an end can never coincide in the eternal – or actually not eternal, only permanent – return of the same thing, this return cannot possibly ignore, nor eliminate these.
although implicitly, these “interpretations” tackle and outline the very possibilities and conditions of thinking and existence – and they do so with a radical philosophical regard to their ontological and hermeneutical-historical situatedness – they are necessary in order to be able to avoid the previously presented patterns of the (philosophical) approach of history, proven to be insufficient, or what is more, a dead end.

In this case, philosophy is not a kind of “theory” which would then grasp something that is outside theory and entangle it in a conceptual-terminological net… nor is it something that differentiates in its origins from other “characteristics”, achievements or behaviours of man – let’s say, science or “practice” – but, to continue with a quotation, “philosophical research in its very actualization co-temporalizes and thus brings to fruition the temporally particular concrete being of life in itself, and not first by way of some subsequent ’application’”\(^1\) Of course, in the “Phenomenological Interpretations with Respect to Aristotle” – which expose for the first time the basic ideas of Being and Time – Heidegger speaks of the Dasein as “human”, but with the specification that “Factic Dasein always is what it is only as its own Dasein and never as the general Dasein of some universal humanity, whose cultivation would only be an exercise in futility. Critique of history is always only critique of the present.”\(^2\) In other words: this is also not about man as “human nature” in a “general sense”, a humanity abstract and invariable throughout history, but one which becomes temporal above all as Dasein, and being-here, and, moreover, as factic. **As a historical critique of the present!** However, Heidegger’s subsequent words must also be added to this: critique cannot naively think that it can hold history responsible for what it should have done if… And this again does probably not mean the triviality which is usually formulated like this: “there is no “If?!?” in history, for the past is something that has already happened, was already decided and ended.”… Indeed, on the basis of such a public opinion no kind of historical critique is possible. All this is about the fact that critique “… must focus on the present and see to it that it asks questions in a manner which is in accord with the originality within its own reach.”\(^3\) That is to say, historical orientation itself, actually and primarily, derives from an orientation to the present – that is, a living one! – but without its being

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2 Ibid., 157.

3 Ibid. (Emphasis added)
exhausted in the present. On the contrary: in a more fundamental aspect and sense, in
the present history is always “present”, it is here – firstly as past and tradition, but
also as future – as something problematic and questionable. “Here” as well as
“there”. As something, that is, which we cannot just simply accept and take over, nor
just continue… and therefore we must always, “inevitably”, also negate it! But:
“History is negated not because it is ‘false’ but because it still remains effective in the
present and nevertheless can never become a properly appropriated present.”¹ To put
it differently: on the one hand, history as past always articulates the present and
interferes with it, while, on the other hand, this always happens in such a way that it
can never offer sufficient, readymade and thematic answers to questions comprising
problems, restrictions and anxieties that we (living) humans face in a determined and
particular way in the constraints and possibilities of our all-time present. History and
tradition appearing as the past is on the one hand inevitable, and on the other hand it
is always an “object” of – appropriated – critique. However, this is not some kind of
methodological rule or etiquette of general validity but: “The fixing of the basic
historical bearing of interpretation grows out of the explication of the sense of
philosophical research.”² The “sense” of philosophical research and the focussed
horizon of this sense means, outlines and inquires primarily whether its “object” is
the factic human Dasein as such, or whether philosophical research itself is a definite
mode of factic life, and as such, by its own occurrence it renders simultaneous within
itself, and not merely a subsequent “application”, the all-time concrete being of life.

Now: the expression “factic human Dasein” signifies first of all a kind of
liveliness, or even liveliness itself. That is why, in connection with the “factic human
Dasein” Heidegger speaks directly about “factic human life”. Because, no matter how
manifold the meaning of the term “life”, it refers first of all to liveliness. However,
from the point of view of the understanding of life and the liveliness of life the issue
of death has an outstanding importance. In the first place, because death “threatens”
precisely life and its liveliness as such, and, what is more, in an unavoidable way.
Death is thus not simply or “formally” “beyond” life, but it is directly the how of life:
the factic human Dasein, the factic human life exists factically always and ever in
such a way that it (will) die, that is, it is mortal. This way, for a factic human life
death is never merely a simple event or “process” of the termination of human life,
but – although undeniably together with it – death is much rather something towards
which life factically approaches, and before which life stands as before something

¹ Ibid.
² Ibid., 158.
inevitable. For this reason life cannot actually be grasped without the explicit thematization of death, saying that since death is the “opposite” of life, it does not belong to life, resulting that the grasping of life “in itself” could be done without death. In contrast, Heidegger emphasizes that the problem of the possession of death must be treated by the investigation of the objectual and existential character of factic life as having a **problem-guiding** importance. Therefore the theme of death has indeed an outstanding ontological, phenomenological and hermeneutical – and consequently: **historical** – importance for the thematization of life, of factic human *Dasein*. This importance however is not built upon externally understood considerations or expectations – usually called “methodological” or “theoretical” – but it has itself an altogether ontological and existential-historical nature. In which, however, it is primarily the “inevitable”, “certain” character of death which must be set down, interpreted and undertaken. For the fear of thinking, of undertaking the matters (*Sache*) of thinking, their avoidance and escape is nothing else in fact than “life’s avoidance of itself”.

“Inevitable” and “certain” death stands therefore before life, before the living, that is, **before ourselves**! This also means that factic life, factically too, always **approaches death** in some way. So, **death exists in the same way as life does, with death standing in front of it as something that it approaches with certainty and stubborn inevitability**! Evidently, this way death becomes the how of life, if in no other way than as some kind of “how” of the possession of death. Therefore death, without losing anything of its certainty and inevitability, does not mean in fact any kind of loss of perspective, a mere passage or a simple or formal termination of life, but, on the contrary, it can directly “give vision to life”. And in such a way that, as something that stands before or is at hand, only death can lead life to its most actual and particular present and past. For the factic human *Dasein* and its understanding or interpretation the “approach to death” is not merely a kind of “natural process”, with its time-direction “characterized” by the unstoppable growth of the past at the expense of the future, but on the contrary, it is rather the unavoidable and certain – constitutive – futurity of death which, as the “how” of life, constitutes the temporality – that is: historicality – of factic life. For, with its future standing-before, death makes visible for factic human *Dasein* both its present and past.

Heidegger offers and outlines thus an equally ontological, existential, phenomenological and hermeneutical – and therefore essentially historical – analysis of death. And what is more, precisely as something that is fixed and outlined as an aspect which **guides problem management**. So the issue here is not merely how
people “processed” in time their own mortality and death as “conscious knowledge” or “ideas”, and this is also not relevant in fact; the issue is that the mere understanding of these historical-anthropological aspects, knowledge and ideas is only possible by the historical and actual, but nevertheless essentially ontological exhibition and explicitation of the existential phenomenon of death. For people most times “consciously” avoid the actual possession of death… But of course they are still not able to avoid or escape, nor transgress death, and thus it remains, in spite of all, an existential-historical constituent that ontologically articulates their factic Dasein. For this reason Heidegger has to unambiguously settle the matter that: “The purely constitutive ontological problematic of the character of the being of death which is described here has nothing to do with a metaphysics of immortality and a metaphysics of the 'What next?' or 'What comes after death?'”¹ For both of these – the metaphysics of immortality and the metaphysical inquiry about the “events” after death – are nothing else in fact than attempts for “escape”. What is more, the idea of immortality and the metaphysics of the inquiry about the “something” after death makes nothing less in fact than being an unredeemable failure² regarding the actual object or matter of philosophical research! Additionally, Heidegger also says: “The basic sense of historical is defined in terms of this temporality…”³ This means that the fundamental meaning of the historical is defined on the basis of none other than that what stands before us – namely, precisely death! –, moreover, from its factic possession, that is, rendered simultaneous by its present problematic character… and not on the basis of some kind of “historical past” grasped and recorded by “historiographical notions”. Simply, man is not “historical” because it has a “historical past”, which is then revealed by a very much historical “historiology”, but because he his temporal in such a way that in his being and through his being, and in a constitutive way, he always renders his future, present and past factically as temporally simultaneous as here, always actually and “spatially” articulated. That is, first of all, in fact by the having/possession of death. So the basic human ambition for the persistence of human endeavours and actions, as well as the desires and thoughts of immortality are born precisely from the nature of the awareness of death, and the problematic character of immortality. Whoever does not think that he will die – that is, whoever has indeed no doubts that despite his “death” he will somehow not die still – would not and could not in fact build pyramids, mausoleums, scientific

¹ Ibid., 163 (Emphasis added)
² Ibid. (Emphasis added)
³ Ibid. (Emphasis added)
truths, works of art, technical innovations or institutions for endurance. Therefore the philosophy which explicitly and decidedly concentrates on this issue cannot remain some kind of fine yet indifferent “theory”, but only a dedicated research happening in the form of questioning search which, unambiguously and clearly, “has decided radically and clearly on its own (without distractions of any busywork with worldviews) to make factic life speak for itself on the basis of its very own factic possibilities; i.e. if philosophy is fundamentally atheistic and understands this about itself – then it has decisively chosen factic life in its facticity and has made this facticity into its very own comprehensive object and subject matter.”¹

Nevertheless, Heidegger marks the entanglement of the decisive forces with effect on the existential character of the “present” situation as “in short the Greek-Christian interpretation of life”.² The most important thing about it is not to reveal the various currents and their interdependence either in the sense of literary affiliations or as “images”, but to emphasize the central ontological, logical and historical structures by an authentic treatment of the sources. However, this is only possible from the direction of the “facticity problem”, which primarily means again that we must proceed “from the present going back to the past”. But Heidegger marked this “Greek-Christian interpretation of life” in such a basic sense as a constitutive force having effect on the existential character of the present situation with the inclusion of anti-Greek and anti-Christian tendencies as well. For, as he says, this is what defines them also… Clearly, we cannot deal here with aspects such as those of the history of philosophy, theology or especially anthropology. It must be noted nonetheless that Heidegger calls for this historical retrospection and “search for origin” from the “central foundation of facticity”. Whereas the radical range of this foundation is best illustrated by the fact that – at a deeper thought – this Greek-Christian interpretation and tradition of life, and the history that it outlines, lacks precisely the certainty of the possession of death, and particularly its constitutive-factic-historical projection on existence! Both in the Greek-Christian teaching of the immortality of the soul and the early Christian awaiting of the Apocalypse affecting “humanity” as such, etc. However, this is indeed an essential and fundamental aspect for Heidegger…

¹ Ibid., 165. It is no secret of course that such formulations of Heidegger made many enemies of his thinking. Perhaps for this reason even the so-called followers of Heidegger think that somehow the radicality of such formulations should be attenuated. This is probably the explanation for the fact that, when H-G. Gadamer published the discovered texts of the Phenomenological Interpretations with Respect to Aristotle, he added the explanation, as if a subtitle, “Heidegger’s early ‘theological’ writing”, although there are hardly any analyzed or explained theological references in the text, and the few that there are, are rather critical.
² Ibid., 168.
As a kind of closure for the commentaries and notes on the *Phenomenological Interpretations with Respect to Aristotle*, it should also be mentioned that, although Heidegger pointed out that the present, the current age is determined by “standing in the Greek-Christian interpretation of being”, these interpretations – from the perspective of the facticity problem – do not deal at all with the Christian interpretation of being… A few lines in the mostly only enumerative discussion – and also one that leads back to Aristotelian origins on the paths of destruction – of the major crossing points of historical theological-philosophical affiliations are the only hints to the fact that these multiplied connections and transfers would go back to the early Christian religious life experience. However, the hermeneutical and phenomenological tackling of the latter, with special regard – as I have said – to the facticity problem, as well as to its historical critique previously stated as compulsory, is in fact completely absent and only signalled as a task. And, what is more, without raising, for instance, the problem of the particular historical difficulties of this task. It is understandable therefore that Heidegger himself – in contrast with many of his commentators – ventures into no detailed speculations on this field…¹ However, it is clear still that Christian theology described as moving away from the religious life experience of early Christianity and the philosophy influenced by this Christian theology speak about their particular domains and experiences of being in a language of categories which are not only “borrowed” but completely different – not to say alien – from these domains and experiences precisely because they employ the conceptual instruments of the Greek, and primarily Aristotelian experiences regarded as summarizing for tackling their own experiences. No matter how much this language became widespread and dominant in the course of time and transfers – interpretations, selections and misinterpretations. At any rate, the radical interpretation and preservation of thefactically authentic experiential possibilities of present generation(s) presupposes the radical re-thinking of language, the language of categories, with regard their original meaning. However, its source and orientation as

¹ As regards the question – historically and existentially highly problematic and diversified – of the “unique” “authenticity” of the time-experience characteristic for early Christianity, it should be taken into account that although it had indeed formed in the spirit of the “future” of the awaiting of the Apocalypse at hand… it does not mean still – for the same reason! – anything else or more than the removal from time (itself) – expected then to happen in the near future – to an eternal, death-less life. The “time-experience” of early Christianity is therefore nothing else in essence than precisely the “time-experience” of the awaiting of removal from time, and as such, it has little to do with the existential, factic and actual “possession of death” as well. Of which, by the way, Heidegger speaks very unambiguously. On the contrary! On this account the Christian church only defined the nature of the relations that the living had to maintain with the dead in the 4th-5th century, namely in Saint Augustine’s treatise entitled *De cura pro mortuis gerenda*, written around 421-422, see Jacques Le Goff and Jean-Claude Schmitt, *Dictionnaire raisonné de l’Occident Médiéval* (Paris: Fayard, 1999).
well must be again the problematic and tensed intimacy of facticity in order for
philosophy to be able to recognize itself anew and its present possibilities, as well as
its own history, as a particular way of factic life. For factic life is from the beginning
a life in the world, which is historical and therefore understands itself in a historical
way. So philosophy must also “go together with life” (Mittgehen mit dem Leben).
Philosophy is of course primarily a “historical” cognition in the sense of its
destructively confronting its own history.

However, such a “confrontation” must sooner or later also reveal that – as
pointed out before – this (“private”) history utterly lacks precisely the certainty of
the possession of death, decisive and dominant with regard to the handling of the
problem itself! In parallel with the insight into this problem, it is inevitable to admit
that this way, in this facticity, such a history is constituted and happens in fact in a
way in which (at least one of) the basic “functions” of the so-called culture, “with
respect to the ‘handling’ of the problem of death”, has always been and continues to
be exactly the avoidance and negation of death as actual dying. Heidegger might be
right (also) about this to emphasize as a decisive aspect with respect to the existential
character of the present situation that it “stands” in the history of being outlined and
articulated in and by the “Greek-Christian” interpretation of being. In such a history
of being that negates and takes pains – or struggles – to deny and relegate the
acceptance of precisely that something which it should thank for its very existence,
the particularities of its existence and its most characteristic modes of being –
science, art, technology, religion, morals, law and institutions, communities,
individuals etc. – as well as the multicoloured formations of their historical
unfolding! However, the denial of death as dying, and this kind of escape and turning
away from death does not “eliminate” history… as neither does it eliminate the fact
that, in spite of this, it essentially derives from human death. On the contrary, it gives
a particular articulation for this history as well as the history of being unfolding by it.
With respect to its possibilities and the limits of these.

Undoubtedly again, the Phenomenological Interpretations with Respect to
Aristotle firstly reveal and validate the aspect that “historical” orientation derives in
fact from an (always questionable and “problematic”) orientation to the present;
secondly, they grasp and outline it as a thematic, present-day – but always temporally
simultaneous – explicitation; and thirdly, they place all this in the historical horizons
of a Greek-Christian – or more correctly originally Greek and then gradually, yet not
unproblematically Christian – life interpretation effective until today. By these three
aspects, the Phenomenological Interpretations – in their own words – also “over-
enlighten” these, and thus they, even if not directly acquire, make possible nonetheless such a fundamental and radical insight and acceptance regarding history with the help of which then the seemingly inevitable stereotypes of the “philosophy of history” that K. Löwith spoke about may become transcendable indeed, existentially and ontologically alike. For Heidegger’s actual – temporally simultaneous – focal point targeting the present is, on the one hand, the unfolding of the facticity problem, and on the other hand, the explicit thematization of death. From the point of view of their interdependence however, all these actually always prove to be the different faces of one and the same circle of questions and inquiry. This way thus it is indeed the constitutive future of death (related to the present) which shifts the present in the horizons of its own possibilities in the – also temporally simultaneous – directions of the critique of a history understood as past.

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It can be repeated therefore, now on the basis of different insights and considerations, that history “simply” and actually exists because there are, there exist living mortal beings who relate to their own mortality in a factic, being-like way. Whose entire “characteristic” and particular modes of being are not only “surrounded”, pervaded, impregnated and intertwined, but also directly constituted and – albeit mostly covertly – structured and articulated by this explicitly thematic, although often non-thematic relation. Now, the ancient Greek, Jewish and Christian culture hardly thematizes explicitly, and, what is more, directly negates and denies death as dying. While, “of course”, this “creates”, produces, “operates”, and makes

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1 This of course has nothing to do with any kind of “presentism”, that is, one of the “regimes” of historicality in which the present, or rather the aspects of the currently “actual” things historically reign over other dimensions or ecstasies of time, and in relation to which other types of “regimes” of temporality or historicality can also be imagined to develop or operate. On the contrary, the case is precisely that any “regime” of historicality is only possible on the basis of a constitutive temporal simultaneity with temporality as such, and only as different modes of it.

2 For a direct and objective orientation, some aspects are worth being repeated. Psychologists, anthropologists etc. experience and understand the denial of death as a kind of “basic human necessity”, as a defence against the oppressiveness of – especially the salience of – death and the anxiety it causes, as something by which people try to handle, “manage” the terror of the threat of death. That is to say, the terror of that which they face by their experiences, and not just in a “general” sense, but with precise reference to themselves. This may then trigger and keep up several – immediately or distantly effective – defence mechanisms. One of the most important such defence mechanisms denying death is the primordial faith and thought, or rather idea of immortality, which, in the meantime, always faces actual, factic death, dying… This is how death becomes something which, while being a loss of life, is not dying… and dying becomes something which now terrorizes and horrifies indeed as something impossible to be understood, “handled” or “managed”. Therefore it must be denied over and over, again and again, as a cultural etc. heritage from generation to generation! Except that it is not only death which loses its weight in a denied death, but life
always actually “possible” precisely such a kind of history, constituted and organized by a turning-away and denying type of “possession of death” and relation to death. One which, ever since these beginnings, increasingly becomes its own “fate”, gazing at its end, and decisively outlined by its concern with its end. This is what determines in fact the relation of “death” and “history”, as well as how all this has a relevance for the philosophy of history, of course not only in a thematic respect. Since this results in a different kind of insight, in addition to, and beyond the currently fashionable problematic and problem management, into what the primary or actual interest of the philosophy of history is and how it is shaped. For it ever more clearly outlines that the posing of the explicit question of death with regard to the present, as well as the historical research and meditation deriving from it while bringing the future into play does not, and cannot mean only to discover or observe current methods or ideas about death and then, in contrast with investigations of the *ubi sunt?* type, we complete the so-called “critique” of the past starting from, and on the basis of, these. On the contrary, it can only mean that we explicitly bring into action those questions which, albeit related to the experiences of the present and cannot be imagined without these, are nevertheless **not asked** by the present throughout its experiences! Still, these are precisely the kinds of questions which can ensure actual historical orientation only if they are explicitly asked.

However, this “historical orientation” only partly means the discussion of past aspects about the subject. Rather, it is something by which the present may also gain its real historical dimension. For it is revealed that human death is probably primarily about the constitution of history and historicality, and not about the things we might find out from evidence and interpretations on how people used to die or think, relate or behave about death – perhaps even in a way not uninteresting for the future. Nevertheless, and seemingly above all this, “historicality” marks first how man exists itself as well. For life becomes something the loss of which – with Kierkgaard’s unambiguous words – is not deadly! Or, as Nietzsche said in a different respect: man has lost in his life much more important things than his life… Of course, the indeed much more “uncomfortable” question must also be occasionally inevitably asked whether **facing** death is not just as an existential-ontological-historical “basic necessity” and basic interest of man than its denial? A basic necessity which is always – historically! – oppressed and overwhelmed by the historical denial of death which specifically articulates even history itself?! This eminently philosophical problem must be raised and maintained despite the fact that, so it seems, the “denial of death” has already triggered dynamic and extensive – anthropological, psychological, sociological, historical, etc. – research also thematically, initiated and fertilized ever since by Ernest Becker’s – suspiciously successful – book from 1973, *The Denial of Death*. See also: Daniel Liechty, “Reaction to mortality: an interdisciplinary organizing principle for the human sciences,” *Zygon* 1 (1998): 45–58; Camilla Zimmermann and Gary Rodin, “The denial of death thesis: sociological critique and implications for palliative care,” *Palliative Medicine* 18 (2004): 121–128; Joseph Bottum, “Death & Politics,” *First Things* June/July (2007): 17–29.
in time, and second, how he treats time meanwhile. This has lately been expressed by the formulation of François Hartog, the “regimes of historicality”, which was originally understood in two ways only. In a somewhat restrictive sense it asked how society treats its past and what it “says” about it. In a wider sense however the term was meant to designate the “modes of the consciousness of human community”.¹ Later, it was also associated with the difficult task for the term to describe the various modes of being in time.² Therefore the “regime of historicality” is clarified on the one hand by the expression “time regime”, which is very important, on the other hand, because historians as a rule do not think about time. Because they tend to consider it “unambiguous/implicit”. And amidst this “lack of ambiguity” outlines also the possibility and probability that this omnipresent present may begin at once to look most unambiguous. This is primarily what Hartog calls “presentism”. However, Hartog also rather only assumes that time exists! and also that history exists! and urges to examine – no, not how they are possible, but – how they are articulated or interconnected “meanwhile”. Moreover, it urges to explore how, also “meanwhile”, these connections – coloured at the beginning and end by the “crises of time” – outline the older regimes of historicality, or the ever newer ones just separating from these.

These issues have to be raised here in order to clarify that the problematic of “death and history” also inquires wherefrom and how time comes – namely that which, as admitted by Hartog, historians do not usually think about –, and (also) wherefrom and how history comes to being through this at the same time. For it could well be that time and history actually come to being and step into being “from the same place”… This of course does by far not mean that historicality and the related “temporality” has no, or could have no “regimes”. However, the question is whether a different kind of historical research, “historical orientation”– as we have called it above in relation to Heidegger – regarding so-called “presentism” is possible and meaningful at all? And if it is, then in what way? Is it not perhaps the case that – although in an implicit, unexpressed and unacknowledged way, but – with regard to its original or actual intentionality, all such kind of historical investigation derives in fact from the present questionableness and problematicness of the subject of this research? Even if the thematic ramifications of actual historical research – like in most of the “concrete” cases – always direct, in relation with their own needs, also on

² Ibid.
a disciplinary level, by their particular transmission (as well), the continuously redefined intentions unfolding towards the past of the present research. We are not speaking therefore about any kind of “stance” of the present, from where we humbly or complacently, yet decidedly investigate our past, burdened with all kinds of methodological problems and at the expense of various ordeals and efforts. Much rather, it is the **question-points** of the present (pertaining and supporting, as well as deriving from the future) which direct such investigations, as well as the questions which move them, to the landscape of an always historically articulated past, actually – that is: in *actus* – corresponding to these.

In spite of, or together with this, there is still general consent about the fact that historiology investigates and researches nothing else but the Past. In addition, there is also general consent about the fact that “historicality” is not merely a “particularity” or “characteristic” of the past, but of the present and future as well. Notwithstanding all this, the terms “present” and “future” from the perspective of historiological research should not be understood as “dimensions of time” which characterize, accompany, and constitute “all” events, processes, changes, etc., but much rather as entities which are **not** “subjects” and themes of historiology. But which are nevertheless somehow entitled to the attribute of “historicality”. But how, on what grounds can the present and future be entitled to the attribute of “historicality” when the science of history – and every kind of historical interest of its inspiration (histories of philosophy, literature, science, etc.) – “only” and exclusively research the past?

It is clear therefore that this question dwells in fact on the privilege that historiology enjoyed in exhibiting and articulating historicality. Not meaning, however, that this questioning could only be listed as a kind of “epistemological” problem of historiology. Since, indeed, in the cognition of historicality itself, the past somehow still seems to be a **privileged** dimension (of time). Because “within that”, at least in theory, we may see the events in their – actual, alleged or apparent – finiteness. That is, precisely in that privileged – or seemingly privileged – sense in which these events perhaps no longer happen… for they have “passed”! In the dimension, the ecstasy of the past, therefore – at least seemingly – the events or happenings can be seen and analyzed together with their preliminaries, their course, and above all this, also with most of their consequences. In contrast, for instance, with the problems of the present which have their “preliminaries” as well, and they are happening just now, and will also probably have their consequences, but these – especially the latter ones – cannot or can hardly be seen as explicit or articulated.
Because they do not exist as yet. Well, it is surely this actual, or “real” situatedness which creates the circumstance or the appearance that the privileged place and dimension of the insight in, and tracing of historicality is indeed the past and the science which investigates it – namely, historiology.

Nevertheless, led by these appearances, we tend to forget that all the dimensions or ecstasies of historicality that offer us insights into the past during its (historiographical) investigation are actually and essentially nothing else but only and exclusively appearances. Since everything that we come across this way in relation with temporality and the adjoining historicality is actually only HAD-BEEN-NESS. That is to say, the past is in the past, the present is in the past, and the future is also actually only in the past… So, in a strict sense, all these cannot be actual either, since they cannot be presents which are actually present and here, nor futures which are actually about to come. So there can be no PAST either! In addition to this, the particular situation about the past always is that it – when it was present – never was our present, but as a past it nevertheless and necessarily somehow “turns into” our past. This means of course that in order to indeed gain insight into, or read something like “historicality” or its articulation from the research of past things… well, for this we should also previously possess an essential insight referring to, and at the same time also questioning temporality and, in connection with it, historicality. Without which we would probably not investigate the “past” at all. However, this preliminary insight is precisely historical to the highest possible degree! And as such, on the one hand it also takes part in the shaping of history, and on the other hand, it is constantly changing, that is, it is always different. Therefore one must also go “behind” it in a philosophy of history perspective, for it should also be found out where it actually comes from or derives.

However, if it can be proved that time, the actual, that is, finite time as well as “all” our factic and being-like “relations” to it, to the past, the present, and the future, derive in fact, ontologically and existentially, from human death, which is human mortality in all its aspects, then it can also be essentially proved that history and historicality also derive and originate from the same thing, namely from death, from the mortally living, continuous being-like relation, constitutive of being, to our own death, our mortality, a relation not only of continuity but also of repeated unavoidable emergence with particular reference to every single generation! Quite regardless

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therefore of the aspects or questions – or rather: anticipating these at least in regard to essentiality – of what the “building stone” of history is, or what counts as the “essence” of “historiology” from the point of view of historiological – or intellectual history (Geistgeschichte) – scholarship, or from that of different philosophies of history connected to these in various ways. Perhaps the actions of great historical personalities, the anonymous actions of the masses, or rather the event (Hayden White), the change (Arthur C. Danto), large timeframes (Fernand Braudel), the narrative (Paul Ricoeur), or the various structure of the different discourses making up the narratives, etc. Or perhaps the fact whether or not history has its general laws (Aristotle, Schopenhauer, Hempel), or whether or not there is “universal history”, or what/who the “subject of history” is (Hegel, Georg Lukács), etc. … Quite the opposite, it is not at all incidental that the great historians and philosophers of history of the 19th century (Michelet, Droysen, Ranke, Dilthey, etc.) emphasized, unanimously in fact, as Droysen formulated it, that history is the shaping of human things and that these belong to the scope of historical research precisely because human things are historical.

But what do “human things” mean and how is this connected to the fact that these “things” are – as if from the outset – “historical”? But what else can it mean that some things are “human things” if not that these are the matters and things of a being living in time as a mortal being? And indeed, “matters” and “things” whose beings as “matters” and “things”, primarily and directly, are particularized and emphasized by their – being- and mode of being-like – pertinence to this being. As a permanently reborn and outlined challenge, givenness, possibility or task. For what else does it mean to be a “mortal” than to be and live finitely, in need and satisfaction, in challenge or threat, or in possibilities? The case is therefore that “human things” – and by this, the ontological identity of man, and consequently also man’s so-called “specificity of being” – is particularly rooted in, originating from, and focussed by mortality, that is, human finiteness. Therefore this aspect and the possession of this aspect, a possession attained and accomplished over and again, should/must guide the handling of the problem itself.

**Leviathan and the “human things”**

“Human things” are finite. And they are finite in a human way. That is to say, they are “imperfect” because they are mortal. And thus: alive! As such, they “belong to nature” on the one hand, while on the other, so it happens, they also have their own particular “nature”. One that differs and is beyond their “physical” nature. This is
what thinkers – and not only them – have called “human nature” for so long. No matter how “human” it is, “human nature” is also nature. And as such, it is moving, dynamic.

In Thomas Hobbes’s view the dynamics of physical nature is the dynamics of moving matter. Then the dynamics of human nature is precisely the movement which may rightly be called history. At its basics, this history begins with the “natural state” of man, this is from where it begins and comes into being, and this is also to which it always relates and is compared. Precisely through “human nature” and its constituents. Which are “comprised” of human needs and the desires and wishes unquenchably and increasingly connected to them. While “happiness” is nothing else than the permanent and repeated or expected satisfaction of these desires and wishes. To give up the efforts and competition for this therefore actually means to die. However this also ensures two things, two directions for insight. First, that the man who stops his efforts or endeavours to satisfy his needs and desires will die – that is, death directly awaits and threatens him because of this – and second, that a dead man will no longer have such needs or desires urging him for actual dynamics. Again by his nature, man is also characterized by the ability to speak. The ability, that is, to form signs first, then language in relation to his experiences. With help of which he will then always currently interpret (present) his experiences or desires (future), sharing them with others and referring them to others, and also always recalling (past) his memories about them. Man therefore, with its own human nature, belongs to nature while raising above it in such a way that it steps into being as a central and essential shaper – yet of course not necessarily omnipotent lord – of its own universe, conditioned by his own nature. That is: he builds! He builds, shapes the possibilities and conditions of his being, his life connected to the always timely and dynamic necessities outlined in the shadow and impulses of the manifold and pluridirectional perspectives and threats of death. The threat of death is therefore a task and circumstance which is always present and but should always be fended off. And which, therefore, must always take place most organically and intimately in the motivation, drawing-up and articulation of the temporal existence and actions of man. As well as, of course, also for their actual and “practical” interpretation. No matter how problematic Hobbes’s idea of the non-natural conditions of man and the ensuing new political, legal or moral society may be historically – or rather from the point of view of historiological confirmation –, he still offered a completely new perspective of the philosophy of history with his insights. A perspective in which the fundamental question is by far not merely “How events and actions have occurred?” but much
rather why and wherefrom history is, what it is, where it comes from and how it actually works?!

It is only possible in fact on the basis of such an inquiry to discuss, say, the issues of political institutions, etc., that is, the “human things” pertaining to these. For the establishment and permanent operation of even the state and all the connected political and legal bodies is dependent on the life of people and communities – mainly and ultimately articulated by the threat of death and its various possibilities – and the quality and well-being inseparably linked to them. And the opposite is also true! That is to say, the preservation of human life, also against the constant possible threat of death inseparable from human life – including its possible well-being as well – precisely to this end and reason, as human creation, is only possible by and with the help of the state founded on contractual and agreement grounds and a political, legal etc. body. First and foremost then, this is precisely what must be admitted and accepted about these formations, together with their historical, social, political, legal, or organizational changes in time. Consequently: this is also the same thing that the various sciences and the always problematically connected philosophies of them – social philosophy, philosophy of history, political philosophy, moral philosophy etc. – should admit and accept in the first place.

It is no accident therefore that Hobbes’s Leviathan, as shown also in the subtitle, treats indeed the matter that lies at the basis of the form and power of the ecclesiastical and secular state.¹ And this matter is nothing else than the man! Of course, not in the sense in which it appears as a “subject” or “problem” of some kind of “anthropology”, but essentially. More precisely, as an utterly particular being in its own being and in the – deeply historical – unfolding and pursuit of this being. Therefore this is in fact what this entire study deals with from beginning to end. To such an extent that it handles even the state and all organs and organizations connected to it as an “artificial man” created – of course, particularly through human art – in an artificial way. The matter, as well as the creator of which is man himself.² Hobbes clearly states therefore that “…I put for a general inclination of all mankind, a perpetual and restless desire of power, that ceaseth only in death.”³ This ambition is general and unstoppably continuous because man “…cannot assure the power and means to live well, whitch he hath present, without the aquisitions of more.”⁴ However, in their lives conducted through and amidst these ambitions, the fear from

² “…I will consider First, the matter, thereof, and the artificier; both witch is Man.” Ibid., 7.
³ Ibid., 66. (Emphasis added)
⁴ Ibid. (Emphasis added)
**death and being hurt** necessarily makes people first create public authority and then obedience to it.¹

Death is therefore, on the one hand, an explicit **end**. In that very definite sense that this is exclusively what is able to end the ever newer longing for power, necessary for well-being. That is to say, death is specifically the end of life. On the other hand, however – precisely because of its nature as end, as that what ends life – death is also something which is fearsome for the living being, it triggers fear. But the constitutive fear of death for Hobbes is not merely a kind of paralyzing “feeling” or an overwhelming “condition”, but this is precisely what organizes and articulates the will – although prevailing amidst the longing for power, but creating public authority nevertheless – as well as the respect and obedience towards it. Which, therefore, has a decisive role and task in the further support and articulation of a life evolving amidst the – necessarily also “permanent and ceaseless” – fear of death. For public authority and the *sui generis* meanings of public authority outline and defend something – namely, human life itself – the loss of which cannot be compensated by anything.²

So, given that the human ways of self-preservation are connected to desires and ambitions, and under circumstances that all humans are actually equal in their essential aspects, they also inevitably pursue things that they cannot simultaneously enjoy. As a result, people will compete in their pursuits, therefore they will also collide since they can only actually satisfy their needs with the destruction or oppression of others. This of course also mutually threatens their security – and primarily the security of their lives. It is in fact everyone’s war against everyone, which lasts, unrestrainedly and hazardously for species and genus, as long as there is no public authority. But war is most characteristically “continual fear, and danger of violent death.”³ Death is therefore undoubtedly finitude. Man’s – so to speak – natural end, that is, the end which naturally pertains to man. The end which can indeed be “lived through” is the time that nature usually allows us.⁴ In this sense (as well) it is only death that can end the also human ambitions of gaining power. However, this end does not only “margin” threateningly human existence from the outside, at its edge, as a physical or natural feature, but death also becomes a real “inside” of human life – precisely by the actions of people. Like, for instance, the violent causing of death, violent threat of death in times of war. Which is, as we have seen, surrounded by constant fear. But death and the fear of death becomes an inner

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¹ Ibid. (Emphasis added)
² Ibid., 67.
³ Ibid., 84. (Emphasis added.)
⁴ Ibid., 159.
organizing force of the life-long articulation and pursuit of a **meaningful** human life and public life not only in this sense or direction, but, on the contrary, as a source of human feelings and ambitions specifically inviting for peace.\(^1\) To such an extent that everything that Hobbes directly and unhesitatingly calls “natural law” revolves around and connects in fact in its entirety to the above aspects and focuses of death. For he writes: “A LAW OF NATURE (lex naturalis) is a percep, or general rule found aut by reason, by whitch a men is forbidden to do, that, whitch is destructive of his life, or taketh away the means of preserving the same; and to omit, that, by whitch he thinketh it may be best preserved.”\(^2\) The “law of nature” described like this is connected therefore in its entirety, in all its aspects, and essentially with human life and being, living indeed because defined, interwoven and threatened by death. Just like everything else which derives from it as a consequence or conclusion. It is connected to a life which is – also essentially – outlined by its inseparable relationship and connection with death. Including primarily the kind of relation recognized by reason precisely as “law of nature”, and from which, as a prescription or general rule, it validates the “laws of nature”. Or rather: directly establishes! With all the established and validated consequences – like contracts, but also wars and peace, etc. – of these laws.

Therefore the case is not at all only about the fact that these rules and laws prescribed by reason and all the institutions connected to them, their creation and development are simply unthinkable without death, but, above all this, also about the fact that their entire being, the entire structure of their articulation and the entire changing and unfolding, reformulating meaning and operation of this structure and texture is always ultimately created, articulated, guided, pervaded and encompassed by the fact of death and its particularly human threat, directed towards, and pertaining to, human life – that is, man’s explicit and being-like, **living pertinence** and **relation** to this actuality, perspective and threat. So in the projection and creation of the state and its institutions, man “…is the foresicht of their own preservation, and of more contented life thereby…”\(^3\) And it has been clearly seen above what the provision for “self-preservation” and the “undisturbed unfolding” of human life means… Namely, that all this is indeed connected in its origins and meanings and the perspectives of its meanings to death and its – not merely denying or “negative” – threats, factically articulating life and particularly pertaining to life as its end! For which reason the

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\(^1\) “The passions that incline men to peace, are **fear of death**, desire of such things as are necessary to commodious living; and a hope by their industry to obtain them.” Ibid., 86. (Emphasis added)

\(^2\) Ibid., 86.

\(^3\) Ibid., 111.
public authority (state) is called “the great Leviathan”, that is, a “Mortal God” “being born”! This, the – mortal! – public authority thus born has various forms and branches sprouting from the same ground. Forms and branches which – stimulated by determinations and motivations also grown out from and reconnected to the same ground – constantly modify or change. These forms, their diversity, changes and possibilities are treated then in works of history and political science.

Consequently, Thomas Hobbes’s significance and uniqueness in the philosophy of history is primarily due to the fact that not only does he not deny death, but he analyzes and presents it as an aspect and factor which determines history in all its decisive aspects and in an original sense – that is, as something which originates and articulates historicality –, and at the same time as being a constitutive part of human life. In contrast, for instance, with later, 19th-20th century philosophies of history, which are mostly explicitly joined with the horizons of historiology in preparation and usually problematic. And in which – beyond some suggestions, more of a resigned nature, and only raised to the level of an observation (by, e.g., Michelet, Droysen, Dilthey, etc.) – almost no kind of organic and structuring presence or significance of the “problem” of death can be found.

In contrast with this, Hobbes makes it directly and fundamentally clear that all the formations, all the “phenomena” – law and the institutions of law, politics and the institutions of politics (the state and various communities, etc.), ethics and its “institutions”, religions and their institutions – as well as all the events, happenings or changes, processes (wars, confrontations, peacemaking, workings, etc.) the research
of which, their formation and change in time etc., is the object of **historiology** – whether positivistic, historicist, hermeneutical or otherwise – are completely unimaginable “without” death, the constitutive presence of human death. That is to say, not only “generally speaking”, but also in a basic and essential sense: this is what they precisely derive from! Just like the changes of these “formations” – also in their origins and actual motifs and senses –, which also always send back to death. And send forth as well. However, this also means that historiology – and all other sciences as well, whether social or natural – also derive from here in a fundamental sense. Sciences can only have, and do only have a “history”, just like history has some kind of a science – including now also the science of the history of sciences – because these are, in this same basic aspect: essentially historical. For they are nothing else themselves than precisely the actual, but of course particular and determined **modes of being** of a being which is originally temporal due to its mortality. Within and through which this being conducts its own mortal life-being, necessarily in a temporal way, that is, in a constitutive and finite co-originality and co-constitution. History (also) therefore – how else could it be?! – derives, and gains its always actual weight and dynamism from where time originates. Namely, precisely from death, from human finitude, mostly compliantly or derogatorily – or at any rate completely uncomprehendingly – called “mortality”.

In spite of this, Hobbes does not explicitly thematize death “itself”, in a face-to-face, particular meditative effort. Instead, it rather only “operationalizes” it, although only as a factor which creates history and constitutes and shapes it. With this – but in some very significant aspects precisely despite this – Hobbes stands nevertheless in the “schematism” of that history of the philosophy of history which Löwith characterized and identified as an inevitable impossibility to free oneself from the theological “scheme”.

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In conclusion, the novel efforts for the historiological investigation of death are a huge advancement. This research of course has only become possible through the – existential, but not necessarily reflected – loosening of historiological, as well as philosophical historical determinations. That is, in such a way only that meanwhile a fundamental and **actual**, factual, existential, and at the same time ontological and historical shift in focus happened precisely about the question of death. This shift has brought about in fact the historiological research of death as well. This of course also
creates the possibility to raise anew – precisely in the system of relations of death and history – the question of the connections of death and historiology. Clearly, this relation cannot be restricted merely to the historiological and past-oriented questions of the explicit, or more precisely, outlined problem of death. Rather, the issue is that just like history itself – historiology is in fact in a constant and ontologically articulated – although seemingly epistemological – relationship with death. Although this relationship and connection mostly remains athematic for it, meaning that mostly it is neither explicit, nor thematized.

Perhaps nobody was more conscious of this than Jules Michelet, mentioned above in a footnote, for whom the awareness – or, what is more, the experience! – that the historian, looking back into the past, always researches the past lives of deceased people, was a recurring idea. Therefore the “kindness towards all the dead”, required also by scholarly honesty and sympathy, is a necessary condition for the knowledge of the past. Including those deceased who during their lifetime acted in a way disagreeable to us or harmful to their fellows. In the course of historiological research – just like, almost invisibly, in history itself –, all deceased people and generations, whether murderers or victims, somehow become in a very essential way the very own deceased of every living generation. The – “deserved” – memory of which, whether wonderful or terrible, must be guarded by the historian. With the clarification that “it can no longer be revived that what life has forsaken.”\(^1\) All this inspired Michel de Certeau to claim: historiography wants to prove that the place where it is created is able to understand the past; it is a strange process which first claims death, this discursively always repeated rupture, and at the same time it denies the loss, maintaining the privilege for the present to summarize the past as one knowledge. **The work of death and work against death.**\(^2\) It seems therefore that itself the science of history, recte: historical research and historiography as well are precisely and essentially the works of death which somehow, yet always motivated and stimulated by the actuality of death, still always works against death. It is something which essentially – or more precisely, athematically, that is, independently from the subject now analyzed – has to, and tries to turn death, exactly through death, but also in contrast to it, to the work and issue of a summarizing or analytical knowledge about the past, although now present, and primarily addressed to the present (while probably also looking towards the future). What is more, the

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2 Ibid., 61.
existential distinction of historiology lies – or may lie – precisely in the fact that, searching for past lives and thing, that is, for our past, it gets, day after day, into an inevitable relationship with what we may also call “passing”. It is permanently connected therefore with time, or “this working of death”, while it also understands – or rather: can understand – itself as a “working against death”. Which of course always also derives from death…

So historiology and its interpretation and self-understanding may become a privileged domain and opportunity also because we can now dig deeper into questioning what the “workings of death” really means and what it really means that we, humans, always work somehow against the “workings of death”. Is this
existential and ontological situatedness only and exclusively a peculiarity and characteristic of historiology? Or perhaps it emphasizes the same thing that Heidegger so vigorously stressed in his own time; more precisely, that Heidegger alone has ever stressed with such an unambiguous and uncompromising consistency. Namely, that human Dasein as such – which is we, ourselves –, with respect particularly to the possible completeness of itself and ourselves, ontologically, existentially, historically etc. somehow related to death, its death and our death, running forth with it and at the same time reflexive, is (a) being in happening and in progress in some respect. With the completion that this is not only related with the (equally metaphysical, ontological and existential) facticity of death and dying, but with everything in fact which forms human existence and its historical possibilities of being! Therefore the mortality of man is not only “proved” by the actuality of everybody’s dying, but also, essentially, by every and all of man’s modes of being! The very fact that, wherever there is man – no matter how primitively –, there are also camps, graves, settlements, buildings, organizations, customs, institutions, beliefs, communication networks and relations, particular human works and efforts (myths, knowledge, science, art, technology, wars, and comforting religions, etc.), betrays and proves the mortal nature of man and the human nature of finite, mortal life. In short, they prove the workings of death and at the same time the workings against or despite death. Since – as we have repeatedly emphasized – such a thing can only have its weight and meaning for the being of a mortally finite – so Dasein-like! – being. A being truly immortal in any respect of being would never actually be forced into any effort of knowledge, creation or perfection.

The question and questionableness of mortality is therefore about the truth of man, of the Dasein – and thus also being! And we, humans, can only search, question, or thematize this truth by means of philosophy in a way authentic for us, and co-respondent for the weight and force of an all-time historical – that is, one that articulates history –, and inevitable reiteration. Through philosophy which meanwhile also discovers and displays that a merely “thematic” – although evidently highly important – consciousness, possible in several ways and articulations, related to death and the events of dying does not exhaust and is not restricted only to mortality, mortal nature and especially “becoming mortal”… but it interests, articulates, surrounds and, of course, historically and ontologically holds the entire questionable beings of man – and being – and its whole responsibility as a real and questionable meaning, as all-time response(s) which actually decide history!
To approach the question of history and death as a real and serious matter of philosophy also means therefore to formulate why the human being philosophizes. Therefore philosophy and death, history and death, history and philosophy, death and the history of philosophy must – and should – have a fundamental relation (of being) with man. One that would count indeed as a *sui generis* philosophical and existential-historical project to “shed light” on. It is of course out of the question that we should now start to piously search, for example, for the “positive” sides of death next to its “negative” sides, or the “nice” and “constructive” aspects surrounding death’s “ugly” and “destructive” nature. On the contrary, this concern can only be about understanding that “nice” and “ugly”, “positive” and “negative”, “true” and “false”, “good” and “evil”, “destructive” or “constructive” are present exclusively “for” or inside the being of a dying being, who always somehow “understands” death, its own death as a possibility pertaining to itself, its own being, and endorses this understanding in a being-like, mode of being-like way.

Consequently, there is nothing more superficial than saying – as for example the old Paul Ricoeur, related to Lévinas, and in a counter-Heideggerian, quite conventionally moved manner – that human existence, human history, instead of essentially relating to death, to the exposedness to its own death, is in fact a historically unfolding being conducted against death and in spite of death. Which therefore always relates “negatively” to the “positiveness” of death, although in itself “negative”. That is to say, it exists against death and “in spite of” (its) death. But not opposing it, not facing it face to face, but mostly turning away from it. Of course, the belief or idea of “immortality” also fully belongs here. For this is also a highly explicit denial or “repression” of death. Therefore one must “define” “immortality” and all kinds of ideas and thoughts about it as the dying mortal’s ontological-existential inability to die, to become an actual mortal, which also decisively defines historicality itself and the articulation of history and its possibilities. Adding the clarification that in fact only the dying can be “immortal”. He who “meanwhile” – since factically always dies – may become a mortal in a historically decisive way. Consequently, the non-dying immortal would not only be “incapable” of dying, but would never even die. On the other hand, such a thing could not exist, not even “against or in spite of” death.¹

¹ Heidegger in his later works, in reference to the fundamental aspects of being, reiterated and rearticulated by him – and primarily in connection with language –, speaks about Heaven and Earth, mortals and immortals. However, he unambiguously treats this latter as a non-human possibility. On the contrary: the mortals are (exclusively) the humans, who are never called “mortals” merely because their life is finite, but because they are able to die in their lives and with their lives! Immortals are therefore those who do not
facticity of the possibility to become mortal is therefore simply a precondition of the latter – namely, being against or in spite of death. Including, naturally, the possibility of “ethics” or “the ethical”. Since this can only be meaningful and significant for a being who is mortal and as such – in and through history – “may” become indeed mortal. Therefore the so-called “transgression” of “being” or death by “ethics” and ethical ambition is none other in fact than mere senselessness. That is, the incomprehension of the ontological, existential and historical roots and origins of the ethical. Which stands again completely in the traditional and unquestioned mode of being against death, which denies it and “flutters” it.

Paul Ricoeur’s investigations are stimulated however also by the special ambition to make the philosophical interpretations of, or insights into history available and “applicable” for the use of historians, that is, practicing researchers of history. Therefore he always searches for the crossing or overlapping points where the philosophical investigations and “terminological subtleties” connected to history – although always “surprisingly” – may productively and fruitfully meet and get into dialogue with the diligent daily work of the historian. The question of death and mortality acquires special importance in this process.¹ This issue has recently become a historiographical “problem”, a research “subject” of history. But how could I – or

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anyone – be a being existing against and in spite of death, my death and mortality in any other way than “meanwhile” somehow raising my inquiring “awareness” of death and mortality, and, again “meanwhile”, also relating to it in a well determined or rather outlined way?

Being against or in spite of death – precisely by its “negativity” or, more accurately, in its being as denial – simply presupposes some kind of assertion of death! If we did not know and understand – as if beforehand and in advance – in some “positive”, asserted way that we are indeed mortals, then we could not exist even against or in spite of death, or relate to it in such a way. So, not only is being against or in spite of death not a friendlier, more attractive or ethical “alternative” to a being-like and constitutive anticipation of death, but on the one hand it directly (pre)supposes it, on the other hand it is none other itself than one of the also being-like – that is, factual and actually conducted – derivative modes of this relationship and anticipation.¹ Such modes in which, against and in spite of death, they usually turn away – even if not “always” from death – from an existential and thoughtful anticipation, explicitly thematic and thematizing, undertaking and understanding, as well as facing the constitutive aspects of relating to death. And also in which, instead of the being-like acceptance of the ontological, existential and historical – actually constitutively metaphysical – aspects of death which face, understand and explain it, the trying and excruciating task of “wisdom” is to “accept” death as “destiny” and as something “naturally” connected to the human body. Or such modes in which – at the same time – the focus gradually and sensibly shifts to the death of the Other and Others…² But which build in fact the entrance hall to the repeated denial or at least turning away from death. Historiology and the work of the historian is therefore something which essentially – or more accurately athematically, independently of the subject just analyzed – is constrained and strives to turn death, particularly through death but precisely against it, towards the work and matter of a knowledge, summarizing or analytical, yet being present and primarily addressed to the present (but looking to the future.

While of course the historian is alive! And lives in such a way that he is mortal. That he will die. For the mortally living historian too, his (own) death “is” always in

¹ It is not difficult, only tiresome at most, to present in detail that the discourse of both Lévinas and the later writings of Ricoeur – as well as all other similar discourses – are dependent on, and directly linked to, Heidegger’s philosophy, but they are not able to either open it up, or “transgress” it… while they also cannot break away from it.
² See Ricoeur, Memory, History, Forgetting, 359–361.
his (own) future. As something that will inevitably be, and which therefore will hold\footnote{See more on this in István Király V., “The Future, Or Questioningly Dwells the Mortal Man – Question-Points to Time,” Philobiblon – Journal of the Lucian Blaga Central University Library Cluj XV (2010): 92–118.} his being or life. It is only in this constitutive future-ness of death for the living that the explicit and heavily outlined perspective can be revealed for the historian that he himself is also mortal, and even more than that, he is mortal precisely as a living being to-be-dying. That is, sooner or later he himself – with all his works – and together with his own “generation” will get to the “region”, dimension of death essentially constituted by dying – namely: the past – with which, or rather “against” which, the then also mortally living historians will “deal with” and research diligently in the future. In other words: death not only defines historiology in fact and actually as the athematic yet constitutive coming into being and connection of its “subject” to the actuality of death, but also in its all-time origin, ambitions and meaning always newly emerged but left unthematized. Precisely because it is precisely a determined action or directly mode of being of dying mortals, and this is why historiology may turn towards the research and analysis of the actions of mortals once living and now dead. With all its “epistemological”, methodological or other pitfalls or benefits. Let me repeat: there would be no history or historiology without death. And neither would there be philosophy of history.

Hopefully, it is now clear that this philosophy of history cannot possibly – and especially not “exclusively” – be any kind of epistemology or methodological aid for the science(s) of history… and also that it should not deal at all, even if only additionally, with something which – let’s say, in a “substantial” sense, using Danto’s expression – historiology “deals with”. Instead, the philosophy of history should particularly struggle with questions which historiology itself mostly fails to ask. It is a different question whether the “philosophy of history” does or would not precisely prove to be ontology. No matter how specialized and determined in its own history by the division of historiological disciplines, history and historical interest always derives from the problematic nature of Dasein originating in fact from its own mortality. Either in the sense that the majority of the questions, “issues” emerging in their being-present are permanently proved to be results of history in several decisive respects, or in the sense that a historical perspective is never superfluous for assessing the novelty of these questions. This way the current acceptance of these questions cannot happen without the historical investigation of things. Besides, more originally and essentially, any kind of “problem”, question or challenge – that is, not merely
“historiological” – gains its actual weight from the fact that these are in fact problems, questions and challenges of the being and pursuit of this being of a finite being, finite in the sense of mortality. In short, all the problems, issues, tasks or constraints of the present ultimately gain their weight, importance, inevitability, comfort and simply their meaning from finitude, and by this they organically relate to time, the questionability of time. That is, also in short, to the question and questionability of “When?” From which derives also – questioning it – the question of “What is time?”. Of course, further asked and unfolded in the direction of “What is history?” and “Where does it come from?”.

However, as the man relates – “in space and time” – to time, how he grasps it and interprets it, and how it shapes and creates in this respect the order of “historicality” that François Hartog also speaks about, ontologically presupposes that we understand or sketch in some way – if not otherwise, then “problematically” – where time comes from. That is, we somehow understand, validate, and ask the – essentially and originally categorial – question of When? For every single “order” of historicality – which Hartog identifies and analyzes – is nothing else in fact than a specifically articulated, factual – explicit or inexplicit – questioning of “When?”.

This specific and factically articulated understanding in the historical articulation of temporality is always about what and how time is, can be, or “must be”. Which is of course completely impossible without the explicit or inexplicit questionability and “problematic nature” – at least as a “presuppositional” or “interrogative” background – of “When?” However, examining the question and origin of this “When?”, I have previously arrived to the conclusion that, regarding its ultimate source, it derives precisely from death, from a necessarily future and inevitable perspective of death, namely from and anticipatory human finitude shaping in the sense of mortality, and relating to death, as a Will-be-being. Or more precisely: this is where the future always comes from! This also means of course – and again decisively – that the always present, always timely questionability of historical interest derives from, and comes from the same place! From a time and temporality which comes from a future articulated, constituted and burdened by death. Which truly and actually connects “together” the past and the present now already as history in a being-like way, deriving from future, or rather from a specific horizon or perspective of the future from which it always gains its actual weight. As such a history which, and the process (and “consciousness”) of which are permanently, and from various “directions” – with Schopenhauer’s words – “interrupted” and “cut into pieces” by death.

\(^1\) See Ibid.
May it be outlined either as *historia vitae magistra*, or by historiology itself as an apparently more elaborated “historical consciousness” of modernity, the origin, essence, stake and meaning of historical orientation or interest is always precisely this. Just like history itself, historiology also, and any kind of actual, living and motivated historical interest – including of course the philosophy of history – is both initially and ultimately grounded and articulated by death, by human mortality. From the beginning to the end. It is a different, yet not less important question whether historical interest is aware of this, or applies it indeed. Especially when it conducts its most specialized and “interdisciplinary” researches, separately for countries, regions, settlements, centuries, decades or years, months, days, major or minor events or even hermeneutical problems... Whereas the most important – if not only – question in history will apparently be: “To explain what is?”. For, paraphrasing William H. Dray, the duty of a historian is to unveil what was it what really happened. And when dealing with this question, he provides an explanation of the events of a “this and this happened” type.¹

In the meantime however it does not even emerge what it actually means that something HAD-BEEN, as neither does whether these HAD-BEEN-nesses presented as “those which actually are” or more precisely “those which actually Had-been” become “actually” PAST just like that, on their own? Namely, why would we people now alive have to know anything about what “actually happened” in the history of the once existing HAD-BEEN-nesses? What is the actual meaning – and not merely the “damages and benefits” – of historical knowledge? Beyond some commonplaces always remaining unconsidered. The most important problem however is still that during such researches it usually never becomes admissible or acceptable that historical questions – including all kind of questions of historiology and historiological “scholarliness” – are of such nature in fact that the inquirer himself is always and necessarily encompassed in their horizon as well. This is only how the former people of history and their former – that is, no-longer-being² – things can

² It is the explicitly ontological conception of precisely this “no-longer-being” which is usually absent. In other words, the conception of “what kind of being” is the “no-longer-being” in fact? Because somehow the being of the Past is this or like this! However, we rather see instead something like: “There is (or rather was – *sic!*?) the reality, the past in itself (*sic!*), which basically has two essential characteristics. First, by no (longer) being, that is, by the fact that the historian (in contrast with a natural scientist) examines a field that he only has assumptions about. Second, these assumptions are of course not completely unfounded, since there are traces left which bear witness to past events.” So this no-longer-being of the past is therefore more of a mere attribute, and not a *sui generis* question, but this is precisely what situates and challenges historiological researches in their own problematic nature. See Tamás Kisantal, *Történettudomány és
become their own PAST for the always living “carriers” of historical interest, and free historical “knowledge” of meaningful and future-projected weight and significant for the directions of future possibilities for an all-time present. That is to say, not merely as a science of “things not necessarily worth knowing”, or as curiosities and events continuously becoming “former”, as Goethe had thoroughly warned us in his time. But a science of things which, as their HAD-BEEN-ness is turned into our PAST and accepted as such – that is, its actual make-pass – is a hermeneutical, factual, ontological and historical task, highly actual and awaiting and pertaining to us, which can only be possible to weigh by the view and acceptance of the inherence of the relations between historicality and death, always sending back and forth to the future.¹ That is, the way from death through temporality and historicality leads – back and forth – precisely to freedom, and from freedom through historicality and temporality to finitude. The historical way of the historical man and being, meant to ask the question of meaning. For what else would make a being have a history at all if not precisely that by which and from which it is explicitly historical in its being? And only by this can being itself, as well as those beings which only have a story – but not a history – become historical. That is, not merely in a substantive or substantial sense, but in an ontologically, existentially and historically constituted sense.

Therefore, far from speaking about the “present perspective” as a sort of inevitable and “implicit” circumstance which by its inevitable inseparability uncomfortably “relativizes” and “subjectivizes” all kind of historical research, one should rather see that historical research – in a most organic combination with its extensions to the past – should precisely appropriate this perspective of the present, right at its question-points, in a most radical way, that is, with a factic view to both its origins and its present problematic nature, therefore leading to – and actually

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coming and deriving from – the future.¹ For, in the absence of this, it may be feared that the diligence of historical research is rather a kind of delay, of directly a “scientific” escape into the “past”. A past, of course, which is always ensured to belong to “anyone and no one”. So that, on the one hand, this past does not “oblige” anyone to anything, while on the other hand we are and will be almost completely and defencelessly exposed to it.² Obviously, this is no different for the historical and historiographic research of the theme of death. Since this mostly happens precisely without the actual, explicit and thematic acceptance of the overwhelming presence of death, and the also actual – being-in-action – confrontation with it. While of course the very “theme” of death, “directly” and certainly, sends to the future of the living – meaning also those who study it historically –, also coming directly from it. Always and inevitably.

This is naturally essentially connected with what Heidegger discusses in Being and Time as “the existential origin of historiology”, the analysis of which actually pertains to the investigation and explicitation of the existential and ontological historicality and history itself. However, it should be known in advance about such analyses that, with a view to their meanings, their purpose is such an insight and approach which consists not merely in the production and distribution of some kind of “objective” knowledge, but much rather in the thematic outline and articulation of

¹ Historical “narratives” and their differences so much troubling the epistemologists probably do not firstly and merely derive from the fact that – in the words of L.O. Mink – the “chosen” beginning, middle and end of the targeted “changes”, events, actions, etc. is somehow never the “same” beginning and the “same” end, but from the fact that every question which raises, mostly inexplicitly, in its present problematicness, always has a specific source, and a specific net and map of problems. Which, even if not surfaced or thematized, fundamentally influence still the “narratives” connected to them. See Luis O. Mink, “Narrative Form as a Cognitive Instrument,” in The Writing of History: Literary Form and Historical Understanding, ed. Robert H. Canary and Henry Kozicki (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1978), 129–140.

² This must be emphasized in spite of the fact that historical retrospection does not suffer in fact merely from a lack of knowledge or information, but it also always has a particular surplus. For – as we have already mentioned – looking back “retrospectively” it may see things that the actual actors or participants of the investigated ages and events could not have seen at all. Namely, the results of their actions, or at least a major part of these. This does not eliminate however, but makes more serious the initial aspect that historical interest can only be meaningfully motivated by the present and current problematic nature of things and affairs. Since it is in fact by, and because of, this that the “present” turns towards the research of the past. Trying to understand how far and in what way are the problems of the living, that is, weighty present determined by – what kind of – past, or trying to create possibilities or at least measure for itself from the experiments and achievements as well as failures of the past for the current management of the weight of these problems. Now, this is what the “disciplinarization” of the historical interest seems to cover up. When the research of the past is not merely an end in itself, but only an automatism. This is of course also valid for the “history of philosophy” as well. The “historical researches of philosophy” regarding an age, period or thinker are mostly hardly related to those very “present” – timely – motivations which originally and organically create this concern implicitly in their own “problematic” nature, but they are the “scientific” operations of a sort of simple automatisms of the “history of philosophy”. Which “meanwhile” – and instead of repetition, which would mean nothing else than what stated above – continuously gain newer and newer inorganic and external “actualities”.

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the always “problematic” possibilities of being. For, irrespective of when, where, or by whom it is cultivated, historical interest and historical research, as well as historiology, primarily and essentially, is one of the factic, determined possibilities and modes of being of the Dasein, of man. In which he always opens up – or closes – windows to the inevitable seizure and carrying out of his ever newer possibilities of being. If only in the sense of that elementary yet fundamental respect that “The idea of historiology as a science implies that the disclosure of historical entities is what it has seized upon as its own task.”¹ That is, the seizure and acceptance – and all its consequences – as one’s own task of the revelation of the being of a being to which this revelation and the “reveler” himself directly or indirectly pertains, and the being of which the revelation itself (historically) shapes, not merely as an “object”, cognitively or “phenomenologically”, but with regard to its possibilities. What else would such a revelation – or rather such a science! – gains its real weight and “import” from? All the more so because “Such historicality does not necessarily require historiology. It is not the case that unhistoriological eras as such are unhistorical also.”²

**Being and Time – death and history**

In order to avoid misunderstandings, it must be settled right at the beginning of this subchapter that Martin Heidegger did not have in fact any kind of “philosophy of history”. His inquiries, thoughts and researches actually and essentially related to history and the question of history are so radical, organic, and central components of his philosophy that any kind of “disciplinary” or merely conceptual and technical understanding of these can only be counted as incomprehension and mistake. All the more so since Being and Time calls us mortals not “humans” but Dasein! And mainly because the “man” increasingly became not more than a “concept” or “term”, which moreover gradually dried to a terminus technicus. One by which we humans do not call, only discuss ourselves. That is, objectify ourselves. While a man objectifying himself by discussing himself… can only exist in mere “objectivations”, which are also objectified “objects” or “things”. This way, also “terminologically”, the Dasein does not simply leaves behind or simply pushes away or exceeds “the man” but – certainly critically – rather goes behind “him”. More precisely, man goes behind himself, and by this he opens up and surfaces himself for himself. His

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¹ See Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 445. (Emphasis added)
² Ibid, 448.
existence bound and held onto being, being-towards, coming and calling to being. This is how man becomes *Dasein*, that is, a being which had always been – as “man” also – and which calls, understands and validates himself as “here”, “being-here”, being-present. Which therefore he must **comply with** – and also with himself – in and by his being in the actual conducting of his life, and amidst permanent and continuous **challenges**. With the also actual, factic, and mode-of-being-like response that I am **here** and I am **present**, we are here and we are present!¹ This is evidently possible only and if this being stands somehow, always and actually, in his own possibilities, or if he grasps and outlines all other beings – including his own objectivations – again always and primarily with respect to their own possibilities. *Dasein* exists and stands thus in an understanding, that is, mode-of-being-like **relation** with possibility. However, “whenever Dasein tacitly understands and interprets something like Being, it does so with **time** as its standpoint. Time must be brought to light – and genuinely conceived – as the horizon for all understanding of Being and for any way of interpreting it. In order for us to discern this, time needs to be **explicated primordially** as the horizon for the understanding of Being, and in terms of temporality as the Being of Dasein, which understands Being.”²

Temporality however means at the same time **historicality**. If and when it **is**, the *Dasein* is in an originally historical way. That is, it does not receive or take onto itself the attribute of “historicality” externally or somehow subsequently, as a result of some kind of prehistoric or extra-historic development or evolution, but: when and where there **is**, there exist a *Dasein*-like being, then and there it is already “also” historical at the same time. However, the existing *Dasein* is always and primarily “in-between” birth and death, as a living and as such, relational **extension**. Extension is of course mobility, but the mobility of existence is not the movement of a thing at-hand, but **occurrence**. Therefore the occurrence is not a mere “happening” of something, but an extension with its own consistency, which – as constancy, independence of Itself – also extends. That is: it **occurs**. “On the other hand, it is by no means the case that *Dasein* ’is’ actual in a point of time, and that, apart from this, it is ’surrounded’ by the non-actuality of its birth and death. Understood existentially,

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¹ *Dasein* “... is ontically distinguished by the fact that, in its very Being, that Being is an issue for it. But in that case, this is a constitutive state of *Dasein’s* Being, and this implies that *Dasein*, in its Being, has a relationship towards that Being – a relationship which itself is one of Being. And this means further that there is some way in which *Dasein* understands Itself in its Being, and that to some degree it does so explicitly. It is peculiar to this entity that with and through its Being, this Being is disclosed to it. Understanding of Being is itself a definite characteristic of *Dasein’s* Being. *Dasein* is ontically distinctive in that it is ontological.” Ibid., 32.
² Ibid., 39.
birth is not and never is something past in the sense of something no longer present-at-hand; and death is just as far from having the kind of Being of something still outstanding, not yet present-at-hand but coming along.”¹ But in a temporal way. The mobility of the occurrence lies in fact in the extension on the one hand and in temporality on the other hand, as the existential aspect of the interrelation between birth and death – actually as care. For the Dasein is indeed a kind of being whose play of being permanently “aims precisely at this being”. Such a being, that is, which is initially in a world so that it always is, exists anticipating itself, that is, being open to possibility. This also means that it discerns and projects as being the beings and itself – including its coexistence with others – from questionable possibilities or possibilities made and outlined as questionable. That is, it is in care.

In short, occurrence is none other than carrying out Dasein’s life-long and anticipatory-extensive factic pertinence to care. Occurrence is therefore in an original relationship with temporality and this relationship does not mean in the first place that it, say, happens “inside time” but that occurrence is the being and mobility of a being extending in anticipation of itself – and thus always returning to itself. Dasein and its character of being and ontological particularity lies in the fact that this being actually occurs. The being of the occurring being is not merely – or rather not “simply”, in the sense of in-between “life and death” – finite, but in such a way that it always relates to its own finitude in its own extension in occurrence, in a particularly being-like way. This is the meaning of the statement that Dasein is finite precisely by its being mortal. It is such that it occurs mortally, in the sense of mortality, and the other way around, it exists finitely precisely in this fundamental sense.

The process and “matter” of history is also not formed so that the initially isolated human or human-like individuals or specimens at the crossing point of a number of factors suddenly, then increasingly get somehow into the already autonomous turmoil of some of the more comprehensive and general connections mostly called “community”, “society”, “culture”, “interpersonality”, etc., which will then inevitably have their “stories”; instead, it is formed when and how the being of certain beings becomes occurrence – that is: Dasein – and together with it, historical. Recte: when certain beings become mortal. Or rather: when they become such that they can essentially and directly become mortal. That is, by and with their being they open up the possibility pertaining to them to relate and turn towards their death as a particular possibility. And by this and with this the world is also constituted.

¹ Ibid., 426.
Because: “the world has an historical kind of Being because it makes up an ontological attribute of *Dasein*.”\(^1\) It is therefore precisely fate, inseparable from death and mortality, which is the privileged *occurrence* which outlines and defines existence amidst time and temporality, the *Dasein* as *historical*, or as a *free being open towards death*. Such that is actually and essentially *in-the-future* in its extension, and which connects as such, also actually and essentially, in its own *presence* to the *past*, to its own, *appropriated past*! And only thus, only in this horizon does the occurrence of history become the occurrence of the *Dasein*, of being-in-the-world, the historicality of the world and world history as well. One in which fate turns freely and as a possibility to all the extensions – future, present, past – of the occurrence of history and its temporality. This is why actual historicality means for Heidegger fate and *repetition* as well.

The Heideggerian concept and articulation of *repetition* is again particular. It does not mean at all the reiteration of the same thing and the same way “now” or “today”, again, imperatively, as a copy or imitation, but exactly that “explicit bequeathal” in which the *having-been-present Dasein* and its possibilities of being are precisely “problematized”. Or rather: become questionable, as always actual responses to the questionable *possibilities* of a having-been-present *Dasein*. It is in fact the possibility which “returns” – or rather is reborn – in repetition, and not something which has once been or happened. Repetition does not answer of course the former possibilities of those already dead, by taking these upon itself in the present in some fantastic way over the distances of time, but in repetition the *Dasein*, amidst the questionable articulation and acceptance of its own being-here possibilities, acquires the inevitably appropriate – that is, open towards death – degree of challenges in his own being, as well as the heritage that can be found and earned through bequeathing. In a different approach however repetition can mean of course also the responsible present critical rejection of a past possibility. It is only the Da-sein, the questionability of the present and the explicit being-present of questions and questionability – or more precisely, their momentary rather than timely surfacing and undertaking – which may give birth to and organically articulate historical concern itself. However we have no other kind of possibility or horizon to access this questionability or its existential-ontological momentariness and references sending to the past than that which always derives precisely from death. And this highlights the connections of fate and repetition. For repetition proves, ever more clearly, to be something which always articulates and constitutes fate by its momentariness in the

\(^1\)Ibid., 432–433.
openness – and we should add: creativity – of freedom. In contrast with the mere display of the “past” or the mere projection of the present onto the past… and of course also with a future outlined as mere coming. It is now clear that for Heidegger the Dasein’s attachment and relating to death is both ontologically and existentially – that is, historically – indeed constitutive. That is, it does by far not mean, or even less exhausts in a “well-tailored” thematization of death as such. Namely, as people have publicly thought or behaved about death and its matters in time. The constitutive relation to death understood as mortality characterizes the being of Dasein in its (always possible) entirety, and what is more – precisely with respect to the direct possibilities of this “entirety” – it pervades and articulates this being. Therefore it defines it! Together with historicality and history, and of course freedom, also constitutively – that is, even athematically – connected to it.

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There is no contradiction or nonsense about a statement that says: all the previous history of mankind – defined by death and dying in the sense articulated above – is mostly still the history of the escape from, and “denial” of death. “The” history which is now studied by the historiological research of death as a self-imposed subject is in fact the history of the explicit denial of, and escape from death which, in spite of it, is originated by and structured, articulated and constituted by the fundamental ontological and factic nature of human death and mortality, mostly athematically, yet still constitutively for historicality itself. However, this can also be revealed, or can only gain a – necessarily critical and “dismantling” – insight if the historical and ontological question of death is repeatedly and radically questioned not – or not only – as a traditional, yet “actual” and novel “historiological” problem, but as a present and current – and as such radically historical – (philosophical) question, with the determination and weight appropriate to its actual oppressiveness, pertaining to us in actu. In a repeated questioning which may – in Nietzsche’s words – open up and support a new history: as a history of being and of “man”, of Dasein that has become mortal indeed and has accepted, faced and validated its mortality in a being-like way.

However, any discourse about “any” kind of “end” of history is unfounded which does not essentially reckon with, or outline this end as the coming to an end of man as an earthly being or race. A “perspective” which, in its own way, undoubtedly exacerbates the “historically” “unpleasant” and “uncomfortable” matters and things of becoming a mortal. In exacerbates and hinders at the same time. But it does not make it more difficult, since this “exacerbation” and “hindrance” mostly
precisely functions as a **facilitation** amidst the escape and turning away from death and mortality. Francis Fukuyama does also not speak of the “end of history” as the discontinuation of events considered to be historical, or the “natural cycle” of “birth, life and death”, but – similarly to Hegel and Marx, but rather only with reference to them – only about the fact that in liberal democracies mankind in its ideological evolution has reached that “ideal” condition which cannot be perfected any longer. This is also – although seemingly with regard to its “end” – only about what is history like and how it “is”? Or, whether or not it has any kind of direction, an internal, *sui generis* tendency, or an “end” – although not sending forth to any termination? And not about where the history comes from, is constituted and happens in fact, which is always problematic as to how it is in its dynamics, and how it must be studied, or what is the possible meaning and yield, or damage and risk of such a study…¹

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The main problem here is precisely that, to call a highly “problematic” ideal state of mankind’s ideological development the “end of history”, means nothing else in fact than to forget and veil – and thus “facilitate” – the highly explicit and constitutive perspective of the actual finitude, end and termination of history. Irrespective of whether or not mankind (and the western man) has reached indeed in liberal democracies the ideal ideological form impossible to be further perfected! This veils precisely the perspective that could and should be undertaken explicitly and thematically in connection with the insight into the essence of history. That is, what is history and where does it come from? Of course, not by “analyzing” it merely “in itself”, or in its differentiation from other regions of being (e.g., from nature, or the “world of ideas” or “the otherworld”), but on the contrary, as a particular, therefore finite-temporal-mortal pertinence to being, and as its particularly constitutive pertinence to us. As an all-time and actual happening of a being open to possibility as possibility and being in a questionable and inquiring relation of meaning and being with the beings, with regard to itself and its weight outlined amidst the pertinence to this being, holding and being held. Which of course also defines or refines the question regarding the “meaning” of history! Or connects it to the question of meaning, the relations between meaning and question, meaning and questioning. With regard to the fact that history is because and ever since there is a being – coming to being, to existence – “one” finite, explicitly mortally finite, which therefore relates to its finitude in a being-like and mode-of-being-like way, bringing-to-life its questions of meaning. In other words, by this, history is because and in such a way that it has (will have) an “end”. There is history therefore because there is a being, having come to life, whose being in its freedom is indeed (a) Will-being! That is, one that is held in its being by the fact that it always Will-be and how it Will-be. It will be in such a way that, and because, it is mortal. That is, because while being alive, it will always die – differently, under different circumstances or at different ages – and also because thus it has come to a being held and constrained to itself which if finite – ever since its creation – both as a species and as a race. That is to say, finite not only in the sense of being destroyed or extinct, but in a mortal way. Or, the other way around, because, while being mortal, it must also be prone to destruction and extinction.

1 On Will-being and its original and essential relations with death, both constituting and articulating temporality, historicality and meaning, see Király V., The Future, Or Questioningly Dwells the Mortal Man.
The Human life on Earth

Earthly life and the future horizon of the destruction of its conditions and possibilities – outlined by the cosmic perspectives of the Sun and the solar system – concerns not only humans but, sooner or later, all other living beings and life forms on Earth. This case brings about radical and serious consequences with regard to the existence and perspectives of man and history alike. The weight and oppressiveness of these perspectives is usually eased through various and, at least seemingly, much varied ways, avoiding thus the need to consider and think them through. One way is of course the End of the World and the ascension to Heaven connected to the apocalyptic last judgment. The other is apparently more “philosophical” and is particularly connected – even if mostly not admittedly – to the interpretation of Heidegger’s thoughts on *Dasein*. This – as repeatedly claimed – does not say anything more or different only about “man”, but also means a calling or invitation which can be applied in fact to any “intelligent” being of the Universe. That is to say, the “extraterrestrial intelligent beings” can also only be *Daseins* in their own way, that is, *being-heres* (or rather *beings-theres*), and we, earthly *Daseins* can only get in any kind of meaningful – even if “combative” – relationship with them because of this. All these can even be meaningful considerations, but they can only gain their actual weight with the condition that we make sure that the stake of these considerations is by no means the “easing” of this *Da*, this “here”. Or, perhaps, a new dissolution or fluttering of *Sein*, of Being and Existence. So that we might disregard again that fundamental aspect that “man”, or simply the being which now calls itself *Dasein* as its own accessibility and openness is only what it is as an **Earthly** being! So that it is what it can be at all – as a non-Earthly being – only as an Earthly being. The situation is probably similar with “intelligent” extraterrestrial beings of a being-here-like, therefore *Dasein*-like, nature. These can also be being-here(there)-like beings only as they are present for themselves in their possibilities of being in relation to other surrounding beings, in a being-like and mode-of-being-like way. So in this essential aspect they are not only Other, but entirely Different being-here(there)s or *Daseins*! To these, a third facilitation connected to the “end of history” adds up, which yields the possibility that, with the development of science and technology, earthly *Dasein* will sooner or later create the conditions for itself to simply move away, before the end of the Solar system or of anything else, from the planet which gave birth to it and carried it all along, but which is now squeezed of
everything either by this being or by cosmic forces, and made it impossible for living, for life… Now, without dwelling much on how fantastic or “real” this possibility is— including the “social”, “ethical”, as well as “historical” complications inherent in such a planetary mobility—it should also be asked whether this Dasein, as a non-earthly being, would be the same kind of being there as well? Or—in perspective—we ourselves. As also whether is this perspective as such not a kind of relevant, meaningful but at the same time very ordinary ontological escape from ourselves, from being? Or whether is it not an also ordinary escape from history—or rather: from the ontology of historicality itself—that is, from death? Apart from the fact that the Dasein moving away from Earth should also leave behind its own earthly history, its life-like being—and also “death-like” being, namely its graveyards and tombs—or at least pack it up for itself compressed into mere “information”, the “human” race, in the course of the (e)migration of its worthy “representatives”, must inevitably proliferate to form not only a new generation, but outright a completely different Dasein. However DIFFERENT may this Dasein deriving from humans be or become, it will fail to become either immortal or endlessly “historical”. On the contrary, just because it is mortal, and as such, historical or historically finite, can the being came into being and present as Dasein keep opening responsibly the incidental possibilities of its extra-terrestrial existence. But not for immortality, and neither for an endless and eternal history or historicality.

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History therefore cannot have any kind of “meaning” outside or beyond itself which will shine somewhere “after” or “behind” its end. And which, of course, would always prove meaningless and—as seen at Löwith—completely inaccessible.

It is a different question however how all this is connected to the “natural cycle of birth, life and death”.¹ Is this “cycle” “natural” in the sense that it is, let’s say, biological (belonging to nature), in opposition to “social”, “cultural” or “intellectual”? or in the sense it forms the otherwise non-social “foundations”, “sources”, “conditions” or “parameters” of social formations or simply “societization”? As something which, for and from the point of view of history and historicality, is precisely not historical, or as we have said, actually without history? Something which only has a story, but not a history?

¹ See Francis Fukuyama, The End of History.
The cycle of birth, life and death seems “natural” first of all because it pertains to being, to the living being as nature, living nature. As something which is different but at the same time is somehow inevitably “common”, overlapping and in this sense somehow still identical with man, “society”, “culture” or “history”. But, just like human life, human death, although it is according to physis, in the above sense is not at all “something natural”, not a “natural event”. More precisely: not a historical “course”. But one which does not only alternate in its cycles connected to birth and life, but also changes. And not merely “under the impact” of the forces of nature – let’s say, biological evolution in the narrow sense. But people are born, live and die differently in the “cycles” of birth, life and death, which should actually be called history! This can only happen this way because they always stand in a relation of being, open to possibilities and meanings, with their birth, life and death, dying, which factically precisely means, and is “connected” to, their being, their existence. Therefore, regardless of how many supposedly “natural” and “hard” “elements” the cycle of human birth, human life and death essentially contains in its overlapping “composition” – that is, by the opening and closing, being-like or relation-of-being-like nature of the physis, the pertinence to being, forming a particular, new dimension of being – it is “natural” precisely in a Dasein-like way, and not in a “physical sense”. Thus can it be precisely historical, or thus can, and does, it constitute historicality, that is, history itself! So, we can say that the history which the historiological research of death has appointed as its own subject of research is essentially the history of the denial of, and escape from, death, which is – although athematically, but constitutively for history – nevertheless originated from, and structured, articulated and “constituted” by, the fundamental ontology and facticity of human death and mortality. However, this also means then that it is, above all and mostly, the history of the disclosure, “understanding” and recording of death from the point of view of the fear from it, or a history articulated by precisely this.

Perhaps it could also be understood – like for Hegel – as the wilful defeat or transcendence of this fear. Since the militant and wilful defeat of the fear of death risked in favour of recognition, control and domination of the other, about which Hegel speaks as preconditions of “historical” success and victory, illustrates and justifies both a basic aspect of the history-constituting role of death, and also the fact that death in this history was and is primarily, if not exclusively, revealed from the point of view of an explicit and “thematic” fear from it – and not from that of understanding and recording it from its problematic foundations. And it proves to be even truer as the ideological, political, institutional, philosophical, anthropological
or psychological efforts which should be of assistance in gaining more insight into it become more outlined or intrusive.

We have seen in connection with Hobbes as well that the kind of thinking which understands and explains fear, and particularly the fear of death merely as a kind of paralyzing “feeling”, in its mere “negativity”, is a dead end. On the contrary, fear, and particularly the fear of death continuously articulates the world of man with regard to its historical unfolding, always inevitably and not merely as a psychological “overtone” to be tempered. This means that no kind of human caution or circumspection is possible without fear. When man builds a house which will possibly not collapse to crush him to death, although by this he does not explicitly “thematize” and “defeat” his fear of death, this fear is in it nevertheless, and by ways of caution, calculation, provision, or circumspection always operates in the accomplishment of this task. The same happens when we say about something that it is completely harmless. Since this also needs the outlining of danger, harmfulness, while dangerous can only be something which, ultimately, is in some kind of relation with the threat of death of life as such. Something which we are afraid of, must be afraid of, and it is “advisable” to be afraid of. Man is not only “afraid” of (his) death, but he also related to it, and with it, to his fear of death. But it is short-sightedness not to understand that any kind of human attitude towards the fear of death, as well as its heroic defeat, is itself motivated, articulated and pervaded by this constitutive, therefore not solely “negative” fear. For it if was not so, then it should not, and indeed, cannot be either “defeated” or dominated. Let alone “managing” it, as many psychologists would want. Not to mention that fact that the endangering of life – that is, exposing it to a threat or risk of death – of which Hegel speaks in a general tone in *The Phenomenology of the Spirit* as one of the historical conditions of the earning and primary unfolding of freedom and as a process, an occurrence of freedom, can only have such a role or function if, and with the condition that this life – including the freedom possible in it and through it – exists and outlines from the beginning in a being-like and relation-like connection with (its) death. And articulates as well. Otherwise human life could not be risked at all in any way, not even in the direction and for the purpose of freedom.

But what does it actually mean to “risk life”? For it can be – and must be – lost even without its explicit, definite risking! Is it not rather the case that human life can – and often must – be risked just because it is originally mortal? That is, exposed – although with some caution – to a definite and at least broadly outlined and projected threat of death. So that in this “exposition” the **target** is not death, one’s (own) dying,
but precisely the “recognition”! That is, supremacy, domination, victory. The actual possibilities of the stake(s) and decisions of the “struggle for recognition” are in fact: death; or victory and domination; or defeat, subordination, servitude. All three however essentially concern human life and its possibilities as such. That is, its human possibilities. Such of which it turns out, consequently, repeatedly and in this respect as well, that at the bottom of its essence it is outlines and decided amidst its constitutive relation, attitude, threat and risk – and also denial and concealment – towards (its own) death. Thus: it occurs. With that further critical clarification that the “superior”, “intellectual” and “ethical” ability of man to overcome his “instincts” and especially his basic instincts of life preservation in themselves do not originate or explain any kind of “history” since man could use this ability even in suicide, for example… and does use it quite often in fact. So, in this case as well, (human) life and (human) death and dying can only have an always coming-(in)to-being, therefore existential and ontological relation, much deeper than its “intellectual” and “moral” meaning aspiring for elation. One that radically originates and articulates morals and “morality” itself in its very historicality! For really, actually “immortal beings” could not possibly have any kind of morality, as it would be, precisely ethically and morally, completely weightless and therefore meaningless for them. The weight and stake of morality and the origin of these can only be a historical life intertwined by (one’s own) death and the perspective and threat of (one’s own) death, mortally returned to oneself, and connected with the rest of – living, dead, or not yet born – mortals. And this is precisely what the great 19th-century spiritual philosophies of history as well as the historiologia of that age disregard. Precisely during a time when the specificity and relevance of “human things” for the philosophy of history is identified to be in their “moral” and intellectual “nature”. The case is similar with the great German philosophies of history as well, which are generally against Hegel (especially in what regards Hegel’s concept about the pure rationality and clarity of history), but are nevertheless completely consonant with him in the emphasis on history’s determination by intellectual and ethical aspects.

In what regards the analyses conducted in this paper, they are rather focussed on the ontological “determination” of history. The kind of “determination” which always grounds the appearances and partial truths of the in turn intellectual-ethical-ideological, or economic, material and natural (biological, geographical, etc.) “determinations” of history. To such an extent that it may indeed form and solidify the quite strange “situation” and idea that although history has long before “come to an end”, it continues nevertheless in the “events”. Moreover, it continues most
joyfully and truly exactly after it has “come to an end”… The situation when the “end” of history, or rather the constitutive finiteness of history – and of course the essential historically constitutive aspect of finitude – has no real weight any more. It is not at all only the “modern” (western) society which denies death or turns away and escapes from death or the raw fear of death. On the contrary, every age had and continues to have its particular kind of fear of death. This also proves only that, despite all its appearances of being an eternal problem, death and the question is death is to the highest degree and in a very particular way historical. Firstly, in such a way that there is probably no kind of “ideal” age in history in which man would have been in an ideal or carefree relationship with “death”, in which death was not any kind of oppressive and “unsolvable” “problem” for him. And secondly, in such a way that in a fundamental sense history and “historicality” itself derives from death and “mortality”.

It is an important question however – therefore it must be asked – whether historiology, that is, the ever sprawling historiographical research of death, reckons with it, or how it reckons with it. For, as it has been repeatedly claimed, these researches never re-question but rather only take into account and interpret the former “meanings” and understandings of death in various ages, so that, meanwhile, they also try to surface the various social or other “functions” of these. Additionally, the historical knowledge of death also reacts to the modifications which have occurred in these functions and interpretations in the course of times. As mentioned before, it is not incidental that historians speak about the “system of death”, since by this they highlight the complexity and variety of roles that the structure of death has undertaken in various ages. By this, it becomes increasingly clear that the “historical perspective” as such is simply inevitable for the understanding of the actual significance of the subject of death for human existence. Nevertheless, the actual situation is rather that these researches, as a critique of a “present” only sketchily outlined, tend to confront this present with the “more ideal” conditions of a better analyzed, yet already lost, former age. In which, perhaps, humans were in a “domesticated” or “tamed”, (as if) almost friendly or carefree relationship with death and dying. In such cases it is usually the Middle Ages, or at least some pre-modern age which seems to appear particularly glorious. Admirable or directly enviable about these ages would be precisely the fact that then “…dying meant transformation, and death a stage of passage to another life”.¹ The legitimacy of such an interpretation

¹ See Georg Weber, “Reprimarea morții – o caracteristică structurală a modernității? Aspecte din perspectiva teoriei sistemelor și a sociologiei cunoașterii” (Repression of death – a structural characteristic of modernity?
was largely, yet essentially, based on the institutionalization of mythical-religious systems, which at the same time offered the certainty and security of non-dying death.¹ So these ages should not (have had to) “repress” death – as it allegedly happens ever since modernity.

It must be repeatedly asked therefore: what does it actually mean that dying is “transformation”, and death is “the stage of a passage to another life”? And what does it mean for this to be presented and served as offering “the certainty of security”? But what else could this mean if not precisely that – at least until the “beginning of modernity” – death “meant” precisely non-death, and dying non-dying? Namely, that even in these long and allegedly enviably “carefree” ages (as well) death as well as, even more, dying was in fact “denied”. It is incomprehensible however why could we not regard the denial of death a particular and highly radical “repression” of death even if is was often publicly “displayed” while being denied? In other words: it was denied particularly in its being displayed, and it was “displayed” precisely in the denial of death. Well, in contrast the former and alleged “homogeneity” of the image of death was lost indeed in modernity. To such an extent that it cannot be secured even to this day…

Nevertheless, it would do no harm to investigate the possibilities of historiographical research on death with reference to a different – critical, therefore negative – perspective, and mainly to apply this perspective as well. What I have in mind is that it would primarily be historiology itself which could demonstrate or honourably acknowledge that during, and despite, the methodical research of the history of death – that is to say, of the history of the denial and repression of death – as well as the history of the variety of mentalities connected to it has not come across any single case, valid for its discipline, in which someone would have avoided or in a different respect survived his own dying! Whereas it would be just befitting for a science – especially if it almost infatuatedly deals with the criteria and methodologies of its scholarliness – to represent this as well, in addition to various images of death etc.

The actual situation with “modernity”, just like the “present” age, is much more complicated. We should therefore consider more seriously the conclusions of

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¹ See Weber, “Reprimarea morții...,” 120.

Aspects from the perspective of system theory and sociology of knowledge), in Discursuri despre moarte in Transilvania secolelor XVI-XX (Discourses on death in 16th-20th century Transylvania), ed. Mihaela Grancea and Ana Dumitran (Cluj-Napoca: Casa Cărții de Știință, 2006), 120.; Maria Crăciun, “‘Moartea cea bună’: intercesori și protecători în pragul marii treceri. Între discursul clerical și pietatea populară” (‘The good death’: intercessors and protectors at the great passage. Between clerical discourse and popular piety), in Discursuri despre moarte in Transilvania, 226–269.
researches which qualify the public discourse on the contemporary cover-up and
tabooing of death - instead of a serious inquiry – as more of a commonplace-like and
superficially or automatically repeated *slogan*, emphasizing that it is precisely the
modern (western) society which eventually started to seriously and responsibly deal
with the oppressive human things of death and dying. Indeed, nothing proves it better
than the emerging hospice system and its equally novel mentality, “philosophy”. Or
the recent emergence of the “discipline” of thanatology or, say, the legislation on, and
practice of euthanasia, or the explicit caregiving and palliative undertaking of
“accompanying into death”.\(^1\) Which of course also reveals that modernity, our own
age, approaches the inevitably actual question of death particularly by concentrating
on dying and the process and event of dying. That is, with a focus on the very aspect
which has mostly been neglected so far, since the escape from death and the denial of
death as dying was primarily and repeatedly fuelled by the escape from this aspect.

It is a different question altogether whether our age undertakes and applies this
specific and novel perspective, motivation and intention. However, it seems doubtless
that all this is part of that actual and current change and mutation of mentality which
triggered in the first place the historiological – and also anthropological,
psychological, or social – research and investigation of death. It is therefore part of
the **mutation** in the preparation of which philosophy has accepted a huge, if not
decisive role, despite all its basic contradictoriness and problematic nature. And in
the first place by the works of radical and allegedly “subversive” thinkers like
Kierkegaard, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, or Heidegger. This is not to say of course that
our age no longer tries to escape, deny or veil the question of death and dying itself.
And even less that the contemporary man had indeed succeeded to become mortal.
But the outlines of certain possibilities begin to show – and among these also the
possibilities of autonomous, free and forceful thinking – which would now indeed be
a sin to – again?! – give up or miss. On the contrary, these should be protected and
applied.

Furthermore, although death and dying is indeed increasingly medicalized in
contemporary society, it is not merely this modern society which “institutionalizes”
death. On the contrary again, death and dying were probably institutionalized from
the beginning, and various kinds of formal, informal or symbolic institutions or
powers of various complexity were employed around them.\(^2\) As a fight for the

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1 See Camilla Zimmermann, and Gary Rodin, “The denial of death thesis: sociological critique and
2 This statement is proved by archaeological, anthropological, ethnological, ethnographic, historical, and
religious historical researches as well. To such an extent that, as we have seen, Pierre Chaunu could even
dominance over death and dying, or more precisely for any kind of dominance over the event of dying – of course, essentially over life, outlined and usually “comforting” not amidst dying, but precisely amidst the denial of death. A fight which, meanwhile – that is, amidst the denial of death – becomes an essential and very efficient corner stone and purpose of the dominance over life or the articulation of life. So these days we should indeed think more fundamentally of the historical possibilities of man and human existence which not only dies, but is already truly mortal. That is to say, it has truly and explicitly become mortal already. Because it could well be that this would now truly and actually be part of a story, as Nietzsche suggested, more glorious than any other previous stories. Part of such a story in which it is always explicitly questionable, and it is always radically and originally asked whether we understand – or better understand – time and history? Whether we understand, or better and more seriously understand its pertinence to us, or the questionableness and particular question-nature of this pertinence? And with it also whether we understand it indeed that the real “problems” are primarily not caused by the insufficient, unclear or ambiguous knowledge due to the lack of historical “information” or “data” – that is, of historical “omniscience” –, but, on the contrary, precisely by the “certainties”. In other words, by the fact that every kind of really fundamental and essentially categorial certainty will sooner or later prove to actually, originally and precisely be: a question! Which must always be asked and re-asked. This way it might also be revealed that, while asking them – these questions deriving precisely from certainties – always lead the all-time inquirer to what he must call (so: we must call) death from one direction, and history and freedom from the other! So they lead to further questions which are co-originary and co-constitutive, they have common origins and they are questionable in a way always interconnected in origin

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1 This is particularly emphasized in the brilliant thematic dictionary edited by Jacques Le Goff and Jean-Claude Schmitt which discusses the main issues of the medieval West, among which also the medieval problem of death, with a special regard to the fact that death is always found in a hierarchical network of connections and relations, in structures of power and authority and symbolic systems. (Emphasis added) See Jacques Le Goff and Jean-Claude Schmitt, Dictionnaire raisonné de l’Occident Médiéval (Paris: Fayard, 1999), 771–789. To such an extent that the dead were also ranked: worship was only due to the dead bodies or remains of saints, so that the living, although praying for their dead, addressed their prayers to the saints.
and always sending back and forth to one another. And which, this way – inside and through us – always question and search for the inquirer’s and their own all-time truth. Since it is a truly and actually inevitable question What? is the “meaning” of human existence, human life, human history amidst death or in the “shadow” of death, or, perhaps even more seriously, amidst the finitude of human existence, the human “race”?

However, the meaning of human existence, human life and human history cannot be sought from the outside – since, as we have asked already, Who? and How? could search for it “from there” with a real insight and weight? – neither “outside” of it or “beyond” it. For how should we know that this “meaning” “outside” or beyond living being and history pertains indeed to this or that being and history? By the fact that the meaning and human existence and human history can only be sought (in) there, from where itself the question referring to meaning derives! The question is therefore actually What? is the meaning of human life and human history, or more precisely What? is the meaning and being-like weight of these questions as questions? Since, as long as we do not clarify it or understand it to a certain degree, all kind of inquiry about the meaning of being, life, or history would become completely weightless and as such, completely arbitrary in its answers as well. However, if by “meaning” we do not simply and hastily understand a kind of purposeful – perhaps ideal, yet transferably beyond-like – condition, nor some kind of mechanical, but somehow externally determined “function”, inaccessible and incontrollable as to its origin, and if we decide to investigate what it the ratio of meaning, or the question of meaning, where it comes from and what it is based on, then in order to thematize it, we shall need a shift in focus. For human existence, human life and human history do not “receive” their meanings or any kind of meaning merely externally and independently from themselves, but meaning can only be born, outlined and unfolded for man in the search or inquiry of that very meaning. And closed as well. So that, in the strictest sense of the word, man explicitly and in a being-like manner comes onto the meaning or meanings in his searches and inquiries!

Furthermore, if by inquiry we do not only mean a kind of superficial staring at anything, but – as seen above – precisely the “constitution” of meaning, then it results that meaning itself – and by this inquiry as well – can only derive and originate from where they gain their weight and their stakes. Namely, precisely from finitude, from
human death.\footnote{Which does not mean again, that the quite disagreeable and uncomfortable philosophy would be thinking or make one to think of death all day long! For, regardless of whether or not we accept or understand Spinoza’s geometric and axiomatic statement that the free man thinks less of nothing than death, and that the wisdom of the free man lies particularly in his meditation on life, and not death, we should understand that the issue in not of a quantitative nature. The question and the stake is not therefore whether man thinks “much” or “little” of death, but whether he really thinks meanwhile?! Man could think – and does think often! – of death all day long, or even for millennia, without seeing himself or his own freedom in it. Perhaps, he thinks “about it” precisely because, although he cannot avoid it, it stands in his freedom – while turning away and escaping from it – to not see either his death or his freedom in it. Including also the history constituted by the freedom of such a “wisdom”, and the ontological insight connected to it.} Under the circumstances that all search and inquiry is actually and originally precisely a kind of relation to human death, albeit mostly not a thematic or thematized kind.

For its thematization however there is a definite need for a shift of focus. Namely, we must now proceed with the thematization of freedom – in a particularly ontological way, and in an essential relation with the also ontological issues of death and history, therefore maintainable in their inquiring relationship.

**History – Freedom – Death**

The actual meaning of human freedom or its explicitly occurring “actuality” or validity is by far not despotism or imposing someone’s own will, nor an ultimately meaningless and weightless “universal power or ability” of any kind of omnipotence, but much rather a living “problem” being in action, or an explicit and carried out question and inquiry. Or rather the “problem” of the existence and unfolding of being-here, of Dasein, always constituting and articulating it. Ultimately, in fact, the question and inquiry of being itself, always open and unravelled for the sense of being and the being. With even more precision, the “essential problem” or questionability and question of the unfolding of this being itself, appearing again always like a new challenge, and in this particular way proving always constant and persistent. Therefore freedom can only derive and come from where the weight of being also derives and comes from. And to or “towards” where inquiry and through or within it also the questionable, problematic, weighty, risky freedom – structurally and in a being-like manner – necessarily directs. That is, from the future. However, the future itself, just like also time, derive and come precisely from finitude, from human death.

It has been revealed so far that history, human history and historicality also derive and “come” in fact from there. Freedom and history are therefore not only connected “conceptually” or refer to each other as formal or partial “overlapping” of conceptual contents or circles, but in ways much more fundamental and essential.
That is, ontologically! With respect to their origin, articulation, being, and also to what they consist of and how they exist. Previous analyses offered insight in fact into how history, death and freedom pertain to us precisely by constituting each other, and this is also how they pertain to, proceed to, and mutually find, each other as well. Moreover – I cannot stress it enough – as a mode of being and particularity of being. That is, precisely as the constitution of the lasting, ontological identity of man, we ourselves, the Dasein. Which must be outlined and validated over and over by explicit inquiry. Namely, it must be conducted and enforced. And in which history, death and freedom find and keep the man in being while constituting and “holding” him, and pertain to each other. It has also been found that death as a particularly human possibility also has a question-structure. A structure, that is, which (“also”) structures and constitutes at the same time the essence of freedom. In a being-like way. Or rather: in a mode-of-being-like-way. That is, in the facticity or actuality always referring to the possibilities of being of the all-time unfolding modes of being – all human modes of being. That is, as occurrence, as the occurrence of history.

Consequently, the structure of death is constituted by freedom, and the structure of freedom by death: as history! The revelation or research of this cannot be a “subject” of any kind of historiology or anthropology, but it is something that can only be hoped to be enlightened by the philosophy of history – precisely by a philosophy of history understood, accomplished, and taken to the end as ontology. In which we can offer a more articulate answer to the question referring to the “meaning” of human life and human existence. It has become clear and unambiguous that the meaning of man, the being called Dasein – as the actual possibility of being and the actual horizon of these possibilities of being – cannot be taken beyond question and questioning, therefore neither beyond the questioning being! Since without questioning there cannot exist or open up any kind of meaning or horizon of meaning outlined and articulated as an explicit and challenging possibility!

Questioning is exclusively the possibility, mode and ambition of being of a being whose relationship with the other beings, sending always back to itself is always also being-like. Which, while validating and conducting its own being in its own modes of being, must always experience the all-time weight of its being as well. Which is thus inquiringly and questioningly mortal, and as such, in the aspects and manners revealed here, historical and free in its being. So the meaning of human existence, with its temporal, spatial etc. diversity, lies in fact in the kind of freedom outlined here and the human finitude constituted by it, as well as in the human modes of being of this finitude; in other words, in the history constituted and conditioned by
death and mortality! Human existence is therefore not at all “meaningless” or “absurd” or “tragicomical”! It is “only” questionable and inquiring, always as an ambition, expectation or challenge of being! And as such, always “in expectance” of itself – always outdistancing itself. Philosophy exists in fact essentially for the revelation and opening up of this. For which reason the particular duty or task of philosophy cannot be any kind of comforting or consolation. But only clarification, or the achievement and securing of all-time clarity. With the addition that clarification means here not the “clarification” of concepts – as word-things – but always precisely the increase of questionability; that is, it can “only” mean the continuous, all-time, actual and possible re-asking of questions, corresponding to their own weight.

However, it is not excluded at all that this clarification, if made possible, carried out and achieved, may bring both “calmness” and “ease”. Such that has nothing to do with the arbitrary and unquestioned, promising and/or threatening “piety” – which turns away from consistent inquiry and often even prosecutes it – of either illusory consolations or comfortable illusions. But only with the meaning of philosophy and life. More precisely: the question of meaning! Which philosophy repeatedly asks and in which – just like man himself – it repeatedly stands, and can only stand, with being-like inquiry and questionability… For, only because he dwells mortally, therefore does man dwell, and must dwell questioningly and historically in his freedom – that is, in being, bringing to life history itself as a new dimension of being.

Translated by Emese Czintos
CHAPTER II.

“HAD-BEEN-NESS” AND PAST – History and memory.
An Essay in applied philosophical dialogue with M. Heidegger

Motto:

“History is denied not because it is ‘false’ but because, although impossible to be assimilated as present, it remains active in the present.”

Martin Heidegger

“It is to be expected that people remember their past and imagine their future. But in fact, when they write discourses about history they imagine it through the prism of their own experiences and when they try to ponder over the future they refer to presupposed analogies with the past, until, in a double process of repetition they imagine their past and remember their future.”

Lewis Nanier

It seems to be commonplace that the present of Central and Eastern Europe is dominated by the past. This is about a certain orientation of mentality and experience and the multitude of (stereotypical) self-searches in the form of “identities” but also the confusions about the future. However, the past does not dominate the present by continuing but – strange enough and peculiar – by not passing.

Of course, the instinct of turning towards the past, the supradimensional discussion, dissection and research of the past reveals the problematic nature of the

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3 In the actual centre of the town Cluj (renamed in the nationalist-communist regime as “Cluj-Napoca” after the Roman castrum situated here in the period of the Roman conquest) there is a huge hole. It was done for “archeological research” in order to find out more about that “past”… According to our knowledge the information gained as compared to that which we already knew is insignificant. More important and symptomatic is the fact that all this happened in the live “heart” of an ACTUAL cultural and economic centre – there were serious environmental damages – and all this was done “on account” and “in view of ” the PAST… Our study analyses this possibility and this situation.
present and the future. It is only in cases when the future and the present are problematic in their depths that the past apparently floods the present. However, we must raise the question: What exactly is there in the being of the past that allows it to dominate something like the present?

Philosophy knows the issue of the past as being a question of a dimension of time first of all. This vision dominates every philosophical treatment of the past. Therefore this is not so much about the preponderance of the past or its “nature” but its belonging to the issue of time, the “general”, overall conceptualisation of time. From many essential points of view this is of course justified. Nevertheless the question remains whether it provides us with sufficient ground in thematising and understanding the situation and problem that we face now.

Although Martin Heidegger and other research compelled by his thought raise the problem of time and temporality with a deep consistency, I think that his investigations cannot offer us the necessary means of understanding the issues connected to the past, the problems that we encounter not only in our recent history in the way in which it presents the issue of the secret but also in our century, including the World Wars and the history of Central and Eastern Europe after 1989.

The “history” of the “past” century was undoubtedly often invaded by the “past” and its “unsolved”, “unclear” and unconquerable issues. The “treatment” of these problems has always led to failure. Is it only the problematic nature of present(s) that exposes them to the domination of the past or is there something in the very being of the past that makes it “un-conquerable” for the present whenever it becomes again a central issue? Does our continuous failure and bankruptcy vis à vis the past not in fact mean that there is something essential that we do not know about it and therefore about the way we should relate to it?

Where does this enigmatic nature of the past come from, whenever we try to approach it? Does it not come from the fact that the past is always something no-longer-existing? No matter how hard we try to “link” the past to present and future in “time” or “history”, we cannot completely avoid that it is no-longer-existing and that this is the probable source of all the ontological, epistemological and “practical” (existential) problems connected to it. Nevertheless, the meditation about this no-longer-existence which becomes unavoidable in dealing with “past secrets” is missing from the meditation on the past! Where the question is missing as question, the answer cannot be easily given. The question is missing because it is not brought to the forefront of the horizon of “theories”.
Therefore we must let ourselves be overwhelmed by that “naïve” original wonder which feeds philosophy from its beginnings and ask: what does no-longer-existing being mean? What is no-longer-being?¹

But, what is-no-more, what is-no-longer, existed before! Had-been-ness is therefore that which “bears” no-longer-being. Therefore we must now examine the way in which the past is built in/from our relationship with HAD-BEEN-NESS. “No-longer-being”, “had-been-ness” and “past” are not synonyms but the “enigma of the

¹ Latin languages encounter a difficulty – which can nevertheless be transformed into a chance – which is still not easily surmountable. The term “dèja” (already, no longer) is in disuse on account of its French kinship and its use for purely speculative topics such as “dèjá vu”. It is difficult to preserve its originality which is still necessary for thinking about something like the “past”.
passability of past” (passéité du passé) (Paul Ricoeur), of the “being past” of the past\(^1\)
probably dwells in their relatedness.

The past is not given to us immediately and in an unmediated way. However, there are many things not given to us immediately which do not belong to the past. What is then the special nature of the “mediation” of the past? The usual answer to this question is that the “temporal distance” which separates it from the present specifies and determines the “mediation” of the past. “Temporal distance” becomes therefore something that must be “conquered” and “surmounted” in order to reach the “past” immediately and unmediated. This is the – probably unconscious – position dominating and directing the functions (memory) and con-structions (historical sciences) of our preoccupation with the past.

The past becomes thus something that gains its “specificity” through the direction of its temporal distance from the present. It does not have a special being as compared to the present; it is characterised and articulated by the difference in “length” of temporal distances separating it from the present in the direction of the “former”. This is the concept of past as “past present”, or, more precisely, as “present that had been”. That is, the past is nothing else than temporality in the former time. It is therefore time – temporality – that distinguishes the past from present and this is based on the presupposition that the past does not have a “being” different from the present but only a dimensional “time” different from it.

Therefore the central and supreme problem of psychological and literary techniques (Marcel Proust) and of historical sciences is the surmounting of this temporal distance, through regression to that which is moving away or by reconstructing and bringing into the present (presentifying) that which is hidden in its permanent distancing in time. Anyway, the central difficulty in memory and historical knowledge is a time sketched in its continuous withdrawal.

This is a time which deals with successive chains of “nows” and “presents” and which has intruded in Husserl’s thought unobserved, although he introduced the concept of the retention of the near past as well as the retention of the (near) future in the conception of the “live present” (lebendiges Gegenwart), without explicitly taking into account the possibility of a (distant) unremembered past which must nevertheless be studied in connection with the organicity of its relation to the “present”.\(^2\) It is clear that we can only reach this “past” by returning to a present in

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which this was still a retained past and then to a present whose live and retaining core it was… In other words, we did not avoid yet the insistent problem of “had been-
ness”.

However, all these show that the issue of the past is not raised as a problem of being but only as a problem of time which continues to be attached to it unaltered and enigmatic. It seems that not even Heidegger could completely get rid of that which Derrida justly calls the “metaphysics of presence” (metaphisique de la presence).

Also, it is only in a similar conceptual context that the words of Fernand Braudel have a meaning. He stated that the truth value and objectivity of his historical research is not less than the truth and “objectivity” of sociological researches although these latter investigate contemporary events.¹ The essence of this reasoning is that if historical science surmounts the difficulties that face it, then its object and truth will shine in the light of the truth and objectivity of the sciences studying present, contemporaneous events. In other words: there are no relevant ontological diffe-rences between past and present, only methodological differences. It is the temporal status of these target objects that specifies these differences. There are in fact contemporaneous-present “presents” and once (formerly)-present “presents”, and history is the permanently open stage of time on which presents walk along ceaselessly, presents which, withdrawing to the dark backs of the scene gradually and perhaps only apparently lose their contemporaneity with the spectacle, but they can always be found, they can be revisited and identified by the headlights of memory and historical science turned on for this reason.

The past is therefore predominantly a past present and only incidentally PAST. It is the temporal modification – “in” time? “through” time? - of the present itself. It is the modification of presence in connection with time; it is the present modified by time and modified presence: as time dominates presence, the present dominates time.

Ontological reflection on the past is therefore reduced to reflection on (this) time, because it is always time which modifies presence viewed as a general essence. Hence the problem of the “power of time” which always reappears, a problem which links time to its “passing” and also fixes the passing of time as the source and origin of the “birth” of time.

But does the fact that time “passes” lead to something like the “past”? And is our past so handy that only a “temporal distance”, a hermeneutic and methodologic task separates us from it? Should we not replace general reflection on “time” and its “passage” with the explicit thematising of the issue of the PAST, formulating the

burning, direct question: What does it mean in fact that something is no-longer-existent? This question is not interested in the “how” of the past – how was it what it was – but the fact that it had been, that is, it does no longer exist. What does HAD-BEEN-NESS mean in fact?

“Had been” means first of all something that “passed”, something that is no more. Nevertheless, historic knowledge rightly asserts and sustains that the past cannot be mistaken for “non-being”.¹

True, the word “had been” in any language does not in fact say “non-being” but speaks about being-in-the-past, in the past. But what else does being in the past mean than being-no-longer?!! However, in the history of metaphysics from the be-ginnings to Heidegger, being means first of all presence. Presence has the privilege of linking being to time and thus time to the present. Therefore the main question about the being of the past will always be: how is the past present? Heidegger also investigates the presence of the past and he comes to the conclusion that the past is in fact a deprivation formed as aspect (eidos) and it is presence in the form of absence. The past is not “nothing”, but it is something that was somehow deprived of its presence and which appears therefore “in the present” in the shape of a lack and absence (Abwesen).² Lack here means moving off and distance: what is missing is “at a distance” and not present, however, its moving off, its absence is presence and “being”.

Thinking about the past as “presence through absence” encompasses several essential aspects of the characteristics of the presence of past. Commencing with our analyses thematising the problem of “absence”, it is still problematic how absence specifies precisely the past? Not to mention the fact that presenting something in the form of absence is not only complex and complicated but also extremely heterogeneous.

Let us take an example from Heidegger’s work in which he exposes and interprets the thinking of absence (steresis): “The bicycle is gone.” This statement does not say that the bicycle “disappeared” but that it is missing. When something is missing, it is of course not present, but the anger provoked by its absence is nevertheless insistently present.³ But how does absence present and constitute precisely the past? If I say “The bicycle is gone”, that is, it-is-no-longer-here or there, it is not clear what exactly “had passed”? Although the bicycle is missing now, this absence (of the

bicycle) refers to the bicycle itself (that is missing), the had-been-ness of its presence but also the presence of its absence. Therefore, what had passed in fact is exactly its (former) presence! Despite the fact that the bicycle is somewhere, in the place where it was before and where we now feel its absence there is only the void of its absence, the bicycle is missing as its former presence passed.

Even if it is true that the past appears in the shape of absence, absence itself does not specify the past; conversely, it is the past that allows us to go deeper down in thinking about absence. The past probably hides rather than manifests itself in absence; more precisely, it presents itself only in hiding.

Furthermore, if we are waiting for it, the bicycle is present in the form of absence even though it had not been there before. Indeed, what follows – the future – can also appear in the shape of absence. In this absence appears what is missing; the absence itself is also articulated in it but together with them, there appears something completely different from the past. Heidegger himself asserts in *Zeit und Sein* that the future does not begin until what is coming is not revealed as absence, as something missing.¹

Absence does not specify the past at all, rather it is an intervention and/or an overall, “more general” modification of presence, the nature of which can only be revealed by the direction of temporality. The past is absence in a certain temporal direction, the future in another direction. However, the difference between the two “types” of absence is that the past is missing as being-no-longer whereas the future as not-yet-being. In other words, “pure” absence does not tell us what the past is!

In order to find out what the past is, we must go beyond the simple fixing of deprivation which forms absence and ask ourselves about the meaning of “no-longer” within the absence. It is the only remaining cue to the modality and nature of absence in the past, because the past is missing as past-being and this is why it becomes present as being PAST!

However, all this means that deprivation still remains connected to time and apparently, in an unknown way, it is again time “alone” that introduces deprivation in presence, modifying it in the direction of the past or the future. Time passes and this is how it makes past what is present and brings what will be; it is also time – passing and extending – that keeps together all that had been, is and is going to be.

In order to pierce these real or apparent “appearances” and find the “character” of the past we must go beyond its temporality grasped as absence fixed as privation

which is in fact only the temporality of no-longer, and examine the temporality of no-
longer-being. But before that, we still have to clarify some con-cepts.

When we are talking about the “past” as a dimension, an ecstasis, even a
privileged attribute of an abstract concept of “time”, we revert, perhaps unwillingly,
to the definition according to which time is the meaure of movement. What is it that
passed in fact of yesterday? Evidently, the “day” as temporal unit is first of all that
passed as being “of yesterday”. What is specified as “of yesterday” although we
repeat it day after day, had also passed. What we have done, well or badly, had also
passed. Therefore we “measure” a series of heterogeneous actions by “yesterday” of
which we stated that it is “past”. It is important to state again and bear in mind that if
we ask about the meaning of “passage” and “past” in connection with yesterday, we
must focus on what had really passed in it instead of what generally happened or
“took place” in it. At the same time, we must also ask whether this time and this unit
has not become its own passing measure unobserved? Is this concept of time
adequate for grasping the past? It “measures” movement, measuring itself in its
passage and there-fore it shows itself as the “creator” of the past.

As concerns duration, the past meaning “since that time” is in fact the past of
present which lasts as not-past. Therefore we can say that “The proceedings that last
three days go on for two days now”. What passes in it, lasts. However, days “pass” in
the mean-time.¹

When the duration passes it becomes in fact past in the sense of HAD BEEN.
When something ends, it is abandoned or even becomes nothing. The “past” in the
centre of historical scien-ce is first of all the past of past durations. This past can only
be studied if something is preserved of its duration: remains, marks, documents,
results or consequences.

In this way we have two pasts already: past as “since that time” and past as
“passed”; the former is the past that lasts and the latter the past that is preserved in
past durations. Both of them can be found in the present, only the past that lasts is
actually present just like that which is present appears together with its past, whereas
the past which is preserved is only simultaneous with the present.

This is the most faithful image of the present interpreted as “now”, “about” the
past. This present simultaneously contains the past. It is only this way that the
statement: “The spaceship to Mars is now launched and the British Museum is open
now” has a meaning. The spaceship which is landing on Mars and the remains of
ancient times are “now” simultaneous.

¹ We will later analyse this past of “since then” which is wrongly considered to be the “past of duration”.

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This is the most problematic aspect of time as development and as a series of “nows”. It articulates the past referring first of all to no-longer-now and it is closed towards the understanding of the nature of HAD-BEEN-NESS, closing itself in its own passage and development. What was maintained of what had been – and therefore had-been-ness itself – becomes simultaneous with “now”, whereas “of that time” as “no-longer-now” will be first of all what “passed”.

The past that lasts is therefore “since that time” and this becomes “now” what is no-longer-now. Therefore we cannot find in this past something that really HAD BEEN, because everything in it that is no-longer-now, “had been”. The no-longer-now of duration and the no-longer-now of HAD-BEEN-NESS which has not been preserved are completely mixed in the past of “that time” interpreted as no-longer-now. And vice versa, every HAD-BEEN-NESS which has not been preserved becomes in fact the past of “that time”, so that precisely the “had been” of HAD-BEEN-NESS is lost. The specificity of HAD-BEEN-NESS which was preserved, disappears as it becomes simultaneous with “now”.

Consequently: neither the past of duration (“since that time”), nor the past of the series of “nows” can help us understand HAD-BEEN-NESS. HAD-BEEN-NESS cannot mean “since that time” and “no-longer-now” at the same time, at least not in a way that would make us understand what HAD BEEN means in fact.

HAD-BEEN-NESS is a mode of being! It is the mode of being of that which is-no-longer. And, vice versa: being-no-longer is the way in which what HAD BEEN “is”!

In fact everything that HAD BEEN, only appears in the horizon of no-longer-being. Therefore, we suspect and presuppose that if we find out something more about no-longer-being, then we will perhaps know more about the being and essence of the past or at least open horizons for asking more explicit questions.

The phrases “being-no-longer” and “no-longer-being” contain a negation of being and this refers (again) to the Nothing.

Excursus nr. 1

“The Nothing”

Martin Heidegger already dealt with the issue of Nothing in Sein und Zeit. His analyses of dread, the phenomenon of guilt and death led him to this topic. Shortly after the publication of his book he went over the question again. Thus the Nothing became the central issue of the lecture What Is Metaphysics? (1929)
Every metaphysical question is an act of interrogation with a double feature. On the one hand it covers the whole issue of metaphysics and refers to being in its completeness, on the other hand, the questioner as such is by his very questioning involved in the question.\(^1\) Being as being in its whole can only be grasped going beyond being, and this “passage” is born in the very question about Nothing. Therefore Nothing naturally becomes the target of metaphysical enquiry.

How can we “grasp” the Nothing? Only in something in which and by which it opens up and reveals itself. This is how the mood of dread becomes the centre of analysis. The opening up of Nothing can be found in dread, as we have already mentioned. Nothing is in fact revealed in dread which contains being in its entirety.

Still, Nothing (das Nichts) is something strange to being. It bears a Not (das Nicht) in which the “not” of negation is rooted and from which it originates. “The Not does not come into being through negation, but negation is based on the Not which is the nihilation of Nothing.”\(^2\) The not of negation comes from that original Not that originates in that which belongs to Nothing and therefore every negation is a mediated contact with Nothing which grounds it by nihilation. However, avoiding the provenance of negation conceived as an operation of thinking, it is the experience of mood, the “harshness of opposition”, the “violence of loathing” and the pain of refusal through which we can understand the nihilation of Nothing. These bear witness to the fact that Dasein is always related in its being to Nothing even if this relation remains closed without the understanding of the opening of dread.

Heidegger continues the analysis of Not in his study *Vom Wesen der Wahrheit* (On the Essence of Truth) without explicit reference to the issue of Nothing. He relies on a distinction which is already known for us from *Sein und Zeit*. This is the difference between the negative Not and the privative Not (steresis). They are not “species” of the logic operation of negation, rather, they articulate the original Not. In other words: it is apparently not the Nothing but the original Not which relates to entity as a whole. Not is cracked and breaks into a *privative* and a *negative* “Not”.

The privative not is steresis, the manifestation of something as its absence while the negative not is its own positivity, a positivity which can preserve something essential in its radical negativity such as “hiding”. In relating privation and hiding (as a negative “not”) to entity as a whole, this relation appears as and is named as Secret (das Geheimnis).

\(^1\) Martin Heidegger, *Ce este metafizica? (What is Metaphysics?)*, in: *Repere pe drumul gândirii*, București, 1988, p.33.

\(^2\) *Idem*, p.45.
It is clear that “secret” is another name, perhaps a shallower one, for Nothing, but we do not know how did Nothing acquire this new name? It could only have happened in the question of the thinker.

Indeed, we can observe that he who asks is missing in the question about being as a whole in *On the Essence of Truth*. Although the question refers to being as a whole and the wandering Dasein, he who asks is not caught in it. It is an exegetic task outside our interest to point out how this is possible. More important for us is the fact that Nothing is called Secret in the act of enquiry. Nothing and the Secret can also be correlated intuitively. But we have still not discovered the meaning and significance of this correlation. We are now interested in the issue of Nothing. And this is even more interesting as it has become, through Heidegger, one of the central themes of 20th century philosophy.

Heidegger thinks about Nothing in German language. The german word for Nothing (*das Nichts*) directs him towards a certain thinking about Not and negation (*das Nicht*). At the beginning the German language helps him in thinking about this Not, but only to a certain point. More precisely, it directs him towards the greek steresis of Aristotle.

Certainly, viewed in an abstract way Nothing is a negation in every language, a negation of Being. On account of this “abstraction” the different words for Nothing are generally easy to translate. The Romanian “Nimicul” corresponds to the German “das Nichts”, the English “Nothing”, the French “rien” and the Hungarian “semmi”. The terminus technicus “non ens” coming from the Latin that came to stay in the professional literature of Latin cultures (we cannot call it special literature because profes-sional philosophising lacks exactly the speciality of philoso-phising) is a conceptual construct and artefact the pattern of which is used for constructing the apparently domesticised versions such as “ne-ființă” in Romanian and “nem-lét” in Hungarian.

Nevertheless, the different languages express the negation of being which belongs to every word of Nothing in different ways. Negation and Being are articulated in different ways in their construction and utterance. Therefore we must try to explore some of these words, in order to penetrate the horizon of their articulation. It is exactly the Nothing that is usually present simply as a “word”.

“Nothing” is that about which we usually say that it “is not”. This conceives Nothing as a concept. The concept of Nothing is void and it is completely empty of content, but it is “pure” on this account. Thus “pure nothing” and “pure being” can
even become identical in the void of the undifferentiated unity of their purity (Hegel).¹

It is exactly on account of its lack of conceptual content that Nothing is not a concept in fact but “only” a word. Our languages utter the deficiencies, absences, the uncertainty, omission and decay of our being by this word. Nothing is only expressed because the existence of our entity (our Being) makes it uttered. Therefore philosophy does not have and cannot have the task to manufacture a “concept” or “idea” out of the various words of Nothing. It only has to understand them and fix all that they express as words in the language. “Nothing” is a mere word that we are not only inclined but compelled to utter. Its utterance brings to the surface first of all and most directly the pressing need of “using” it.

What can we do with such a “simple” word which is, moreover, “empty” as a concept? Of course, we cannot simply examine the different references and contexts in which we “use” the word “nothing”. It would be absolutely useless to enumerate the different meanings implied by the different usages of these words because we cannot understand them unless we penetrate the horizon which remained un-thought in the very “use” of these words. In case of words such as Nothing, philosophy does not have any other task at the beginning than fixing their existence in the language, trying to understand them.

“Nothing” is thus a simple word. What does this word say in the void of its simplicity? Some languages express Nothing by simple, monolithic words. Its German name (das Nichts) and the French one (rien) are such words. In other languages the word for Nothing is a compound, such as the English “Nothing”, the Romanian “nimic”, and the Hungarian “semmi”. Non-being which has a Latin origin is also a compound, expressing Nothing as pure non-being, that is, as pure negation of being.

As we have already said, the words for “Nothing” express, utter and represent in their abstract generality the negation of Being. We must see how do they articulate Negation and Being. We have seen that Heidegger’s German word, das Nichts refers to the negation of Being based on Not, that is, negation. It negates Being by founding, originating negation itself: negated Being remains in its original un-determination, while the act of negation itself finds through it the origin of its articulations.

The English name (Nothing) expresses the negation of Being in its quality of thing. Negation “works” in a completely inarticulated manner whereas the negated Being is articulated in its qualification as “thing”.¹

¹ G.W.Fr. Hegel, Știința logicii (The Science of Logic), 1966, p.54-58.
The French word for nothing is equally interesting. It means “thing” which is mostly not there, or was not there, a hypostasis in which it is negated. Thus the word “rien” gains its actual meaning by assimilating and associating thing-ness and negation so that negation and the quality of “thing” are not articulated but melted together.

We face a different situation when we try to understand the Romanian word “Nimic”. It is a compound, made up of the negative “nici” (“not even”) and the adjective “mic” (“small”). However, the negative “nici” is completely different from the German negation in “das Nichts” and from the unarticulated English No in “Nothing”. The Romanian “nici” articulates negation as a searching negation. On the other hand, the adjective “mic” means the quantitatively reduced being and thus the Romanian “nimic” says that then and there where it is uttered there is not (or cannot be found) even one Being that could be grasped “at least” in its “smallness”. That is, negation grasped in its searching hypostasis loses its “quality” of abstract logical operation and fixes in the language its originally existential nature. In the meantime the Romanian word “Nimic” articulates, even if in its quantitatively reduced quality, being in its quality of thing (res), because only things can be “small”.

The Hungarian word for Nothing (Semmi) expresses negation as searching. Its analysis reveals perhaps more than the words analysed so far. The Hungarian word

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1 In his thesis dedicated to the analysis of negation from a functional grammatical perspective Peter Kahrel suggests the analysis of the word “Nothing” from the point of view of negation conceived as a zero quantifier merged with an “indefinite”. We must stress therefore the fact – essential for thinking about the word – that this indefinite is and remains a “thing”. However, behind this superficial understanding there are deeper non-understandings regarding the understanding of the sui generis searching nature of the negation of Nothing and its relations with negated Being. Left in the inarticulation of the indefinite and the void of the zero quantifier, the negation and the articulation of the negated Being do not let themselves be understood. This is probably about a limitation and a trap of the English language and the lack of meditation of the method. However, Kahrel analyses - through tables and statistics – 40 words for Nothing, including the Romanian and Hungarian words. In spite of this, negation is a zero quantifier in his opinion! This is why it can be applied in an indefinite way. It is only in the indefiniteness of negation that “nothing” and “nobody” can be considered similarly indefinite and co-originial. But “nothing” is really “more” original than “nobody”. We can realise this fact by understanding the real meaning of the searching “not”. “Nimeni” in Romanian means “nici oameni” (“not even people”). In “nimeni” (“nobody”) there is the reference to the searcher. Where there is “nobody”, there is he who is in search of others. Only in the meantime the horizon of search can be “full of things”. In Nothing, more precisely in “Semmi” we surpass determined “things” arriving to ourselves, “us” (“mi”), searchers who do not find and, on the other hand, we become ourselves, those who do not even find ourselves. Where there is “nobody”, there is only the lonely searcher. Therefore “nobody” does not mean “neither of them” but “alone”. The searcher of “nici” in “nimeni” will not encounter “nimic” (nothing) but only his lonely Self. “Nimeni” is therefore the lonely self which comes from “Nimic”. See Peter Kahrel, Aspects of Negation, Academisch Proefschrift, Amsterdam, 1996, p.30-43.


3 This is perhaps why French thinkers use the technical term of non-being instead of “rien”. The former one, as every artificial word, links only pure concepts, that is, Being in its conceptual inarticulatedness and/with negation in its logical-conceptual inarticulatedness.
“semmi” is also a compound. It was formed of the negative “sem” (“not even”) and the pronoun “mi” (“we”). The negative “sem” says in fact “not here”, “not there”, “not then”, “not me”, “not him”, etc. That is: we have searched everywhere and have not found. The not referred to by the negative “not even” is not the negative “not” or the Privative “not” revealed by Heidegger when analysing the refe-rences of the German “das Nicht”.

The “not” of the negative “not even” is a searching “not”. It says that we did not find while we have been searching. This expresses that searching is the modality in which we encountered and confronted this “not”. Therefore the negative “sem” places negation in the modality of searching and searching in the moda-ility of “not” (negation).

What does this mean? First of all that “sem” (“not even”) is a search which flows into “not”, but it also separates from the determined “nots” that it encounters. Searching is “never”¹ a repeated question only, or the repetition of a question, but it is a question passed round. Therefore “sem” is more than the tension between the question and the negative answer received. Negation itself or “not” is placed in the modality of searching. Therefore “not even” does not negate the search but places and fixes it in its deficient modus in which it “does not find”. Thus “sem” loads, stresses and outlines “not”, but through this, it also impels search towards its exhaustion. Therefore “not even” is the deficiency of the exhausted search but not its suspension.

This confers “not even” a solidity which hermetically closes in itself but, at the same time, also endows it with an inner impulse which irradiates and sends it towards its re-exhaustion. It is in the space and horizon of this radiant impulse that “sem” and the pronoun “mi” are combined.

“MI” in Hungarian is both an interrogative pronoun (meaning “what?”) and a personal pronoun (“we”). Whether this phonetic coincidence is accidental or not, it has rare and important speculative possibilities. We must not avoid them. Together with the negative “sem” the pronoun “mi” says that WE are those who search asking, but also do not find anything. Combined in their reciprocal space “sem” and “mi” express that in the plural of searching questions the searchers revealed in their plurality met what is expressed by “SEMMI” (NOTHING) by coming up against NOT or negation.

In the inner space of its articulations the Hungarian word “semmi” allows us to think more deeply about what it “expresses” because it fixes from beginning not only

¹ The term “never” will be analysed later.
the search and its deficient modalities but also the fact that WE are those who search and ask, even if we cannot even fond ourselves in “nothing”. The fact that one of the meanings of Nothing is the strangeness and unfamiliarity of our self, and therefore our efforts to eliminate it from the space of our existence (omitting and avoiding it) are always useless.

It is clear that “semmi” is not only a simple negation of Being coming from beyond and outside it, but one which is always involved in our being and existence. In order to realise this fact we must analyse the different words for “nothing”.

The interrogative pronoun MI? as an undetermined inter-rogative pronoun also contains other references. It mobilises us with questions of the type “What is this?” “What is that?” Certainly, the question MI? in “semmi” is originally in the horizon of “sem”, the searching “not”. However, we must observe that in spite of every negativity the search of the searching “not” and the question of “what?” reciprocally and permanently inspire and impel each other. That is, the question “mi?” (“what?”) does not let our (“mi”, “us”) search die out completely, no matter how deficient they remain. It is not only the negation which is articulated in it as a searching Not, but also the Being which bears this negation. It is caught in the negation of this word as surpassing every nature of “thing” but it also belongs to us as the final meaning of our search.

We have in fact found an older form of “not”, the searching “not” in the Romanian and Hungarian word for “nothing”. “Nici” and “sem” are “open” nots capable of bearing the existential, profound and dynamic sense of negation. This searching Not bears and originates in fact the privative not and the Heideggerian negative not. In its Hungarian name there is a special tension that cannot be found in any other word of “nothing” known by us. Although it is predestined to negativity, the question what? (“mi?”) is reverberated in it as a question that belongs to us (MI).

What is a question hoping and waiting for when it is reverberated although it cannot receive an answer? Instead of an answer it can only hope for an attachment which, far from being satisfactory, matches it\(^1\). The question which is destined not to be able to hope for an answer in the Hungarian word for “nothing” is always regenerated in it and cannot hope for an attachment other than a wonder.

Indeed, the attachment to the deaf but unremovable question WHAT? (MI?) is wonder. It will sound like MI-CSODA? (csoda = wonder), that is, “What wonder?”

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\(^1\) “Attachment” is something which although “can be attached” to something on account of correspondance remains nevertheless exterior.
and the immediate answer in Nothing is SEM-MI-CSODA ("no wonder"). Where “there is” Nothing, not even a “wonder” “can be found”.

Whenever the Hungarian word for Nothing is uttered, the “question of waiting for a wonder” is also voiced even if it is immediately faced with the positivity of the absence expressed by the searching “not even”. The waiting for a wonder is indestectutable because it is rooted in the original relation between the Dasein and the Nothing and thus by Being. Besides the waiting which articulates its attachment as “wonder” the Hungarian word for “nothing” bears in itself explicitly another reference. It refers our Dasein back to itself.

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The nothing remains one of the most interesting and characteristic topics of 20th century philosophy. Although non-being attached to being or the “void” in being have always been a provocation and a nuisance for philosophy, the Nothing has only become subject of explicit thematisations and part of a basic problemising disposition in this century. This was due to the gene-ralisation of the so-called postmodernism which had originally no-thing to do with it.

When thematising the Nothing we began to take seriously the fact that our being does not rest on firm grounds which remain immutable even when we are in doubt. We must think about the modes in which Nothing enters the “games” of our life and the role it has in our lives.

This is the case with the “past”. Modernity seemed to find the most solid foundations of the advance of present in the past. If historical knowledge allows us to follow the antecedents, development and consequences of events in the past then the past becomes or seems to be the only real dimension or ecstasy of time.

Thematising the issue of HAD-BEEN-NESS as such we reached the conclusion that our concepts of “past” and “time” are not sufficiently articulated so that we could think what we have to think about, and, on the other hand, the past itself cannot be analysed without an explicit meditation about HAD-BEEN-NESS.

We have seen that HAD-BEEN-NESS cannot be analysed without “no-longer-being” and this led us to the issue of Nothing which is the negation of being par excellence.

However, the negation of being in “is-no-longer” and “no-longer-being” is caught, contained and articulated by the adverb of time “no longer”. It is only this way that the expression “is-no-longer” means HAD BEEN. That which “is not” like
“NO-LONGER-being”, HAD always BEEN. This NO-LONGER grasps the negation of being in Nothing and also negates it. This is how it says that what HAD BEEN “is-NO-LONGER” but still it is not Nothing. “Being-no-longer” it is not Nothing.

“Is not” and “not Nothing” are also negations. One of them negates Being, the other negates Nothing. Gathering the two negations “NO LONGER” also becomes negation, and in this way it specifies the mode of being of that which HAD BEEN.

NO LONGER expresses a negation which gathers other two negations and thus fixes a triple negation. The triple negation of NO LONGER is not the “negation of negation” in the frame-work of thesis, anti-thesis and synthesis. On the contrary: it negates two negations at the same time which also negate each other. NO LONGER is the bringing together and turning simultaneous of these negations. The negating temporal adverb says that what HAD BEEN “is-NO-LONGER”, that is, it is neither Being, nor Nothing. Consequently, the real “function” of NO LONGER as a negative is NEITHER (NOT EVEN), the searching NOT.

HAD BEEN-NESS seems to be formed by the triple negation which became simultaneous in the searching NOT of NOT EVEN. Therefore it is not simply a “concept of absence” or “void” in being, but it is being which has its own phasing.

Let us analyse this in more detail. HAD BEEN is that which is-no-longer. “Is not” in itself means “does not exist”. However, that which “is not” can be “no-longer” or “not-yet”, therefore it is clear that “is not” is only a present of the series of “nows” in which “no-longer” and “not-yet” are both non-being. “Is not” is always the present in the sense of “now”; that which is “presented” in it as negated is either “no-longer” or “not yet” non-being. Therefore “is not” is, according to Kant, nihil privativum whose “objects” are in the void of a permanent “now”. Irrespective of whether what “had been” “will be” or “may be”, they can only manifest themselves in the void of the horizon of “is not”. The first is “no longer”, the second is “not yet”.

What else does this horizon open up, than search itself? We only “know” that something “is not” when we have searched for it, true, uselessly. Therefore “is not” always appears in the horizon of the deficiency of search, still being the tension of “now”.

Of course, we can search for the past and the future and this does not seem to be an empty search. In the past we can find HAD BEEN and in the future we are promised that which WILL BE. However, we do not realise that none of them “is”.

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1 The whole meditation that follows is based on the peculiarity of the Hungarian language of expressing the negation of the verb “to be” by a special word: “nincs”. The negation of “is” is not expressed by simply adding the negative “not” as in most languages (“nu este” in Romanian, “ist nicht” in German, “is not” in English, “n’est pas” in French), but by a special, comprised word. This makes us think in a special way.
The first “no longer”, the other “not yet”. Despite this, every time when we find something that “had been” or “will be”, we face in fact the void of the horizon of “is not”: we are in search of the past because it “is-no-longer” and this holds good for the future too.

True, this is why we search for it but we do not search for it in this way!\(^1\) We search, research and problemise the past not as something that “is-no-longer” but something that although past, it is. Only, being past, it is HAD-BEEN-NESS which willy-nilly is in the void horizon of “is not”. This is why we usually do not understand what had been, because we do not realise that in HAD-BEEN-NESS there is inevitably the void of the horizon of “is not”.

Let us recapitulate: we have seen that in “no-longer-being” which forms HAD-BEEN-NESS, the meaning of NO LONGER is in fact the searching NOT of NOT EVEN. As no-longer-being, HAD BEEN seems “not to be” Being or Nothing.

We must now go back and ask about the temporary meaning of NOT EVEN. How does NOT EVEN specify NO LONGER?

Evidently, in the way in which NO-LONGER makes the triple negation simultaneous in NOT EVEN. However, if the negative function of the adverb of time NO LONGER becomes NOT EVEN, then the temporal function of the searching negative NOT EVEN becomes NEVER.

As active and searching NOT, NO LONGER brings NEVER “from” the time already connected to the temporality of the adverb to NO LONGER, because it will be the “time” of reaching simultaneity in the triple negation. This is how HAD-BEEN-NESS as triple negation is made simultaneous by the energies of the searching NOT of NO LONGER, in which Being, Nothing and Time gather in a special and privileged manner.

**Excursus nr.2:**

**On the "NEVER"**

**A. The temporality of the “phenomenon of guilt” in Heidegger’s work**

The issue of time and the topics connected to it traverse the whole work of Martin Heidegger. We can perhaps better understand his concept of time if we do not deal with his direct and frontal analyses of “time” but direct our attention towards those passages where time functions effectively. Thus the analyses of the issue of death,

\(^1\) We think that it is superfluous to emphasize that we are not speaking about the negative reinvention of Augustinism but pointing out its lack of foundation.
moral conscience (Gewissen) and the phenomenon of guilt are of such a nature that they can throw light on several aspects of (our) temporality which may remain invisible from other perspectives. We will only give a summary examination of the temporality of the “phenomenon of guilt”.

As it is known, Heidegger speaks about the “original guilt” of Dasein without a connection with the “original sin” in the Judeo-Christian teaching. How is the Dasein originally guilty and being-guilty (Schuldigsein)?

Dasein exists in such a way that it has been thrown into the world of its existence. This means first of all that it does not bring itself to presence, more precisely, it is never him that brings himself to presence. Still, in its existence it is defined as his own ability to be which belongs to it congenitally but which is not placed, founded or grounded, that is, brought to life and existence by itself. Existing it can never avoid or surpass the fact of being thrown in the world. It can neither cut – “liberate” or contemplate – from his existence the fact that it is and must be in order to be able to lead them to a presence in a somehow “purified” state. It cannot leave behind itself the fact of being thrown into the world as an event which, although it took place, it could be separated from the development of its presence. On the contrary: as long as the Dasein exists as care, its care remains the care of the fact of being.

Although thrown into the world the Dasein is still the ground (Grund) of its potentiality to be of its Self which is itself the potentiality of being a ground, a ground which has never been laid down by Itself. Therefore, there is always a hiatus between the existence of the Dasein as the ground of its own potentiality to be its Self and the ground which has thrown (brought) it into the world.

The existential nature of the hiatus specifies it as guilt, but also as something which originally belongs to the existentiality of the Dasein, that is, original guilt. It is however important to see that Heidegger circumscribes and fixes this hiatus first of all with the help of adverbs of time (“before”, “then”, “in the meantime”). It is also important to note that he underlines continually that being thrown in the world means in fact that the existing Dasein never lays down its own ground, the foundation of its birth and after all, the exclusivity of this “never” lies in that which pushes it in the weight and pressure of moods.¹

Only we always know that the ground or being the basis (Grund-sein) which brings to presence the Dasein and which therefore always precedes it is exactly its parent. Every Dasein as being the basis thrown into the world exists through its ground. But precisely because of this, “The Self, which as such has to lay the basis

¹ Martin Heidegger, Sein und Zeit, Erste Hälfte, 1935, p.284.
for itself, can never get that basis into its power; and yet, as existing, it must take over Being-a-basis.”

But this “nie” or “never” is that which we named hiatus before, and about which we said that Heidegger circumscribes it with adverbs of time. Now we can see more clearly that this “never” dwells in the existential de-phasings fixed with the help of adverbs of time. The ground of origin always precedes the Dasein, as its precedence is the actuality of the potentiality-for-Being the ground for other preceding being the basis (Grund-sein) Daseins, the parents, that is. The de-phasing does not only come from the relation between the different Daseins but from fixing some “temporally” determined relations between the fundamentally (Grund) determined Daseins. The Dasein is “never (nie) existent before its basis, but only from it and as this basis.”

Being-a-basis also means that we have never complete power over our existence. This NOT is included in the existential meaning of the fact of being thrown in the world; whenever the Dasein begins to exist as the ground for its own Self, it is already its own nothingness, because it already bears a previous existence which was not grounded by itself but which it must take on. Therefore it is originally guilty and this guiltiness is the nothingness of the grounds of the Self.

This “nothingness” dwells in the never nestled in the existential de-phasings of “before” and “then”; they do not form a hiatus which could be simply filled with “moments” or temporal “durations”. On the contrary, it is clear that this “never” is not “empty” from the point of view of moments and durations but it is something that we live as a whole and “from the beginning to the end”.

In other words, “never” completely reaches our temporal existence and our temporality. Therefore it must be taken seriously and analysed as such.

B. The analysis of the “NEVER”

As in the case of the words used for “Nothing”, we must try to analyse the meaning of “never”, the existential sense of its occurrence in the language and the words used for it in different languages. What does such a strange word like “never” mean?

In all languages “never” expresses something that cannot take place in time, something that does not find its place in time and is therefore “expelled” of time. It is negated by time and also negates time.

Strange enough, time itself appears in all these negations, it is “articulated” in various forms. When we say “never”, time is negated in its articulations of date. The

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1 Ibidem
2 Ibidem
“date” can **not** be dated in “at no time”. In “never” we catch time in its **categorical** meaning. Time as a category is exhausted in negation. Time is almost **abandoned** in the expression “nevermore” and “never ever” through the negative reference to “ever” (eternity) where there is no time.

In order to express something that does not find its place in time we must also negate time. However, negating time we become open towards the negations of time, thinking that the “impossibilities” which urge us to express ourselves in these “adequate” words come from time itself and are in fact imposed by its “person”.

Probably because of these reasons, too, we do not know anything about this negation of time although the extreme reflexivity of our relation to our temporality is perhaps expressed in it. This extreme reflexivity in relation with our temporality cannot be thought any time, or by any word, or “never”... but only then and there where it is imposed as an experience of guilty thinking. Again, it is only “words” that remain for this thinking which can then try to understand the meaning of their combination.

What do these words say? The French language uses the word “jamais” for “never”. Etimologically “jamais” means some-thing that does not have in store any “surplus” time.\(^1\) Completely exhausted the word has extremely various meanings like “de-termined time”, “eternity” and “never”.\(^2\)

Unlike this, the German word “nie” means “no time” and also expresses a negation which takes place every time.\(^3\) The Eng-lish “never” (no-ever) says “always no” or “eternal not”.

None of these words contains the searching not of “not even”. This can only be found in the Romanian and Hungarian name of “never”. We have already discussed the Romanian word. Let us now continue with the analysis of the Hungarian word.

SOHASEM is a compound which “starts” with the sear-ching “not” of “not even”. It does not only start from it but also **returns** to “not even”. From the beginning to the end it is in the horizon of this searching “not”. Moreover, it is a multiple compound. Its first part, SOHA is also a compound, formed of the negative SEM (“not even”) and the adverb HA, used as “when”. SOHA in itself says “never”.

However, SOHA in itself does nothing else but sends or expels “when” with the help of the searching “not even” in Nothing. Its real meaning is SEMMI-KOR, the “when” of Nothing. We say for example that the effect “never” precedes its cause, or,

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1. Dauzat, Albert; Dubois, Jean; Mitterand, Henri, *Dictionnaire étomologique de la langue français*
the apple which comes off the branch does “never” fall towards the sky…

The “when” expelled in Nothing circumscribes and completes every time an “always”: always this or that way, “never” in another way. But SOHASEM – which means NEITHER-WHEN-NEITHER - says and does more than that. It does not only bring but also fixes “when” in the tension of the coordinates of the searching “not even”. It does not only say “not even”, or “neither” but also “neither..neither”. The second “neither” is not a final Not which strengthens and supports the negation of “when” but the re-sending of “when” through “not even” to “not even” again. If the first “not even” sends “when” to Nothing, the second “not even” sends Nothing to the Time in which Never is articulated.

On account of “when” caught in the tension of “not even” – on account of “when” not found again – Nothing enters Time. Thus it becomes datable in time, unlike the simple “never” whose “when” takes place always, because it is in Nothing. In “not even-when-not even” the when of Nothing takes place.

We only know about “not even-when-not even” that until “when” exists it does never exist and “not even-when-not even” always has a “when”. This “when” is always, and datably, Nihi-lation.

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What does all this mean in the understanding of HAD-BEEN-NESS? First of all it means that we must be more attentive to the “data” (chronological ones, too) gathering around HAD-BEEN-NESS. We must ask by what right do we use this data to replace HAD-BEEN-NESS? Or: what does ontologically mean “When HAD it BEEN what is-no-longer”? And how does this form the PAST?

We have seen that HAD-BEEN-NESS is a triple negation held together by “no-longer” which functions as the searching “not” of “not even” and in which Being, Nothing and Time come together in a special way. Therefore, ontologically speaking, HAD BEEN does not mean “some time” or “in a certain previous time”. First of all HAD-BEEN-NESS does not have a meaning interior to time, it is not time-space or spatialised time. On the contrary: that which had been remains unchanged and, on the other hand, it is something that is-no-longer. This is why the Greeks said, “What had been, had been, not even the Gods can change it or consider it cancelled.”
But this does not mean that what HAD BEEN is simply closed, on the contrary, it “comes out” of time. The apparent eternity of HAD-BEEN-NESS is exactly the “never” analysed before. The temporal meaning of HAD-BEEN-NESS – not the one in the “interior” of time – is that it underlines the fact that “never” belongs to our temporality as the Nothing which, although nestled in its de-phasings, brings it “outside” time.

Consequently, HAD-BEEN-NESS does not automatically, of itself form the PAST, because the HAD BEEN detached of time does not pass. The conscience calling itself “historical” can create a compulsory canon for the present and future or “move” what had been in time because HAD-BEEN-NESS is not automatically fixed in the past.

In order to become PAST, HAD BEEN must be made to pass! To make something that HAD BEEN pass, is an existential human task and philosophy must open horizons for it. HAD-BEEN-NESS as a special mode of being faces in fact multiple possibilities. Sartre says that the expression “had been” (’était) is transitive and gives the following example: if we say “Paul was tired”, then we say that Paul who is present is responsible for his “former” tiredness, his tiredness “in the past”. That is, the present being is the foundation of the past, says Sartre.

Let us examine this example. First, we must clarify when do we say that “Paul was tired”? Naturally, only if Paul is-no-longer tired, when his tiredness “passed”. But how does this tiredness “pass”, how does it become PAST tiredness? Does tiredness pass with the “passage of time”? Of course not! Tiredness must be made pass in order to become PAST tiredness. In other words, Paul must take a rest so that his tiredness becomes PAST tiredness. Without this, in vain does time pass, his tiredness will not pass, on the contrary, it will deepen. In order to make his tiredness pass, Paul must either complete or interrupt what made him tired and must rest. Then his tiredness becomes indeed PAST tiredness.

It is not at all indifferent what do we mean by “Paul was tired” then. If we say “Paul was tired” after a day full of successful activities and know that he made his tiredness pass by sleeping for long, then this refers to a state produced and eliminated day after day, a state that Paul makes pass by eliminating and nihilating it. Therefore, if HAD-BEEN-NESS is generally transitive, it passes into “nothing”, because the next morning he will not feel his former tiredness. In other circumstances the statement “Paul was tired” has a different meaning. If, for example, he had a task that he could not complete because he “was tired”, then the HAD-BEEN-NESS of his

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tiredness will remain un-passed during the days passing. Only when Paul completes
his task can we say that his former tiredness belongs to the PAST, that is, it had
passed. If HAD-BEEN-NESS is generally transitive, it is now transited in the past.

However, it becomes clear that HAD-BEEN-NESS in itself is not at all
transitive, but it is “outside” time and it is up to us whether we nihilate it or make it
PAST. Without this it does not pass, even though it is-no-longer, because HAD-
BEEN-NESS – which no-longer-being is still not Nothing – comes to the temporality
of “not even-when-not even”, that is, it becomes de-tached of time. This does not
mean however that what HAD BEEN, was, is or will “never” be, but that it is the
mode of being nestled in the temporal de-phasings mastered by “not even-when-not
even”, in the temporality detached of time.

But is it not farfetched to say that HAD-BEEN-NESS is detached of time since
we can date it chronologically and also know, by and large, what it was when it
“was” present? Only, the aggressive flurry by which chronological data and the rest
of information are pressed to the surface, diverts us from understanding HAD-
BEEN-NESS. The waving of “when” and “what”, chronology and the rest of
“historical” data, renders more difficult the understanding of HAD-BEEN-NESS
because they hide exactly its no-longer-being.

Not presentation or presentification of the “past”, neither memory nor
historical knowledge can confer HAD-BEEN-NESS a being other than no-longer-
being. It can be found as such in me-mory and historical knowledge, although the
pression of bringing it in the present strives to hide the fact that what they present is
no-longer-being and that it is no longer.

This is why we could learn “something” from the past and this is why the past
could be the source of freedom and human authenticity: no-longer-being, it loses its
pressure of compulsoriness that temporal data and information about it still carry on
the surface. Of course, the past cannot do this on its own.

This problem has another aspect, closely connected to the previous analyses.
We should understand how what has remained of what HAD BEEN can become
simultaneous with the present even if from the point of view of its ground it belongs
to something that is-no-longer. How is this apparent shift in time possible? What is its
ontological foundation?

The essence of the problem focuses round the essence of “presentification”. Is
the essence of presentification the fact that it makes something from the “past”
simultaneous with the present in order to understand and interpret it? We must not
discuss here the mainly methodological problem of the issue of “document”, “mo-
nument”, “remnant”, “trace”. But we must underline that presen-tification does not mean the automatic understanding of the past, or the presentification of the past, but it is the necessary condition of the understanding of the past which is based on the essential fact that the past appears as simultaneous with the present through that which has been maintained of it. The real problem is that something that is-no-longer “is shown” as simultaneous with the present. Consequently, the problem of presentification does not eliminate but, on the contrary, acknowledges the importance of problemising no-longer-being and, consequently, that of HAD-BEEN-NESS. This is the ontological structure which is capable of gathering the temporal distance fixed chronologically and movable and, on the other hand, the feature of HAD-BEEN-NESS that it can appear by presentification as simultaneous with every present.

It is true that history and tradition influences the decisions of the present which inevitably contain references to the future. The “past” has a “structuring performance” as concerns the selections which become parts of the present. Memory, historical knowledge and the understanding of tradition are always selective. The image of the past does never contain the whole of what “had been”. In scholastic terms, the sphere of the “image of the past” and that of HAD-BEEN-NESS do not overlap. What happened to the HAD-BEEN-NESS which, although it took place, was not preserved by memory or the constructions and images about the past? This HAD-BEEN-NESS was nihilised.

We must be conscious about the fact that the simple possibility of the nihilation of HAD-BEEN-NESSes raises serious ontological problems which cannot be simply diluted in the assertion “The history of the system is not a simple amount of facts and data that the system ceaselessly leaves behind, but it is the history of the selective performances which are justified in the system itself (sic!) that preserves them according to its option. Therefore, not only those which were selected belong to it but also those which were not selected (sic!)…” In other words, the problem of those which were not selected, is buried forever.

This is what happens with the “most modern historical conscience”, although it “temporalises (verzeitlich) the past” (N. Luhmann) distinguishing the past horizon of the present from present in the past, even if it seems that an important aspect of the

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concept of time comes to the fore, its “reflexivity” which is revealed through the interconnection of its dimensions.¹

The past becomes present that had been and the past of the present. Undoubtedly we bury the problem of HAD-BEEN-NESS even deeper by “reflexive modalising” because defining it as present that had been and pouring it in the present it remains determined from the perspective of present and presence and not of its HAD-BEEN-NESS. Present and presence come to dominate HAD BEEN and therefore the existential situations in which things happen inversely remain simply unconceivable.

It is characteristic of these existential situations that the past of present is replaced by other past presences. In Central Europe 1848 is more lively present in people’s conscience (especially during such important moments as the elections) than 1971 which is only 30 years away from us. We must not speak about “reflexive modalising” but a temporal change of place which is of course not accidental but it can take place whenever “the conscience about the past” is no longer structured by any live tradition but by classical historical science. This latter avoids the “near” past, the past of “present” and quickly fills the remaining gaps with data and information about PAST presences. (The statements of Alina Mungiu are very interesting in this respect. Her psychosociological research shows that the memory of Romanian “social masses” about the near past is selective and in the gaps appear “unscientific” data and information coming from farther pasts.)²

Therefore the real problem and task is to understand how these information can “change” their place in time, in spite of their chronological fixedness? Is it generally enough to talk about a “false”, “unscientific”, “inauthentic” conscience of time and “history”? And how could this conscience be “rectified”? Is it by publishing the correct and scientific data? Do these data contain the fact that the things and events they inform about are no-longer-being or do they first of all hide this “aspect”? Is there an authentic conscience of the past without this no-longer-being? Without this the past is only a HAD-BEEN-NESS which is possible any time, a HAD BEEN which does not pass because it is not “drawn” into the PAST.

It is very important that we examine and understand what has really passed of the past and how does it relate to that which has not passed, that which lasts or is born. For example, what does it mean that certain things happened to me when I was

¹ Idem, p.139.
18 or that I did this and that when I was 18? Of course, I am no longer 18 and I will “not even-when-not even” be in that situation. I am, but 18 years ago I was. I can remember what happened and what I did then and my memories can be supported by discussions, readings or further information about it. I can see that all these belong to me, even if I would rather like to get rid of some of them.

Usually we say that “this is my past” that I live and must live together with. Does this not mean that 18 years ago I WAS and therefore I am-no-longer and will “not even-when-not even” be?

Still, how can the HAD-BEEN-NESS of my eighteenth year become my PAST? Is it by remembering or “confessing” it or, only and first of all by stating that I am-no-longer 18 and will “not even-when-not even” be 18? Merely remembering the contents of HAD-BEEN-NESS does not form something like the past because the existential opening of “no-longer-being” and “not even-when-not even” is necessary for this. Without them there is no PAST.

We can only liberate us from what HAD BEEN and what we ourselves HAD BEEN if we realise that we will never or no-longer be like that. In other words, the maintainings, sustainings and freeings are not in fact decided when we think that “time” is lasting or, on the contrary, passing, but when we realise that the past is not simply connected to time but to ourselves, when we understand and fix the relationship between no-longer-being and not even-when-not even as a defiance in which we are as long as we live.

This also means that the past of Time and the time of Past are not the same thing. Between them there is the de-phasing that we encountered during the analysis of not even-when-not even. The past fixed as all the things that happened (res gestae) is not only expressed in relation with its difference of its “narrations” (historia rerum gestarum) but it is specified by a series of heterogeneous elements and moments.

From another point of view but led by similar reasons, Jacques Derrida speaks about “dead time” and “absolute past” when he criticizes Husserl’s concept of the “conscience of time”. What is this dead time and absolute past? How could time die or extinguish if there would not be something like not even-when-not even in it?

Therefore it is not accidental that one of the foundations of the revision of psychoanalysis is the rethinking of its concept of past. Initially, psychoanalysis said that the events of the (personal) past are kept repressed in the subconscious and, on the other hand, they act as causal factors in the present conditions of the life of the

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psyche. Similarly, the reconstruction and reconstitution of the past were equalled to examining the hidden causes of the (perturbations) of the present behaviour.\(^1\) However, this is not only an epistemologic and methodologic problem; there is an ontological and existential problem hidden at its basis.

It came to light that it is impossible to decide whether there is a true relationship between the past brought to the surface during psychoanalysis and what really happened in the past. It has also been cleared that the relationship of psychoanalysis and the past is not only and first of all a theoretical issue but also a therapeutic one which should lead the patient to a new position and a new attitude towards his past. The essence of these modifications is, ontologically speaking, the realisation that psychoanalytic **pathology** is nothing else than the “actions” of the un-passed HAD-BEEN-NESS of former trauma. The new position and attitude gained during the therapy means that the patient realises that the past is something stable, something that ended and which nevertheless belongs to the present world of his psychic experience; it is exactly his past.

Essentially, HAD-BEEN-NESSes detached of time, which cannot of themselves pass, are made past. From a psychoanalytic perspective it is characteristic of normal evolution that the past is PAST and nothing else, while in pathologic cases the past-ness of this HAD BEEN is problematic. What is sure in both cases is the HAD-BEEN-NESS, while the PAST-ness of HAD-BEEN-NESS is problematic in pathologic cases.

Let us return to a problem which has been mentioned several times but not cleared up. It is the possibility of nihilation of every HAD-BEEN-NESS. Essentially, nihilised HAD-BEEN-NESS is a disappeared no-longer-being. We do not know about it when was it nor that it “was” at all, because it does not even appear as absence on the horizon of forgetting. However, the possibility of nihilation of HAD-BEEN-NESSes is not an “abstract” possibility, but one which is articulated existentially in and through our ways of relating to them. There is no better proof of the possibility of nihilation of HAD-BEEN-NESSes than the care of the historical man to surround the “past”. Taking care of it, he wants to save it from the danger and possibility of nihilation.

It is also clear that nihilation itself is linked somehow to the “passing” into the past and this is why we consider that the past is most exposed to the possibility of nihilation. This is why Hegel thinks that “passing” (disappearance)\(^2\) is the passage

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\(^2\) Hegel, G.W. F., *Ştiinţa logicii (The Science of Logic)*, Bucureşti, 1966, p.87-88
from being to nothing. Of course, he means first of all “disappearance” and “cessation”, something mediated which reaches non-being through a certain result. This is why he always links disappearance and cessation to becoming, in the conditions of an Aufheben which is unfamiliar to time. Even if we link disappearance and cessation (passing) to becoming in its relation to time, it “becomes” definitive and thus what “had passed” is not in fact pure non-being but no-longer-being.

It is not accidental that Sartre places the issue of “Nothing” in the past: “The Nothing, says he, is not; The Nothing is ‘had been’; the Nothing does not nihilate; the Nothing ‘is nihilised’” (“Le Néant n’est pas; le Néant ‘est été’; le Néant ne se néantise pas; le Néant ‘est néantisé’”). Mixing the issues of past, Nothing and nihilation we give up the possibility of considering the existential problem of the Nothing in its real nuancing and weight, a problem which again seems to be organically linked to the past.

The “past” which we are usually speaking about, that is, the past without HAD-BEEN-NESS, is characterised by the duplicity of being the past of present and, on the other hand, what had been (what “took place”). Only, this point of view leaves undiscussed the possibility of re-finding a long-forgotten thing and that of the disappearance and “loss” of certain deeds, those which have nihilated. The more we try to fill the gaps with systemic constructions, the more we move away from the real issue of HAD-BEEN-NESS, and together with this, of the assumption that nihilation is a real possibility for HAD-BEEN-NESS – it could not have this possibility would “passing” and our temporality not be in a certain relationship with Nothing from the very beginning. Nothing is not only at the end of HAD-BEEN-NESS, as one of its effective possibilities, but it can only become such a possibility if it participates in its formation too.

Nothing is a feature and a component of the mode of being of man in the world and relating to the world and through it to Being. It “is” not “in” man or “in” the world but it creeps and fissures through in the existentials through which man exists or is in Being. It is not a limit marked by destiny, nor a curse, nor the deficiency of one of our modalities of being which would thus ask for corrections. Man exists in a way that Nothing is always born and it always intervenes in its being. Nothing is neither the “exterior” ground of all negativities with which we are completely helpless, nor the expression of our imperfection which asks for elaborate programs of action, but it is one of the fundamental, tensioned features of our being in the world which moves the understanding of being in the direction of determining our...

1 Sartre, Jean-Paul, L’Être et le Néant, idem, p.57.
protection against its determined “nihilations”. Nothing is there-fore not an “empty” region “in” man, “in being” or “beyond” being, but it appears whenever the intra-mundane existence of man is going on. This is where Nothing is born and nihilates, and this is why Heidegger links the metaphysical question leading to it to the constituting circumstances that the questioner is always involved in the question. Thus there is no “nihilism” in “Nothing”.

In spite of these, the majority of the meditations on past try to eliminate the negativity of no-longer-being, sacrificing it on the fetishist altar of the continuity of time and events.¹ It might be that philosophy thinks that it has saved the past from “passing”, ensuring it for the present but it is questionable whether it has also saved the present from the past. It does not even raise the question whether the past must be “saved” not so much of passing but of HAD-BEEN-NESS, and that this can only happen by making it PAST. Similarly, it is avoided that the past is not simply born of the passing of time, but in the way in which man produces HAD-BEEN-NESSes to which he relates in this way or that way. Therefore, it does never happen that there is HAD-BEEN-NESS and there is no “past”, nevertheless, there can be a past that does not pass. It does not become “present” but only dominates and floods the present.

Although we have discussed this in another context, it is perhaps useful to fix it, giving two more examples. There are two volumes edited by the History Department of the Bucharest University which together throw light on the issues in question. The first one is Miturile istorice româneşti (Romanian Historical Myths) (1995), the second one Miturile comunismului românesc (The Myths of Romanian Communism) (1995). A study from the first volume analyses the myths about Voivode Mihai Viteazul and reaches the conclusion that school manuals present this voivode as a permanent contemporary of successive generations. The analyses of the other volume showcase the gaps, hindrances and difficulties of the research about the recent history of communist Romania. One of the consequences is the hollow memory of this history. In the meantime the 16th century voivode remains permanently con-temporary, it has not “passed” as PAST but it is “present” as a HAD BEEN placed in the gaps or de-phasings of live and actual memory.

This is only possible with the ontological condition that FORMER events of a distant “past”, although un-passed, are able to fill the gaps of the memory of a recent past which is thus condemned to de-phasing in its organic relationship with the true liveness of the process of its effective formation and outlining.

¹ One of the most eloquent examples is Hans Georg Gadamer’s work, Igazság és módszer. Egy filozófiai hermeneutika vázlata (Truth and Method. Sketch of a Philosophical Hermeneutics), Budapest, 1984.
We underline: the problem at stake is not the **qualification** of this “procedure” or mentality, whether it is “scientific” or authentic. What interests us is: what exactly in the “being” of the past and our relation to it founds and makes possible such a placement of it?

However, if we analyse things more attentively, we realise that there is not only a shift in time and a change of temporal “place” but also a change of ontological qualities. HAD-BEEN-NESS becomes simply SINCE THEN. While the ontological meaning of HAD-BEEN-NESS is no-longer-being, the ontological meaning of OF THEN is already-being.

Already-being in the meaning of SINCE THEN is not fixed as “present” but as a duration “Already” linked to “of then” refers to previous but fixes it as something that lasts. This is not HAD-BEEN-NESS because what “passes” in “SINCE THEN”, lasts.

This reveals that what is called “past” is usually made up of extremely heterogeneous elements from an ontological point of view: it consists of HAD-BEEN-NESS and SINCE THEN. What is extremely interesting and important in this “past” is that HAD-BEEN-NESS in itself does not pass while SINCE THEN lasts. What is this enigmatic past which lasts on the one hand and does not pass, on the other hand?

“ALREADY” refers to the past, even in the already-being of SINCE THEN. We have already said that in time presented as a series of “nows” it is no-longer-now. SINCE THEN is not simply the fixing of a beginning in a former time, nor the “from … and until” of a duration, but its duration lasts.

For example: the building in which I am writing today is the Central University Library in Cluj which was built in 1906. SINCE THEN it functions in this building. Only, in the meantime, its fence was demolished; new wings were added and generations of employees and readers have died. The past of the present state of the building and institution is “composed” of a series of factors which, as SINCE THEN, already exist and others, as HAVING- BEEN, no-longer-exist. This heterogeneity of the past cannot be diluted in slippery dialectic formulas. We must not reinstall the initial conditions and resurrect the dead employees in order to fix and authentically identify the past of this building and this institution, but we must fix its elements which are-no-longer as no-longer-being and those which are-already as already-being.
It is very important to bear in mind that what we usually call the “past” is – ontologically speaking – extremely complex and heterogeneous. Even more important is that the past is not formed by the simple “passage” of time.

Something like the past is formed only in and through the existentiality of existence, that is, in and through the fact that the historical man maintains and continues certain things while ceases or interrupts others; he keeps some things and lets downfall, even eliminates or makes past other things. Man himself only “passes” as HAD BEEN, without becoming PAST.

Exactly this is why HAD-BEEN-NESS and HAD-BEEN-NESSes must be known and researched. Only their research and knowledge must be guided and founded by the ontological and existential opening of their HAD BEEN nature. Only this way are historical constructions and narratives authentic.

Of course, this is a difficult, sometimes painful task. This is why it is important to understand that making PAST something that HAD BEEN has nothing to do with what we usually call “forgetting”, “reconciliation” or “resignation”; the essence of the problem remains ontological.

Let us take the example of the Holocaust in the Second World War. How can its HAD-BEEN-NESS made past? Not living it again day after day, nor negating its existence. Criminals must be punished and victims must find their “peace”. But we cannot be calm SINCE THEN!

The criminals do no longer live today, only their descendants. Although they are not responsible for the “past” they must confront it. They must face not the victims but rather their descendants who survived the inhuman conditions. This is a huge task and a challenge in which we must see, among others, the possibility of making the Holocaust PAST. Only this way can we ensure that it does not happen again.

Ontologically speaking, any other possibility, even the most “noble”, “uplifting” and “moralising” is just a trap. A relevant example of this is an otherwise well-meaning excerpt from an interview with Hanno Loewy, Director of an Institute in Hamburg which researched the phenomenon of the Holocaust: “As to reconciliation, said the Director, only the descendants live today, who are not responsible for the past. The problem is that there is no equality (sic!) among the descendants: the descendant of the criminal is no longer criminal but the descendant of the victim is also victim (sic!) because they intended (sic!) to prevent his being
born”.¹ That is: the HAD-BEEN-NESS of the Holocaust is not let to be PAST because of the un-passing nature of the quality of being “its victim”. It remains un-passed, “boiling” in the opacity of the no-longer-being of its HAD-BEEN-NESS.

The enigmatic nature of the past consists first of all of the fact that we consider it as a “natural” feature (time) instead of a zone of our existential possibilities. Of courses, the past is not a possibility to the effect that it can “not be”. However, it may happen that we do not see the possibilities inherent in it.

How does HAD-BEEN-NESS and SINCE THEN meet and interweave in this past? Because the past is – or seems to be – “one and the same”, only we do not know how is it “composed”.

In order to answer this question we must return to certain aspects of the analysis of HAD-BEEN-NESS. We have seen that the adverb of time “no longer” brings together in simultaneity the triple negation in HAD-BEEN-NESS: not even Being, not even Nothing and not even Time. Thus NOT EVEN became the real function of “no longer” and the temporal concretion of NOT EVEN is NOT EVEN-WHEN-NOT EVEN. It has resulted that Nothing enters time through not even-when-not even, detaching HAD BEEN of time. Once formed, HAD-BEEN-NESS is attracted by and nestled in the – similarly existential – de-phasings of (our) temporality. This is why we claimed that as long as the existence of man means his being thrown in the world, not even-when-not even is always revived.

The analyses regarding OF THEN help us to realise the fact that not even-when-not even is installed and takes place whenever the Dasein confronts (through guiltiness) the fact that he ALREADY is, that is, his existence always already has a certain OF THEN that it must take on but which not even-when-not even comes from his being a ground.

This means that not even-when-not even detached of time does not behave in a neutral way in the de-phasings of temporality but has “elective affinities” which attract it and send him towards the past, first of all through the fact that the being-Already which opens the de-phasings is exactly the past in its meaning of SINCE THEN, and, on the second hand, because within the de-phasings not even-when-not even is always directed towards something “previous”.

Consequently, this is not only about the privileged affinity of not even-when-not even as compared to the past but the osmosis of HAD-BEEN-NESS and SINCE THEN in the “past” thus formed. HAD-BEEN-NESS and SINCE THEN mix in this past and also become indistinct, because all that HAD BEEN can last and everything

¹ Published in the weekly 168 Óra (168 Hours), Budapest, nr.24 (January 1995).
that lasts SINCE THEN can appear as already surpassed and vice versa, depending on the momentary needs of any time “now” but which, unobserved, remains exposed to the domination of the “past”.

This is why I think that Sartre was wrong when he differentiated between past and present saying that the past is something “in itself” while the present something “for itself”. On the contrary, what could be, roughly speaking, “in itself” is not the past but HAD-BEEN-NESS detached from time. The PAST is always for itself because it is the past of a being of man which itself is “for itself”. Opening and freeing itself to its own possi-bilities he/she learns to make PAST what HAD BEEN.

Indeed, one of the most important conclusions of the meditation about HAD-BEEN-NESS and PAST is that it throws light on the apparently common fact that the PAST is not a simple HAD BEEN with which we can do nothing. It draws the attention to the fact that we must relate in a determined way to HAD-BEEN-NESS and philosophy can open us new horizons. It also underlines the fact that we always relate to it, for example, in the numerous “commemorative gestures”, only we do not conceive this relation as the PASSAGE of HAD-BEEN-NESS but as its presentification.1

The various rewritings of history depending on the circumstances, which is so common in our region, the selection, hiding and secretisation of the documents of the past are different behaviours and ways of relating to the “past” which may not “influence”, from an abstract point of view, what HAD BEEN, however, they are ways of making HAD BEEN “past”. But they are mainly methods through which, despite the drasticity of intervention - HAD BEEN does not pass.

Modernity and especially historical science whose birth is linked to it, objectifies the past. Thus a completely new situation arose in the relation of historical mankind to his own temporality. Unlike the temporality based on the continuity of tradition, there is a dephasing in line with the gap between history and memory. In fact, my memories go back to the end of the 1960s. However, there are no historical syntheses about that period. In other words: memory is no longer supported and integrated into the possible organicity of a “continuous past”. However, the past of my memory is the past of the formation and articulation of my being which has not yet passed but is in search of the fact of being thrown in the world.

The objectified past became the only real and therefore privileged dimension of time. In St Augustin’s age it was natural to say that if the past “exists”, it is in the present and, consequently, the present seemed to him the only “real” dimension of

time. From modernity onwards we live in fact in the fissure of the dephasing between memory and history.¹

It is not accidental that modernity is called “New Age” (Neuzeit; Temps Nouveaux; Ğékör). It is since then that man experiences time as something that is permanently renewed or must permanently be renewed.² However, experiencing time as something that is renewed, means a certain experimenting, even if only epiphenomenal, of its dephasings.

Even though tradition is not transmitted unaltered and unchanged and its permanence is only imagined, it produces a status of existential continuity in which ontologically there is no fissure between history and memory. It is the dephasing of history and memory which allows tradition to appear as something problematic but, on the other hand, the secret desire of dreaming the “paradisiacal” state. Also on account of this, “Tradition is not the bearer of a veritable historical conscience, nor the bearer of an authentic conscience of the past.”³

Historical science which objectifies the past, happily finds in it the “whole” time, time in the totality of its dimensions: past in past, present in past and future in past. All of them in the past, not “really” anywhere else; the past becomes thus the only “real time”. Therefore it is privileged and precious. The fact that we found the whole time in one of its dimensions is not questioned. Similarly, the fact that this might open the way for the domination of the past, is not questioned. If the whole time is renewed, does it not carelessly leave behind an un-passed, “outdated” past?

Hermeneutics is one of the forms of the conscience of problemising this possibility and situation: how can the organicity of the relationship with tradition be ensured while time itself is lately renewed passing permanently?

The first historical breakthrough accomplished by Martin Heidegger, which is of then on the way of forgetting, is perhaps the interweaving of hermeneutics and phenomenology. In its confluence with phenomenology hermeneutics lost the primacy of its orientation towards the past of tradition, being led – phenomenologically speaking – towards the “things themselves”. Tradition is no longer brought again to the present but to a new present the novelty of which must be determined by its phenomenologic contemporanization (Mitzeitigung) with the present. The “object of philosophical research” in Phänomenologische

¹ St Augustine, Confessiones, București, 1994, p.344.
² Kosellek, Reinhard, Vergangene Zukunft. Zur Semantik geschichtlicher Zeiten, Frankfurt am Main, 1995, p.12; 33; 58.
Interpretationen zu Aristoteles is the presence here of man (das menschliche Dasein) which is not a certain posterior application but it becomes of the same time (mitzeitig) with factic life.\textsuperscript{1} The idea returns with Sein und Zeit: “the phenomenology of the Dasein is hermeneutics in the original meaning of the word”, for the understanding of hermeneutics as the methodology of the historical sciences of the spirit promote its derived meaning.\textsuperscript{2}

Hermeneutics has opened towards the reception of the novelty of newness even if, historically speaking, this novelty is predominantly prefigured as an advance in decay. I think that it is mistaken to consider Heidegger’s “critical” position towards technique, the problems of humanism and modern science, as the expression of an obsolescent “traditionalism”. The novelty of modern technique, the novelty of modern science are critically evaluated but the opening towards the novelty of the present and the future is preserved unaltered.

It is exactly this opening that seems to have been lost in the post-Heideggerian development of hermeneutics which re-opened the places of the re-subjugation of the past of the text of tradition and of the tradition of texts. Hermeneutics has thus became a space and a frame for the return of the domination of past on the present, a framework of deepening the dephasing and fissure between history and memory. It comes to forget about the hermeneutic task of the present and also becomes a forum for the ideologisation and methodological legitimation of renouncing to thematise it.

At its most dramatic point this tendency is expressed by the later thinking of Paul Ricoeur who asserts expressis verbis in an interview in 1991: “Nothing is so unclear and opaque as the present in which we live; Only those who come 20-30 years after us will be able to tell who we are and what we are now. But we now live in the opacity of the present epoch and therefore we are unable to qualify it…”\textsuperscript{3}

But what does in fact mean that only those who come 20-30 years after us will be able to tell who we are now? Are they not our offsprings, the generation generated by us? If only they can understand our present, unintelligible for us and unassumed by us, does this not mean that history is articulated as a series of generations which are only understood post festum? Therefore, the “present” of a generation can only be understood if the generation had passed? Does the passage of a generation not mean its death? Thus, the life of each present generation moves between the effort of

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{1} Op. cit. p.8.
\textsuperscript{3} Ricoeur, Paul, Az “oltvány”, az “üledék” és az “emlékezet”. Két beszélgetés Tóth Tamással (The “Graft”, the “Residue” and “ Memory”. Two Conversations with Tamás Tóth), in: Magyar Filozófiai Szemle, 1997, nr. 5-6.
\end{footnotesize}
understanding the past and awaiting its future death, that is, it moves between the datable void of the temporal dephasing between history and memory.

It is no wonder that Ricoeur is honestly surprised that the issue of memory does not appear in the three volumes of his book Temps et récit. “As though I would have skipped over it”, says he in surprise. Only, the lack of dealing with memory has more serious consequences than those which affect the quality of a single book. The issue of he who remembers and the way he gained his memories becomes unavoidable, and the assertion that it is in fact the memory of a present and living person is also inevitable. “Every memory is pervaded by something personal, says Éva Ancsel and therefore an unrecoverable past disappears with every death, a past that only that single mortal being bore with itself in that way.”¹

The break between history and memory deepened by the avoidance of problemising memory, legitimises the domination of the past and “widens” its place in the fissures of the dephasings of temporality that only hermeneutics can consacrate. It becomes not only “guilty” in the original Heideggerian meaning exposed here but also culpable because the non-testamentary transfer of the responsibility of the effort of understanding the presence of a future generation which is moreover its progeny, cannot be interpreted as “innocent”. In these circumstances, hermeneutical meditation on the “origin of evil” in the world, a meditation by Paul Ricoeur based on the texts of tradition becomes a strange undertaking…

“We can be wrong in describing the present epoch…” says Ricoeur in the same text. As though we could not commit mistakes in describing the past! In our region and at my age I have read at least four or five “histories” of my country and maybe even more histories of my nation. The most serious of these works say that this is inevitable, not only in order to “correct” mistakes but also because every epoch and generation must take on its historical past together with assuming the risk of “being wrong”. In fact the same “relativity” must be acknowledged in the hermeneutic relationship with the present.

The destiny of the subject of application in hermeneutics is in the middle of this issue. Conceiving philosophy and philosophising as an existential or a factic mode of being of the Dasein through which it becomes of the same time with it, Heidegger rejects expressis verbis any “posteriority” of application.² In Sein und Zeit he speaks explicitly about the hermeneutic traps of tradition.

¹ Ancsel, Éva, Lélek, idő, emlékezés (Soul, Time, Memory), Budapest, 1992, p.15.
² Heidegger, Martin, Phänomenologische Interpretationen…, op.cit. p.8.
Hermeneutics with Hans Georg Gadamer lost its very freedom in its relation to tradition, however, in its dialogues about the temporal distance of the past it still took care of the “thing itself” which appears in texts and interpretation and its moment of application is regained although without the capacity of remaining receptive to the novelty of the new.¹

The loss and later on the renouncement of hermeneutics to the “present” and then the “future” coincides with the degradation and disappearance of its preoccupations with the problem of its “application”, together with its detachment and distancing from phenomenology. Therefore it is “natural” that Vattimo Gianni writes: “The future, be it a process or appearance of novelty, is paradoxically guaranteed today by the automatisms of the system; it is the past which risks disappearance, that continuity (sic!) of experience, that concatenation (sic!) of meanings.”² But what else does it mean to renounce to the present (and the future) or to leave the present to the “automatisms of the system” but to deepen through sanctioning, without resignation, the split between history and memory, the temporal dephasing that is born and born again with the generations that are not in fact “born” but flow accidentally.

This is perhaps why we became ready to avoid certain issues which are nevertheless extremely important, first of all the realisation of the ontological novelty of our existential relation to the past. True, it was necessary to put in parenthesis the great philosophical category of time because only this way could we reach, starting from the problematic nature of our existential situation, through guilty meditation, the specificity of a single dimension of time. Only this way could meditation on HAD-BEEN-NESS and the PAST become a distinct research detached of the allpowerful, all-embracing and absorbing concept of “time”.

The question arises whether it is not a feature of time itself, more precisely, of the concept of time, that it “appears” as a whole in each of its dimensions, only in different ways.

Heidegger also analysed the situations and possibilities of temporality being formed by “starting” from the different ecstasis of time. He thought that athetic temporality must be formed by “starting” from the future. However, he did not think about the trap of temporality and time of showing itself as a whole in its orizontal structure in each of its ecstasis “taken separately”. Neither did he deal with the

¹ Gadamer, Hans Georg, Igazság és módszer, op. cit. p.201.
ontological and existential differences between HAD-BEEN-NESS and SINCE THEN.

The division of “memory” and “history” is not strictly specific to the Central and Eastern European region or the former communist countries, but it is a more general phenomenon which structures modernity. However, it has a “privileged” and more acute presence here. Therefore it becomes a real chance for philosophy which must answer its “regional” existential challenges and “trials”. This is what we should call “applied philosophy” in a strict sense.

Translated by Éva Zsizsman
CHAPTER III.

The Future
Or
Questioningly Dwells the Mortal Man…
– Question-Points to Time –

The issue of the future has probably interested people ever since the very beginning. Man as man can probably be unimaginable without this concern.

Naturally, future has always presented and still presents a concern for the man primarily in order to predict or guess what it will bring about and what will happen “in it”. Or rather, what will become – “in it”, again – of all the things that he has planned and achieved.

All these things must have been so important for us humans since ancient times that we have always turned to fortune tellers, prophecies, magic, dreams, wisdom… and of course undertook the pains of sciences and pseudo-sciences in order to answer them.

Richard Rorty might perhaps be right in saying that thinkers only began to more seriously deal with the problem of the future, and time itself, when they finally gave up the hope for the knowledge of eternity.\(^1\) The first philosophers allegedly still believed that the differences between past and future can be neglected… Therefore it was only towards the end of the Middle Ages that philosophers started to lose their interest in eternity and paid increasingly more attention to the problem of time.\(^2\)

Historically speaking, this standpoint is of course much debatable;\(^3\) at any rate, it should be radically revised… Nevertheless, it is probably true that the issue of the

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\(^2\) Ibid.

\(^3\) As already mentioned, people were probably concerned with their future ever since the beginnings of their history, otherwise they would not have venerated the institutions of wizards, shamans, fortune-tellers, oracles – commonly termed Mysteries. Implicitly, the case is similar for sages, thinkers, philosophers as well. Without such a concern they could not have undertaken the task of perfecting themselves and humans in general, by making them partake in truth, kindness, and beauty. Or, for that matter, neither that of amending the laws and the community order, for example by outlining the possibilities of an “ideal”, or at least empirically more operational state or constitution. As undertaken by, say, a Solon, a Plato, or an Aristotle…
future began to gain special emphasis only towards the end of the 18th century,\(^1\) which was enforced, with the **problematization** of historicity and research, towards the mid- and late 19th century, reaching its highest in the 20th. To such an extent that by the end of the last century a new scholarly discipline, *futurology* or the study of the future, started to gain ground, dealing with the research of the future.

What is more, at that time more and more voices started discussing the “future’s shock”.\(^2\) Future had become a “shock” by that time because it could no longer be a shelter. And also because we can no longer have any present shelters – prepared, let’s say, from the past, from tradition – against it. So – as they experienced – the future always arrives… too early these days. Therefore there can be no orientation whatsoever within it, nor with the help of it.\(^3\) On the contrary, it keeps disturbing and upsetting the allegedly “more secure” orientation with the compass of the algorithms of familiarities or novelty productions.

Regardless of all this, future still remains one dimension or “ecstasy” of time, which cannot be discussed outside, or beyond, the discussion of time.

**The future and its coming\(^4\)**

The first and foremost thing that one says about the future is that it **will come**. Directly or indirectly, in most languages people perceive the future primarily with reference to “coming”. Therefore the future is always rendered – more or less outlined in a horizon-like manner – as something that “will arrive”, and then it **will (then) be**. That is, future is what **will come into being**!

However, what only “will be” – naturally – is **not yet**, or does not exist yet. The future is thus something which is **not yet**, but it **will come**, and in coming, it **will be**. Future is therefore a mysterious thing… and in all certainty it is primarily this “will be” that is the most mysterious about it! Since, as we have seen, the “will be” means precisely something or sends us to something which **isn’t there yet or there isn’t yet**… But which nevertheless… will be, will come into being… **then**.

How can one grasp then even the mere question of such a “mysterious” **non-being**?

\(^1\) Let us think of Kant, for instance, the philosophically most radical analyzer of the problem of time after Aristotle and Augustine, but already by referring his metaphysical designs directly to “all future metaphysics”.

\(^2\) Alvin Toffler published a highly successful and influential book with this title in 1970.


\(^4\) The word for “future” in Hungarian (“jővő”) is the present participle form of the verb “to come” (“jönni”). And not only in Hungarian, but also the German *Zukunft* is derived from *zukommen*, and in Romanian too “viitorul vine”…
Well, probably by addressing our first question not to the issue of the “Will be”, but much rather by asking what is this “Yet”? Or even by asking how can we understand the “isn’t there”, which – existentially, thus still as a “will be” – is connected to something which is exactly: the future? Because it is evident from the beginning – and especially problematic, too – that here, as it emerges and outlines in this approach, in the “isn’t there yet” of the “will be”, the “yet” actually pertains to the “present” (to the “present time”, the “presentness of the time”, and to none other…). Nonetheless, in a very special manner. That is, exactly by opening it – i.e., the present – to that what will (then) be. So “that” what will be, is-not-yet on the one hand, but the “yet” in it will be in fact in such a way that, in coming, it will (then) come. Once it will come, that certain “that” or “this” will (then) (still) become (the) “present”.

However, on the other hand, that what “will be”, always comes in such a way that the time passes (“meanwhile”). That what “will be” in one of its decisive relations does not in fact – only! – “come”, but the passing also passes towards itself (as if spreading-reaching-approaching it).

Now: the future is precisely the direction in which time – from the past to the present and with the present itself – passes forward, or rather, passes on. The future as the (mere) passing-on of time can be called – with not quite appropriate words – “physical future”.\(^1\) From this point of view the following – coming – spring also “comes” like this, since – now! – time passes towards it.

So the future here is rather a sui generis, “mere” or sketchy direction of time, indifferent to events, devoid of content, and quite ambiguously doubtful or questionable. Aristotle himself thought that our statements about definite events happening tomorrow or a thousand years from now are problematic especially because, on the one hand, it is questionable whether there will or will not be any future events at all, and on the other hand, it is again incidental whether definite, specific things or events will or will not happen…\(^2\)

So, all these having been said: the future is – at least, at the moment – that what comes, on the one hand, and also that towards which time passes, on the other.

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1. Not appropriate, because for physics it is exactly the “passing” of time which makes it most problematic. In one of his letters written to a friend, Einstein states that past, present, and future are merely illusions, although persistent and obstinate illusions. Therefore in a strict sense no physical concept corresponds to the passage of time. From the point of view of physics the passing of time can only be an inaccurate concept or idea of everyday life. In physics – that is: in “reality” – time does not pass, it simply is. As something “identical” with what clocks measure… See Paul Davies, “That mysterious flow”, *Scientific American* 287, September 2002.

Consequently in this light and moment the “will be” is exactly that what is constituted in the undecided and essentially undecidable and indefinable “encounter” of the coming and the passage towards (as not-yet-is). Then!

This is in fact precisely what we always mean by saying: Then! Therefore we must also ask what this “Then” is, or what does it mean?

Well, this Then means nothing else – at least apparently – than that permanent and future then when something – that is, something remaining indeterminate – Will be in a time coming and passing towards it. In Aristotelian terms, the Then, actually and specifically, is the primary horizon of the ousia (that is, the primary essential horizon) of a future indeterminate then-ness.¹ Such a horizon though which, as we have seen, stands in the more comprehensive horizon of “Yet”, but at the same time it also forms another horizon-like (further) opening which opens (still further) up for the Yet a specific space seeing towards the future in its coming and passing towards.

This peculiar space and horizon is essentially “negative”. Or, more precisely: it is outlined and articulated by negativity. Since what will (Then) be is meanwhile still: is-not-yet. Or rather: it is not exactly as Yet.

Of course, the Yet primarily and outstandingly denotes and names that what goes on and, as such, always, “already”: is. In other words, the Yet is exactly the actual content of an ongoing persistence, which clasps that which is inherently persistent. The dictionary defines Yet as something which “remains further for a while in a state preceding that of the present, and continues the action begun in the past also in the present and perhaps in the future…”²

The horizon of the Yet is therefore quite wide and comprehensive… We have seen that it opens up “from the inside” to that what – albeit specifically – is-not-(yet)! However, it was also about this that we said: as Will-be, this is exactly the future. As what Will-be is exactly not-Yet, and it is not exactly as Yet… But we have also proposed that the Yet – as an ongoing persistence – also pertains to the present. It is by this pertinence that it holds further on to that what persists. It is the Yet again which opens up – in time and with time – the present to that what is-not. As an is-not-

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This is only possible of course if, above all this, the Yet somehow “connects” with the Already. This also reveals that the Yet permanently “touches”, “clasps” or runs across “all” the dimensions or ecstasies of time. Because – connecting with the Already – the Yet holds, from the past and through the present, in the horizon of an undecided, yet “complete” openness – that is, an openness extending to the is-not – that what: holds.¹

Or else there could be no kind of connection or linkage between “Is” and “Is not”, to be or not to be. The “Not to be”, non-being, or the Nothing cannot be “logically” deduced, nor understood from “to be”, from being. And this also stands for the opposite.

So, the Yet pertains to the fine structure of being and the constancy and persistence connected to it, and it does so in the very specific way that it also articulately opens, projects, mediates and “structures” it, from the Not-Yet to the explicit No, to the future possibilities of Non-being, of perishing, of the Nothing. That what “Is Yet”, always exists in such a way that it has no possible future lasting as Will-be as Yet…, and thus also in a way that in the future its future Will be exactly such, that it is possible that it Will-not-be at all. That is, it is possible that its lasting – Then – will not even last…

So the Yet pertains indeed to the fine structure of lasting, but in a way that it articulates its foresight, its fore-reaching to the future. As opposed to the Already, which sends primarily to the past, to Had-Been-ness.² The Yet-To-be, the Yet-To-last etc. grasp (also) in fact that what there is in the present, or rather that what is present as present… But only in the understanding in which its being lies at the same time – and especially – in the exposedness of the is-not-yet, the Not-Yet-Being of the future, of the Will-be-ness!

Really, the “is-not” means exactly: not to exist, to lack existence. That what “is-not”, lacks exactly its existence, or it is exactly existence that it is deprived of. And what will-be, it must be stressed, lacks existence in quite a peculiar way: exactly

² See my study entitled “Múlt és VOLTság” (Past and Had-Been-ness) in the volume: István Király V., Filozófia és Itt-Lét (Philosophy and Dasein), (Cluj-Napoca (Kolozsvár): Erdélyi Hiradó, 1999), 79–126; and also Király V., “Had-Been-ness and Past”.

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as a *Yet*. It is not yet, (but) it will be. Because, on the one hand, it comes. And, on the other hand, time passes towards it.

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Now, it may also emerge that the Will-be is not necessarily a mere or an essentially empty undecidedness, forerunning to “emptiness”. On the contrary – and in advance – the Will-be also contains “certainty” in a certain sense. Naturally: as a possibility.

For example, my own death from the very moment of my birth, or rather by my birth, “falls into” my own future; while in a certain – and only seemingly superficial – sense my life is nothing else than the passage of its time towards my death. But the case with the next spring or the next day is somewhat similar. They are also in a way part of the future ever since long ago, and in a quite certain way. Therefore they will also come in such a way that time actually passes towards them.

The question is now how is that possible and what is the significance of the fact that the Not-yet – as a peculiar and essential “element” of the Will-be, the existence, or at least the ontological structure of the future – opens up to something which in its kind is **certain**, albeit as a possibility? Because, let me repeat, in the course of my life my death for me – and for everybody else as well – is on the one hand certain and definite, and on the other hand it will always and only be, alive, in the future, in my future. So, although in the course of my life my death is-not-yet always as Will-be, it is still not possible that it will not be at all or ever…

It is apparent however, that we stand here entirely in the horizon of Yet, but in a negative direction: **Still-not-yet**! However, this has also been revealed by a – probably mediated – particular contact of the horizon of Yet with the horizon of Will-be. Because that what is-not-Yet, but Will definitely Be, and Will Be in a way that it cannot happen for it **not** to be… Well, this necessarily sends to something which is capable of grasping, and also more specifically articulating the previously outlined horizon of Yet. Which is, at the same time, also connected to the horizons of Will-be, again in a particularly articulated way.

In order for a better understanding of this, one must also make here a little digression. Because the present situation and state of questioning and interpretation indirectly also reveals that, for example, the **Past** – as we have seen it in a previous
study\(^1\) – Was-Is in fact as Not-any-more, the present passes exactly as Already-is in the *Will-Be-Becoming* direction of the future as Is-not-Yet. As Heidegger says: not-any-more and not-yet. Past and future.

Both are of course “negations”, that is, negativity and privation (*sterésis, privatio*), but one constitutes the Past, while the other the Future. Denying in different directions or – negatively – contacting the Is as privation, or rather the *Dasein* present in the present as presence. In such a way, that is, that during this while both negativities constitute a particular existence. Because: Had-Been-ness constitutes, or better: directly means the existence of Not-any-more, while Will-be that of Not-yet. Both are – let me repeat again – particular beings constituted exactly by negation or negativity.

However, that what is deprived precisely of (its) existence, is called, most directly: Nothing.\(^2\) But none of the Had-been, the Past, the Will-be, and the Future are Nothing, although all *are constituted and exist in a particular way* somehow exactly in the horizon of *negation, more precisely the negation of being, the privation of being*.

*Better said, they both stand in some kind of horizon of nothingness.* Since, I repeat: that what Had-been – but which is by no means Past in an actual sense\(^3\) – is exactly in such a way that it is not precisely as Any-more. Because that what Had-been means exactly that it is Not-Any-more. Just as the Future also is in a way that it Is-not Yet.

The Had-Been-ness will only turn into an actual Past if we make it past, that is, if we make-pass that what Had-Been. But this way the Never also takes part in the constitution of the Past. Because the Past partly also means that what Had-Been, Will Never Be (ever) Again. And that is exactly how the Past can be authentically and really repeated. And what lasts, is not (yet) Past, but it passes… The lasting or keeping of this, or its turning into Had-Been-ness and actual Past Will (Then) pertain to the Future (Yet).

\(^1\) See István Király V., *Had-Been-ness and Past*.
\(^2\) For details on the Nothing see my study *Elzártság, elfedettség és elrejtettség Heideggernél* (Closedness, Coveredness, and Concealedness at Heidegger) in the volume *Határ – Hallgatás – Titok* (Limit – Silence – Secret), (Cluj-Napoca (Kolozsvár): Korunk Baráti Társaság, 1996), and also my study *Múlt és VOLTság*.
\(^3\) Ibid.
In its primary, yet essential outlining, then, something like the future is ontologically constituted by the yet almost completely unknown, but gradually already approached **Will-be**. The Will-be is of course not merely “the future tense” of the “grammatical” conjugation of the infinitive *to be* in various languages, but we have already seen that the Will-be must be collectively constituted by things like the (Is-not-)Yet and the similarly wonderful and almost unknown Then.
Now – turning back and taking a step forward – one may also say that the Will-be – and by this to a certain extent the Future itself as well – actually and directly means nothing else than a Not-Yet-Being standing in the horizon of Then. Since the horizon of the Future understood in the sense of ‘that what is-not-yet’ or ‘that what does-not-yet-exist’ embraces or opens up to something that ‘Will possibly Not-Be’. It is partly this that the Aristotelian example of tomorrow’s sea battle illustrates... But we have also seen that the Future taken in the sense of ‘that what does-not-yet-exist’ equally opens up to something that Will exactly and definitely Be.

However, this is only possible if the horizons and force-fields of the Yet and of ‘that-what-will-be’ actually meet and collide in the horizon and force-field of the Then, mediated and associated by it! The Then does not merely and simply say that – taken in general or as usual – Not-yet or It-is-not-yet, but It-will-be. Therefore it demands and deserves indeed a more fundamental explanation.

We have seen that the Any-more – actually – sends to the ‘before’ and thus to the past, and the Yet also sends to the ‘thereafter’ and thus to the future. The Then, of course, always sends to the ‘thereafter’ and thus further and deeper into the Future. Because that what exists as a Then, is evidently ‘that-what-will-be’. But that what Will-be like this – as a Then – is not merely the coming any longer, or it is not only outlined in an – albeit positioned, yet – indefinite event or encounter by the forward-passage of time, but it is more specific and articulated. Now what is exactly this Then and what does it say?

Well, the Then – according to the dictionaries as well – is in fact an adverb referring and sending to the future. It is one of the specific differences and particular, explicitly philosophical possibilities of the Hungarian language that it expresses such a sending to the Future by a separate, straight and telling word (‘Majd’). Since, what in Hungarian is called ‘Majd’, in most European languages is only expressed by circumscribing its typical cases. The German, English, French, or e.g. Romanian languages contain no separate words of such straightness. Therefore the Hungarian ‘Majd’ conceals philosophical possibilities which could even be called outstanding.

And it “conceals” because the Then is primarily used to reveal the latent future reference of present-tense verbs. Further on, the Then is also used for enforcing the future references, the future relations of those said. The Then in fact always refers to

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and utters a time which follows the present. Often with an objecting, denying affective charge.¹

By revealing the latent future references of present (tense) verbs, the Then creates and keeps a future relationship with the present, or rather with that what actually lasts “in it”, and is not just finished. This can only happen of course if in the present the Then comes into future-related contact with the present, or actually with the Yet. In such a way that – as a liminal and articulated mediator – it grasps and mediates the force-lines of the Yet swinging in the direction of the ‘that-what-will-be’, but quite undefined in themselves. And by this, or rather together with these, the Then outlines and constitutes the ‘that-what-will-be’ as well.

This way the Future can indeed be meaningfully called that what Is-not-yet (but) Will Then Be. In other words: it is revealed that the ‘that-what-will-be’ – which is evidently related to that what is the existence of the Future... – is in fact the being of the holding of the Yet and its necessary openness and opening to the non-being, constituted in the force-fields articulated and explicitly grasped by means of the Then.

Consequently the ‘that-what-will-be’ no longer simply and barely means that ‘it-is-not-yet’, but by the Then this Non-being in the Yet becomes in fact a highly articulated “positiveness”.

Now, during this while an unavoidable connection is formed with the non-being, or the negation of being – that is, actually with the Nothing – the definition of which needs further attention.

However, as we have said earlier with a more general validity, that what is not exactly as a Yet, it is still primarily a Will-Be – or more precisely it is outlined exactly as a ‘that what will be’. And surely, we have said it in all rightness. Of course, it must also be said that it is: the Future. So, that what comes – at least on the one hand. On the other hand however, it comes in such a way that the time passes towards it. In other words: by its own passage, time does not pass in such a way that it constantly passes towards (its own) future, and thus it reaches or fetches it. This is what Heidegger states when saying that the time (itself) is not temporal.² Because otherwise time would lose or cancel itself, or eat itself up.

However, the statement that time is not temporal does not mean that it is atemporal, it is outside time, or that it is timeless or eternal. The statement that time is

¹ Ibid.
not temporal means that its **meaning** – or rather the horizon of its meaning-constitution and its “runway” – is beyond time “itself”.

Time and **the meaning of time exists** in a way that time can never reach “to” this meaning “by itself” – by simply passing or extending – as if “fulfilling” it! The actual and at the same time mostly hidden meaning or horizon of meaning of time is exactly the **When**!

A dialogue with Aristotle also reveals that in its original and primary essence (the question of) the *poté*, the When is by far not the direct, precise definition of a moment or a period of time, but it is in fact “only” a category. That is: a **(basic) question** or a **basis for questioning**. And only thus and only to this extent is “time” in fact a **category**. Therefore it is only and exclusively the question and the interrogation of When? in which the Yet, the Any More, the Any Time, the now/then, the before, the after, etc. may have a meaning. And the ‘Majd’ too, of course, as also any kind of “verb conjugation” and “verb tense” as well.

What is more, the Not Any Time – that is, the Never and Not Ever – and the No When?, that is, the possible When-lessness can only have a meaning, a horizon of meaning in and with the categorial question of the When?. Because we humans can only “understand” and “interpret” this – partly very questionable, and partly very certain – When-lessness if we start out from the When?.

The Future will then be only and exclusively because, coming as ‘that what is not yet’, it is fixed as a Non-being, a ‘that what is not’, exactly as a Then, in the horizon of meaning articulated by the Yet of the **question When**?, connected to the essence or passage of the **new dimension** of the being of time. Or more precisely: it is thus and by this that it opens up in a particularly outlined and fixed way in the “indefinableness” and openness of Not-yet-being.

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1 So that “eternity”, “atemporality” or that what is “beyond or above time” can only be understood with the help of, or starting out from, time. See Martin Heidegger, *Der Begriff der Zeit – Conceptul de timp* (Bilingual, German-Romanian edition), (Bucharest: Humanitas, 2000), 8–14.

2 It must be emphasized that for Aristotle – and for Aristotle **alone** in the entire history of philosophy – the categories are in fact **questions**. **Basic questions**, or simply **bases for questioning**, which on the one hand open up in a well-outlined way the being and the various regions of being to different, continuously unfolding self-determined directions with respect to their What?-ness, How?-ness, How much?-ness, When?-ness, Where?-ness, and the What? and How? of their Relations and Relativities, while on the other hand they (the categories) explicitly and actually also define the being. Therefore the questions of the categories are not dialectical questions, which could be answered by a simple Yes or No. Instead, they are such that lay the foundations, originate, guide, and make possible the dialectic questions. And of course also the dialogue which would be impossible without these. So the categories – categorial questions – precede, ground and intertwine – and in fact also guide – every kind of dialectical being. See: Aristote: *[Cathégorie]*, and the subchapter entitled *Poté (ποτέ) és khrónos (ξρόνος): ismét Arisztotelésznél*, in Király, *Halandóan lakozik szabadságában az ember...*. 

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So to whatever extent may the Future (also) pertain to the realm of possibilities, that is by far not the edgeless, inarticulate, and the least formal-indifferent “territory” of possibilities, or more precisely eventualities. But – so we see it! – it is something that always pertains and belongs to us.

Essentially – just like the Any–More, the Yet, or the ‘that what will be’ – the Then is also a (further) questioning attachment of the (basic) question of When?.¹ For it is clear that we are speaking explicitly about meaning – or rather horizon of meaning – in this case as well. Because other things are also attached to the ‘that what will be’, such as the ‘almost’-like ‘did not happen’-being, skimming the edge of existence, or that what Will-not-be/Should-not-be/Did-not-happen Then because of the cautiousness of a warning. (Don’t!... this or that Then…)

It is certainly this fundamental and specifically ontological (linguistic-ontological) contemplation of the Yet, the Then, and through these of the ‘that what will be’ which sets forth and exhibits the “holding” [fogás – see Note 1.] used in Hungarian in forming the future tense of verbs. This “holding” equally situates itself primarily into the horizon of Then on the one hand, and that of Yet on the other, but by these thirdly naturally also into the ‘that what will be’, the ‘not-yet-being’ too.

However, surely only and exclusively by the primary, categorial When?, or actually starting out of, and being in a constant organic relationship with that. And what is more, in such a way that this “holding” already displays the questioner of the When?, and the particular, ontological-existential, therefore meaning-centred, self-pertinence of the question and its questioning!²

It is worth giving a deeper thought, as it forms an authentic philosophical possibility, that the Hungarian language expresses the future tense by the verbal auxiliary derived from the verb “to hold”, inherited since ancient times. This structure is equally used for an emphatic future tense, for a future probability, and also for an imperative or a warning with future reference. It does also not seem accidental that this language uses the same word – ‘fog’ – to express that bony part of the body, situated in the mouth, which humans (and animals) use for holding, chewing and biting (i.e., a tooth).³

¹ See again “Poté (ποτέ) és khrónos (χρόνος): ismét Arisztotelészénél”, ibid.
² Ibid.
Firstly and most importantly, the term ‘fog’ [hold] is not some kind of technical-terminological noun, but precisely a verb. Moreover, it is a kind of verb the meaning of which is somehow connected primarily to **possession**. Even in the epistemological connections of the word ‘fogalom’ [notion]. Since this – and, what’s more! primarily this – also “holds” something, or something “is held” by it!

That is, the Hungarian ‘fogni’ [to hold] is exactly related to that what the Greek *ousia* names and expresses in its primary and pre-terminological sense – although constantly maintaining its authenticity and being put to good use in terminology as well.¹ Because the *ousia* also sends to property, possession, taking possession, tenure, and especially to the grasping – **recte**: the holding! – of its essence as it is revealed in this horizon.

Asking and revealing that what is essential, or that what is the essence itself, the Greek *ousia* also sends and – with a categorial universality – also constrains us questionably and questioningly to take possession of it, and examine what it essentially is… And to also examine of course how it can be grasped and taken into possession. At least as a possession of cognition. That is: how can it be taken into a notion [fogalom], the holding of a notion [fogalom fogásába], into holdingness [fogottságba], into possession or property.

It is probably also not accidental that we all “hold” or try to “hold” – explicitly in Hungarian, implicitly in other languages – the time, especially with regard to future, trying to present it in holding and in its being held. Because time itself is essentially connected to something which “holds on” to us, or directly keeps us “held”. And this will always and necessarily, exclusively and again essentially be and happen and be fulfilled Then, in the future, as a ‘that what will be’, as a ‘to be coming’.

The name of this necessary and always primarily future-oriented factuality is nothing else than: **death, my death, our death**. This, let me repeat, for us live beings – for only the living humans are those who create and use notions, act, examine, hope, make plans, and remember, judge, think, or even… die – lies always in the (certain) future of our lives, or what’s more, it is the future of our lives. Meaning also the process of (our) dying, that is, its (still) living, but particular life experience as well.

So on account of death the Future actually “holds on” to everything that **holds** in life, and thus it “makes” indeed essential and factual with regard to its own

¹ See again Király, *Poté (ποτέ) és khrónos (χρόνος): ismét Arisztotelésznél*.  

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particular essence that what holds and lasts in it – or in “everything”, for that matter… And which is thus: constant.

This is why only that can count as essential what is “constant” and lasting. So constancy can only be understood through time, and “within” it, only through Future, and not by mere measurement and the stubbornness of the results of this measurement.

Therefore we must ask now the following question as well: does the category of When? as a question not “come” or originate directly and actually from the Future? Or, by this, is it not so that every single question sets out towards the future?

For, is it not exactly the nature of questionableness and question itself, the existential-ontological structure and meaning of questioning to mobilize (of course in definite ways and always towards definite directions)? And is it also not the central “element” of a question itself what epistemologists precisely call a “desideratum”\(^1\)? And is it not exactly the future that the “desire”, the “requirement”, the “desideratum”, and the state of questioning mobilization created, displayed, expressed, and represented by it is projected upon in a defined – that is, questioningly designed – way? And is it not exactly the meaning of “asking questions” to open up, outline, and thus primarily grasp – hold – that what we are “just” searching to know?\(^2\) We search for it in order to hold or possess its “essence” as knowledge (as a notion). Ousia!

However, when something is opened up and grasped in a questionable and questioning way, then the questioner itself too, directly and factually, is existentially mobilized, outlined, drawn into, and validated, explicitly and in an articulate way, in the initiating, sweeping search of questioning, with regard to, or as a projection into, the Future.

So then, the ‘fog’, by which the Hungarian language renders and expresses the future, as it is not some kind of mere notional noun, but a verb, expresses the categorical questioning force of the ousia in a direct, unmediated way. Including also the mobility and tensions of its questioning force fields, especially in the force and – evidently – force necessity of the ‘fog’, the ‘fogás’ (holding)! And its reflexivity too,

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\(^2\) On question and questioning, its ontology and existentiality see the writings of the volume: István Király V., *Kérdő jelezés – (tőbb)csendbeni alkalmazott filozófiai zajháborítás a szabad(ság) kérdézes(é)ben* (Question marking – a (multi)silenced applied philosophical breach of noise in free(dom’s) questioning), (Pozsony (Bratislava): Kalligram, 2004).
of course. Because that what we hold or keep held, reflexively holds us and keeps us held. For only thus is it the essence and it is essential and only thus do we belong to ourselves with it, and to it as ourselves.

So: as a projection into the future, every questioning is actually and originally a holding, and therefore everything which is connected to the future – Fog-lét (Hold-being) – is essentially questionable, or it is connected to the categorial, essential and universal fundamental issue of questionableness! Consequently: “to questioningly dwell” means directly to be in a way that is “meanwhile” intentionally open to the holding of that what itself holds as essential… and the advent of which therefore always exists in the Hold-being, that is, in the “that what will be”, or the Then of the Not-yet-being.

So this also revealed that the being of the Future is not merely the “that what will be”, but – at the same time, yet also beyond it and much rather – the Hold-Being. Which is of course always a “Will Then Be”, because it Isn’t there Yet and There isn’t Yet. The Hold-Being therefore does not only mean that what will be and as such, will hold us… but also that what we also have to hold and keep is held openly so that we should not “simply” be, but be ourselves. This in fact, therefore, means to dwell questioningly, that is, openly and freely, in a truly mortal-holding and held way.

The essential acceptance of this also essential point, and the actual acquirement – holding and possession – of this acceptance, for the time being, pertains to the Future as Yet. As a question to be asked and to be held, by which we humans may possibly understand why we continuously or sooner or later always ask questions about everything.

For, as an ultimate horizon: we have still not found out where in fact this When? comes from and originates. Or for that matter where its connected “holding” comes from and originates.

Nonetheless, it can probably be acknowledged more organically and articulately that all this primarily comes and originates from death itself! Human death, death and the future, human death and freedom, death and questioning… not only do they not “exclude” each other, but one presupposes the other, and they always articulate, mean, or call each other. So, if we ask with a Heideggerian turn “Why is why?”, then we may answer with all certainty: because we will die!

But, naturally, not only the “Why?”, but every single question and their all-time questioning – questioning itself, that is – exists for this [ez-ért]! For this is where every reality, reason [ért-elem], understanding [ért-és], and also touching
[érint-és] comes and originates from, as well as everything that can drive away all the mere contingencies. The Why?, just like the Why is why? is just its carrying in circles. Carrying in circles (peri-odos), which, as such, is interval-like, and therefore: calculating.

It is calculating by touching. Its touching is nothing else than an occasion for an event just sounding, fixed and opening in the language. Of course, an occasion taken in the sense of reality. That is, the event of the “Why?” and – primarily – the “When?” also exists for it. Since it is for this end [ez-ért], as it originates from the same place. And of course it also keeps towards this place, towards here. So this is its reason [ért-elme] as well.

And now we can also see more directly, that the existential-ontological fine structure of this openness is exactly the questioning, and primarily the basic question, the categorial-questioning force of When?

Every element or type of relation to the future revealed, for example, by Heidegger – escaping the future (escaping death), the waiting, the self-anticipation, the running forth, the planning, the hope, the prediction etc. necessarily have the structure of a When? taken in a basic – even originally categorial – sense! Therefore the digression, the waiting, as well as one’s self-anticipation or running forth towards the possibility are all conditioned and outlined by the certain possibility of the impossibility of existence (that is: death) and its revelation.¹ This is what the event of language – with the auxiliary-outlining references of the future-forming ‘fog’, ‘fogní’ [to hold] – calls Hold-Being.

This happens similarly to the relations with the past or with the present, in a different reference of course. For the relating itself, or the reference itself as something present, like a mode of being, or the explicitly thematizing relation to death is essentially questionable, questioning, and question-inducing in its openness! That is, it has from the very beginning the ontological-existential structure of the question and of questioning. The (other) name of which is: freedom.

Self-anticipation is also included into this. Because that is exactly the meaning of “asking questions”! To project and anticipate oneself in a definite – further and further opening! – way, to definite (lacking) directions! That is: to be projected into the future, to open up, and be opened to the future.

The co-original and congenial articulation of death, the future, questioning, and freedom has two, different, yet interconnected names. One is the “am”, the sum, the other is history. For I am so that I exist together and meet – in a questionableness referring to meanings – “everything” in a mortal and therefore questionable way in the dangerous and holding-constraining freedom of the openings and openness of questioning, always in the primordiality of my mortality with regard to (the future of) the Not-Yet-Being – that is, being held (fogva) in the sense discussed above. Together with all the “other” mortals of all times and – in a different perspective – with all the “other” beings.

And what else is history than the mortals’ actual, holding and questioning, free, questioningly and dangerously inter-held, life-creating, self- and life-destructing being-together with the beings in and with being? So this is in fact what we mortals call the times of history, or historical time.

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Although it might be true that no concept of time expressed and outlined exclusively under the parameters of natural history – and even less natural science – can possibly reach the essence of time, one must still ask the question whether there are indeed “so many kinds” of time. Or, whether the relation and connection of the different “types of time” is indeed mere derivation. If this was really the case, then what is this derivation based on, and how is it possible at all?

No matter how true it might be that man – the Dasein, the being-here – truly is a world- and life-founding and creating being, it is just as true that man uses this quality as a factor of “nature”, or more precisely, physis.¹ Not in the sense that he were composed of natural (say, biological, etc.) and “non-natural” (say, spiritual, intellectual, or social) “pieces”; much rather, I have in mind a real characteristic of being, namely a partaking in existence as a new dimension of being, calling to life and thus pertaining and aiming to it as being held and free.²

In the course of his coming into being, the man as an earthly being also partakes in the partly cosmic, partly planetary experience of the “primordial” context


² On details for the particular pertinence to existence of freedom, questioning, and the question of being see the article Hagyomány és a szabadság kérdezése – Heidegger és Gadamer (Tradition and the questioning of freedom – Heidegger and Gadamer) in Király, Kérdő jelezés..., mainly pages 157–219; and the pertaining chapters of the volume KÉRDÉS-PONTOK a történelemhez, a halálhoz és a szabadsághoz (Question-points to history, death, and freedom), (Kolozsvár (Cluj-Napoca): Presa Universitară Clujeană, 2008), 7–205.
which at least all other earthly “organisms” felt and endured “at all times” and in which they had also partaken.\(^1\) This of course has its own “biological”, “physiological”, “neurological”, and even genetic consequences, which would not only be hard, but also irresponsible to deny.\(^2\)

The cognitive, cellular, and molecular neurological researches on time-sense and time-consciousness yield more and more interesting results. These results demonstrate that we have no purely “biological” or purely “intellectual” processes connected to time, but the “simple” sensing of time and the temporality of our biological nature, meaning also our “biological clock”, etc., are equally connected to the highest functions of the brain and of consciousness, and the most important life functions. And this is also valid for cosmic and planetary, but also psychological,\(^3\) ecological, or social aspects.

All these relate thus to the mobility of human life, which lives and may only live, on the one hand, in its being counted – according to the previous and the next – by the other movements. And which, on the other hand, does not only count “cognitively” or “consciously” with its own being or life, but it counts and enumerates, by the previous and the next, the growing proportion of existence of the beings moving or staying still in its world, with regard to their existence…\(^4\)

All these are completed by the revolution going on nowadays in physics – for instance, by the work of Stephen W. Hawking. It seems increasingly more unavoidable to acknowledge and theoretically accept that physics and natural sciences in general cannot disregard that in their researches they “deal with” a universe in which the human being was born! Hawking himself calls this the “anthropic principle” and attributes it a direct – physical – theory-constituting function.

Accordingly, the only authentic theory or “image” of the universe, even from the point of view of the natural science called physics, is that which can reckon with

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\(^2\) Yes, the *circadianis*, the daily intervals are so deeply rooted into the organism of the human being that they are effective for a long time even in the lasting absence of external stimuli. What’s more, so-called “clock-genes” have been discovered not only in the case of humans, but also for other living beings, which are expressed in every single tissue of the whole organism.

\(^3\) Let us think for instance of the psychological effects of the periodicity of seasons and seasonal changes.

\(^4\) Here we can think of the many kinds of resources that are running low (coal, oil, natural gas, etc.), of extinct or endangered species of plants and animals, or plastics or any other kinds of environment pollution. But the ontological factuality that we have spoken about is also valid on its reverse: the protection of the environment as well as of our fellow humans all display the factuality of these ontological factualities.
the fact that there is at least one intelligent being created in it,\(^1\) together with the – not very promising – perspectives of this existence. Including also the fact that it is this very being which creates and studies the natural science called “physics”!

However, this also means that when the man – the *Dasein* – takes the parameters and means of his dealing with time from these “primordial contexts”, he does not merely use the handiest temporal issues to make comfortable time-instruments for himself… No, by this he grasps something really fundamental from the point of view of existence, of his own existence. Namely, something which counts and *holds* him and which he himself *holds* and *must hold* in his existence! Something which, therefore, the *hold*-ing – that is, sending to, and deriving from, the future – means, represents and validates, made explicit by the meanings of the *When*?

This of course does not change the fact that the counting activity of the “soul” that Aristotle spoke about would not be a counting with time at the same time… And thus something radically different than a mere counting by time. On the contrary, it is about a radically *new dimension of existence* and being – new also in a *cosmic* sense. A being and dimension of existence which *existentially questions* the *When*? and with this, also time. And which thus measures not only the length, but also the weight of life. And of course its meaning and significance as well.

It does so in such a way that by this it constitutes *history*, or rather it articulates the historical “itself” in a higher and growing, both ontological and existential, dimension and synthesis which connects together the individual, society and nature in the symbolicity of time. And which – as a so-called “social time institution” – itself also becomes the primordial (social-historical) context of human generations and individuals continuously coming into existence and “following” each other.\(^2\) It is the same thing in fact that Heidegger stresses when he connects time-measuring to counting with time, especially with respect to the beings living within the world.\(^3\)

It is true therefore that the *Dasein* is self-anticipating from the beginning, but it is also true that it is *such* in a “world”, in and perhaps for an existence which is mostly non self-anticipating, yet still counting and counted in its parallel movements.

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So it does make a difference what it is that it will Then meet, anticipating, projecting, and understanding itself, and When? and How?

Surely this is why the *Dasein* has concerned itself ever since ancient times with things such as the knowledge and manipulation of the future or weather forecast. Because it is not only the exact time of a hurricane, a tsunami, or some new meteorite that is relevant for the *Dasein* to know, but also the future development and appearance of those ontic, ontological, existential – and as such, also historical – processes the “knowledge” of which naturally has its organic effects over the present, and also over the “judgment”, passage, or authentic repetition of the past as well.¹

So the man dwells questioningly indeed! Because he dies! That is: he is mortal! Or more precisely: because he can become mortal.

Turning back thus to the first, initial thoughts of the article: the issue and subject of the future has surely interested humans ever since the beginnings. The man as a man is probably unthinkable without such an interest. However, the man is only a man and only counts as man – even in historiography – when he starts *burying his dead peers*.

By that, therefore, which *holds* him, interests him: the issue of his death. Death, his death, which will come and – especially Then – will hold him! Being held by it, he must now – in his life and with his life – hold it somehow as well.

The man became man – that is, a calling-to-life and urging existence belonging to itself and pertaining to existence – when death, the ultimate incommunicable, constrained him – and at the same time opened him up – to the communicative, that is, commonly ordered world-like and of course historical necessities of that what leads beyond himself and his own existence.

So “factually” the man is first born in and with the presence of the Nothing, of non-being, called and evoked by the silent, quietly or noisily surrounded muteness of the burial, of the dead body. Together with his “consciousness” and other requisites.

In fact, once “ready”, the man counts for the man only with the consciousness of death.² Or rather: he counts, can count himself. Of course, the man, historically speaking, does not “get” the consciousness of death as some new requisite which perfects him or urges to further perfection, as something he had no possession of before; but he, so-to-say, ontologically *arrives* to it. That is, he directly *comes to it*!

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¹ See on this e.g. Erzsébet Nováky, “A modellezés fejlődése a jövőkutatásban” (The development of modelling in the research of the future), in *Evolúciós modellek a jövőkutatásban* (Evolutionary models in the research of the future), ed. Éva Hideg, (Budapest: AULA Kiadó, 2001), 8.
Coming to it, realizing it…they meet in fact in human death. In such a way that in it
the man, as it were, comes to himself!

Without directly discovering himself, however! So the man, the “mortal” man
is primarily and necessarily – or rather: seemingly unavoidably – “religious”.
That is, historically, or as stated by historiography, the man – in the words of Pierre
Chaunu – became “mortal” and “religious” at the same time.

Therefore the question rises at once: what does it mean in fact to “religiously
become a mortal”? What else could it possibly mean than somehow becoming mortal
without-dying? Namely, drawing up death, but as a sort of not-dying.

This of course also means to grasp and undertake time – actually and
essentially – in connection with survival, living-on-beyond, and also connected to the
issues of the “world”, rather than directly to death and dying. Thus, with regard to
man, time somehow becomes the history – or rather, myth – of “immortal mortals”.
So they have been burying in fact dead immortals ever since, basically even to these
days. For living on and resurrection.

In spite of this, “factually” it is the burial itself, the presence of the Nothing,
the non-being evoked and called-for by the silent, quietly or noisily surrounded
muteness of the dead body that the man is first born from. That is, by his death and
the “consciousness” of his death, which will come still, and then it will hold him!
And which – therefore! – has been in his future for a long time, right from the
beginning. And which is exactly that “something” which originally holds in our
existence… and which, as such, “gives” weight to our constraints with the past and
the present, coming from and going towards the future.

Therefore the Hold-being is not merely captivity, confinement, imprisonment,
but exactly that what “measures” everything. Not captivity, therefore, but a being-
captured-ness. Which equally holds together, holds across, holds into, holds around,
holds out for, and holds… past and present. But which is in the future and always
“comes” from it.

Therefore: not only is death, our death “within” the future, but it is “there” as a
real and actual constitution which originates, constitutes, articulates, and outlines the
Hold-being.

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1 Ibid., 55–60. Religiosus et morituros.
2 This may perhaps also serve as orientation for those who – like Rüdiger Safransky – keep inquiring (usually
suspecting human freedom) why it seems that the man and mankind has followed the “wrong” path from the
very beginning. See Rüdiger Safransky, Das Böse, Oder die Drama des Freiheit (Frankfurt: Fischer Verlag,
The Hold-being Holds by death because and by the fact that it Will always Be... And it will surely be as something that will be and will happen (then) with us, for us, as our own dying. As such, it will surround and define everything “else” which perhaps – otherwise – will be...

Being held by this, the man must also hold it somehow. Firstly, by counting with it. He counts with death, and thus – willingly or unwillingly – counts with time, but with the Nothing as well. So he begins to question what he counts with, and what he has to count himself. And that is “the same” in fact than what counts himself as well, “beginning” from the end. Something that he has been within for a long time – ever since the beginning – that is, since the beginning of the end...

This is the actual “determination” of the fact that the issue of the future has interested man from the beginnings – that is, it Holds them and sends them on to running-forth, to the future, to the Hold-being. The man as man is probably even unthinkable without it. Therefore this is the actual beginning, and time may “begin” only from here – from the end, from the future.

Consequently, the future did not accidentally get into the “beginning” or “middle” of thinking about time just because someone named Martin Heidegger considered it interesting for the sake of diversity to think about time itself not in terms of the past or the present, but the third, “left-over” element of the future. But exclusively because it was acknowledged and undertaken by thinking that the issue of the future – just like the problem of time – is actually and precisely the issue of the living man, which cannot be thought over without the always certain future death of the living man, the living Dasein.

The truly undertaken thinking-over of this issue may then reveal also whether or not this is exactly where time “originates” from, as well as all kinds of human endeavours and concepts connected to it. Including also the counting with time, its measuring, and its many kinds of sciences, as well as their particular concepts and “theories” connected to various regions of being.

It is a great question that, while we keep stressing with ever growing “self-evidence” that sooner or later any discipline finds itself in the situation that they must elaborate their own concept of time, valid and operational for their specific field of existence, which other disciplines will only exceptionally be able to apply – well, while this happens, is it not exactly the essence – the actual philosophical tasks connected to time – that we keep avoiding all the time?

So when we most naturally emphasize that the time concept of, say, physics – as it happens, nuclear physics – has no “applicability” in the understanding of the
particular temporality of “subjects” or “phenomena” discussed by the fields of psychology or sociology, history or even informatics, do we not disregard the most essential fact that all these disciplines – recte: human modes of being – are after all modes of being of “one and the same” Dasein? Modes of being which owe their mere existence to the fact that they are the modes of being of a being in the existence of which the “stake of the game” is this very existence? And that this also means in fact that they are the modes of being of a finite being – primarily and ultimately finite as a dying mortal? For the existence and being of whom, therefore, time is “valuable” and serious – that is: questionable – in all respects! Or, more precisely, time’s explicit and definite, existentially, and not merely “epistemologically” articulated questioning, and the actual happening of this questioning.

This is where the question and questioning of the When? actually and essentially originates from! That is, the category of the When?! Just like, in its continuation, the question and questioning of What is time?. So this is where every questioning of these – originally temporal, that is, historically articulated and conducted, in a physical, biological, psychological, sociological, historical, etc. sense – originates from.

It is therefore this essential and fundamental “circumstance” that philosophy should deal with in regard to “time”. Its interest should not be to try to draw up some “general”, “common”, or “primordial”, yet by now completely lost concept of “time”. Instead, we should realize: the interwoven questions and questionings of the What?, the When?, and the What is time? deriving from it – if we understand them – show and reveal exactly that the What?-ness of Time is completely inseparable from the What?-ness of When?! That is: from the question of When? and its (particular, so categorial) question-nature!

That is to say, the horizons of the existence of time and the time of existence are essentially and factually inseparable from the question and questioning. And also from the questioner! Who therefore is not only “conscious” of time and who does not merely have an (inner) “time consciousness”, but who – precisely because of this – is temporal or time-related! Because he is finite as a dying mortal.

Now, in order not to think of the future and thus time itself in terms of death, or as attached, connected to death, it is not enough to take a different, seemingly more cheerful standpoint or to “vote”! Instead, we should chase death out of our lives, our existence…
Naturally, the understanding and interpretation of that constant urge of us people to find or lend some kind of “meaning” – and especially “positive” meaning! – to death is also connected to this…¹

But what could this endeavour mean once acknowledged that there is not, there cannot be any kind of “meaning” without death?! Since without it there could not be any meaningful – even categorial – fundamental question or basis for question.

Therefore “to give meaning to death” can actually and primarily only mean precisely the understanding and acceptance of this issue! Namely, the understanding and acceptance of the fact that in its basic – equally ontological and existential-historical – way death is the root and source of every kind of – essentially ontologically burdened – meaning.²

On this account then we do not simply “lend-give-attribute” “this” meaning to death “from the outside”, but we may primarily “only” understand death as – at least one of – the original, ultimate, metaphysical, fact-like sources that approach our being and pertain to it, and as an ontological constitution and horizon of meanings.³

A source, constitution and horizon, which is – ontologically too! – fact and metaphysics at the same time.⁴ To the facticity of which its metaphysical nature pertains in a constitutive and inseparable way. And the other way round: to the metaphysics of which its fact-nature also pertains in a constitutive and inseparable way!

So it may be repeated now in a more substantial way: in order not to think of the future and thus time itself in terms of death, or as attached, connected to death, it is not enough to take a different, seemingly more cheerful or pleasant standpoint or to “vote”! Instead, we should chase death out of our lives, our existence! Until then, however, death factually – that is, in its essential metaphysical fact-nature as the

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² Which does not mean of course that “all” the human meanings of death are exhausted “in this”. For more on this, see the Excursus entitled A halál hermeneutikája (The hermeneutics of death) in the article A meghalásról (On dying) from my volume Halandóan lakozik szabadságában az ember...
³ This is in fact a fundamental ontological-existential statement, which has nothing to do with the endeavour to “domesticate” death or make it “friendlier”, or directly attempt at the quite fantastic banishment of mortal fear. On the contrary! It rather surfaces the emptiness and unsustainability of the prevailing opinion that, in order to render meaning to death, there is need of the “surpassing” – or rather: denial – of its “reality”. So that death’s “indefinite” nature, which “overshadows” the future and makes it “uncertain”, can be emphasized. In connection to these latter references – or as such an endeavour – see also Nassehi and Weber, Tod, Modernität und Gesellschaft, 432.
⁴ See also the article entitled A meghalásról in the volume Halandóan lakozik szabadságában az ember..., 7–109.
foundation of historicity—“stands” there in the all-time historical “time”, or rather the all-time “future” of the all-time people. Primordially, holding, and being held.

However, these days the future is becoming more and more “shocking”. Because it somehow always arrives too soon, and therefore two early. So the future today—purportedly—is not what it used to be... One cannot be prepared for it, nor escape it by other appearances, at least apparently. These days, the future, day after day, unavoidably and “sensibly” sets in. It surprises us continuously, day by day, and thus also “shocks” us.

Nonetheless, this surprise is in fact nothing surprising. The future has always been a surprise, or surprising. Because what surprises and has always surprised us in the future is not what “concretely” happens to us or falls onto us, or even threatens us as future. But much rather that from what the future as future actually or directly “comes”. Namely: ultimately precisely death. What we keep escaping from, albeit in advance.

These days we increasingly escape from death forward—let’s say, to “development”, “innovation”, or mere change, etc. Therefore the future comes sooner today. And we die “later” than before. This way the future does not simply come faster, but also more densely, and in a continuous or what is more, even permanent way. So its present surprise is indeed directly “stressing”.

Time “accelerates”—is accelerated—indeed these days. But the acceleration of time as a “self-affection” of temporality is essentially only rooted in the existential-historical modification of the direction of escape. It is forward that we escape from the future nowadays. It is forward that we escape therefore from where the When? and with it, time itself—originates or issues.

This is why the time speeded up in escaping forward seems also continuously “new”. Neue Zeit, Temps Nouveaux, New Age, Új idők: New Era! Only because the escape—the ancient escape from death, from ourselves, from existence—took indeed a new direction. Naturally, the escape itself is also founded upon advancement, self-anticipation, and thus temporality... that is, directly on the future. So that the escaper’s “fate” has also been long decided.

The direction of escape stretches towards the end of the in-finite, the endless time. Which—only apparently, but still—suspending the When? or renders it meaningless. For does the When? matter anything in the endless time, in “eternal” time, in the time of “eternity”? In the time when the When? and the Never are all the same... Always, “constantly”, and all the time. There is, there can be No... When? in it! It is incomprehensible therefore, why would there be any kind of “meaning” in it
at all? Beyond the fact, of course, that it still offers a direction, or “supplies” a direction-like pretext for escaping.

This “supply”, however, is in fact mostly only instrument and technology. But it is by far not a meaning to be understood. For this meaning cannot simply be supplied and served, and then, again, “simply” put into practice. The meaning can only be asked, and the meaning to be understood cannot possibly derive from any other place than questioning. Never and in no time.

So the endless time can only find its own meaning in the question which alone may understand that by the When? it questions the end and from this end questions the being in connection to which this end and our relation to it should or must always be questionable.

Actually, time begins – arises! – in fact from its end, that is, from the future… And the actual, accepted and thus defined time must therefore only begin – arise! – from here as well.

Therefore time itself begins, arises in the “time” which counts indeed with the interchanging movement of various movements, when – as a completely new dimension of being and utterly undatably – the When? is first outlined. And from this point on it must be asked and validated – even in a dated way – in all directions.

By this however the When? – and with it, time too – stands or situates itself into the airy and held freedom of an opening-arising questioning pertaining and connected to being, that is, in fact into the freedom constituted by the questioning itself, into the factual questioning of freedom! “Into” the freedom, that is, which is itself – ontologically and historically-existentially – question, and has the structure of a question.¹ Since it is mortal!

As such, naturally freedom is also: holding and held. Therefore the opening-up, arising, datable-historical questioning of the truth may also take its place as a question in it. Which will surely re-question the truth of the When? and the all-time historical truth connected to the When? as well…

And of course it will re-question the finite, actual, living, creating, grave, dangerous and failing – the deadly, questionable, question-inducing, questioning – freedom also. As a possibility and as a chance!

Together with the When? and the new dimension of being coming into being in the When? – just as being itself – time also arrives at meaning, or more precisely meaning-question. By this however – so to say – it exactly becomes primordial.

¹ For more details on this, see the article Hagyomány és a szabadság kérdése – Heidegger és Gadamer in the volume Kérdő jelezés….
Because with the coming into being of the Dasein, for a while, time is being born again – and also being born anew – in questioning – primarily in the When? of course, in a new dimension of being. At the time when “time becomes temporal”.  
That is, in the most possibly complex and serious meaning – in the questionableness of meaning itself – it becomes finite. Therefore: such a thing may even become actual. (With the specification that the adjectives “actual”, “authentic”, etc. are not “ideal” and “metaphysical” notions in the traditional sense – that is, valid once and for all – but hermeneutical-historical ones, which primarily focus not so much on “states” but possibilities. So the non-actuality of the Dasein does not mean any kind of “diminished” being or a “lower” degree of being.)

However, time can always become actual starting from itself, but never only from itself, and even less simply “by itself”. Because time, the Past, the Present, and the Future do not only go towards us, but also onto us. And pertain to us of course. Because the “meaning” does not go beyond things and issues by simply “cutting through” or “crossing” them, but by turning back to them. And to ourselves, of course. And by this, to existence as well.

It is only this kind of turning back that will go then “beyond” and “above” to a meaning always possible and made again possible. And this – by another name – is nothing else again than history.

2 No kind of merely “physical” or “natural scientific” time can ever be “actual” – and nor can it be “non-actual”. Maybe only “precise” or “more precise”...
3 See, Heidegger Being and time, 43.
4 The temporality of “meaning” – referring to the fact whether something has any meaning at all, or how this meaning is articulated and outlined, and not to the fact that whatever “time” or “temporality” gets suddenly or continuously “connected” to some kind of self-standing “meaning” – always has something to do primarily with the future. No matter what kind of meaning originates or derives from tradition, however, it gains its pregnancy with a view to the horizon- and world-like, co-temporalizing meaningfulness of the interpretation, that is, its possible projectability to the future. This is the hermeneutical meaning of “application”. Since the application always connected to interpretation is never some kind of putting into practice, but something which happens with the interpreter in the course of, or starting from, interpretation. In other words: a self-changing experience. Gadamer in the Truth and Method – not accidentally connecting to Heidegger – speaks very clearly about how the misunderstanding around Heidegger’s ontological explanation of the horizon of time takes revenge. Instead of keeping the methodological meaning of the existential analytics of the Dasein, they treated the existential historical temporality of the Dasein determined by care, by the running-forth to death, that is, by radical finiteness as if it were only one of the possible interpretations of existence, and forgot that it was in fact the mode of being of understanding itself. See Hans-Georg Gadamer, Truth and Method (New York: The Seabury Press, 1975), 110–118. Therefore the loss of meaning is always coupled with the loss of future, and the loss of future is always coupled with the loss of meaning. And together with this, or rather precisely because of this, there are always possibilities of existence being lost. It is not accidental that neurologists, psychiatrists, or psychologists equally found out that the brain injuries which lead to a “short-sidedness about the future” had to do in fact with the meanings which are indispensable in any situation of decision making. And which, thus, always “brings into play” the
So, it is in this thematically and applied philosophically undertaken and surfaced mutual reference that the existentially questionable and of course existential-historical issues of the future, death, freedom,¹ and the truth prove indeed to pertain to, and involve, each other. Because we do not only “possess the consciousness” of time, but we are in fact its consciousness…

However, we are not only the “consciousness” of time, but also – to a much greater degree, and more primordially: its being. Which is constituted and exists in the questioning – that is, in the When? – and the permanently historically articulated horizon of this question, and the also permanent categorial “universality” of this horizon, as well as in the existentially articulated factuality of the historical conducting of the questioning of the When?. Thus, it is as a question of meaning and therefore possibly as a meaning.

The essence of this is exactly the future. Primarily that from where and because of what the future… comes! And because of what the Future itself is not a mere possibility, but directly a “task”.² Essentially – and not only seen from its concrete outlines – this possibility and this task pertaining to us and involving us is the possibility and task of becoming a mortal.

This possibility and possible approach, consciousness, and task – for us people – is actually only opened up and exhibited by philosophy alone. Not by science, which at most can only determine finiteness and push the actual limits to the edge; not by technology, which fills these up and prolongs them; not by politics, which only settles or only “uses” the limits; not by art, which opens and places constantly tuned and re-tuned worlds before the possible completeness of the truth…; and not by religion, which mostly only consoles because of it…

Only and exclusively philosophy, which meanwhile also reveals and displays that: to “become a mortal” is not confined to, nor restricted to a merely “thematic” consciousness – albeit important in itself – of death and the events of dying, but it touches, embraces, and, of course – being held by it – also holds the man’s entire existence and its entire “responsibility” as a real meaning. That from where the future is coming!

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¹ “Although the decision of freedom, the acceptance of the mission, and the taking into account of the possibilities essentially lead to different dimensions of time, they are still inseparable from each other.” See Patocka, Mi a cseh?, 117.

² It is not by chance that Kant connects not only the morals, but also freedom to duty.
Now the – seemingly meaningful – question could be asked whether it is “all the same” if the man considers or thinks himself mortal or – even if “only in soul”, but – immortal? Especially if this latter possibility may seem for some reason more pleasant and attractive to him?!

In spite of this – at least for the sake of the seriousness and persistence of thinking – this question still needs to be reformulated. It should rather be asked as follows: Could there be any connection between the way the historical man has treated and treats the other living creatures (plants and animals); the way the historical man has treated and treats the Earth, its possibilities and resources; the way the historical man has treated and treats himself and the others – for example, but not exclusively, in the terrorism of these days – well, could there be any connection between this behaviour and the circumstance that all this while the man has considered and considers, has believed and believes himself immortal?

For what else could this possibly be than the gradual exhaustion and liquidation of the foundation, the sources, the ground of his own life and the continuous restriction, in these respects, of his future existential possibilities? Something which is not very reasonable and advisable to do for finite mortal beings, subject to (life) circumstances… However, for an “immortal” these are of course indifferent concerns… so all similar things are in fact completely irrelevant for him, even if unreasonably or unadmittedly.

Yet, this is surely the place of origin of the famous, original, and never surpassed or given up contemptus mundi, the contempt of the world, or rather the hatred of the “world”. This is again something that only the immortals could permit for themselves “regardless of the consequences”.

Furthermore, we may not seriously think that we could so easily disregard the question of the “truth”. Namely the fact to what extent such an idea might prove to be true? With the completion that this truth is not only connected to the (otherwise metaphysical) facticity of death and dying, but also with everything else that makes up human existence and its historical possibilities! Therefore the mortality of the man is not only “proved” by the factuality of each of our deaths, but rather by each or all of the man’s modes of being!

Namely, the fact alone that wherever there is man, there are also settlements, buildings, institutions, many-sided communication networks and relations, particular human endeavours (cognition, science, art, technology, murderous wars, and comforting religions flourishing nearby, etc.) betrays and proves or stands as evidence for the mortality of man. Such a thing can only be meaningful and have
some weight for the existence of a mortally finite – that is, Dasein-like – being. A truly mortal being – even if only in his soul or any other respect of his existence, etc. – would not be forced to continuously undertake the efforts of knowledge, creation, or perfection.¹

As we have seen, the question and questionableness of mortality is in fact about the truth of man and being! And we humans – let me repeat it – can thematize it for ourselves only and exclusively by philosophy in an authentic way that corresponds to the force and weight of the unavoidable and trying historical – that is, one that articulates history itself – re-emergence of this issue.² By philosophy, as we have already pointed out, which meanwhile also reveals and displays that: to “become a mortal” is not confined to, nor restricted to a merely “thematic” consciousness – albeit important in itself – of death and the events of dying, but it touches, embraces, and, of course also holds the man’s – and being’s – entire existence and its entire “responsibility” as a real meaning – and thus as a response, as well.

That from where the future is coming! It is only and exclusively here therefore that the basically new “God” may – although “incidentally” – come from, of whom alone Heidegger for instance expected redemption once. And for the advent of whom

¹ One of the most problematic parts of Kant’s moral- and religious philosophy is exactly the fact that he connects the doctrine of the “immortality of the soul” to these, because of the reason – among others – that such a thing would ensure the soul’s infinite self-perfecting. However, it is in fact completely incomprehensible how a truly immortal soul would perfect itself eternally in infinity? In its immortality it could just as well abject itself infinitely and remain untouched… or it could also wander undisturbed back and forth between perfection and abjection. But if the soul perfects itself in immortality (too) because, say, this inclination is somehow rooted in it, than there is no need of its, as it were, highly problematic “immortality” to ensure its perfection.

² Nobody saw more clearly this force and weight of death and mortality which grounds and articulates history and historicity than two seemingly very distant thinkers: Thomas Hobbes and Martin Heidegger. Hobbes treats self-preservation and mortal fear closely linked to it as the fundamental law of human society, history, and the world. It is of course this latter, namely mortal fear, which urges people – the mortals forced to self-preservation – to make contracts and create states, laws, and rights, obey them, and have them obeyed. These can also ensure their self-preservation. At any rate, it is undoubtedly death and the fear of death that grounds, articulates, and operates human history in its most essential and characteristic dynamic and structural respects (state, right, morality, etc). (See Thomas Hobbes, The Leviathan http://oregonstate.edu/instruct/phl302/texts/hobbes/leviathan.html, downloaded Febr. 27, 2010). On the other hand, Martin Heidegger towards the end of the analyses in the Being and Time makes it explicitly clear that the actual being related to death, that is, the finiteness of temporality is the concealed basis of the historicity of the Dasein. (See Martin Heidegger, Being and Time, 449.) This issue is treated in most details in the first chapter of my volume KÉRDÉS-PONTOK a történelemhez, a halálhoz, a halálban és a halálalkalmazásban, which on this account bears the title Halál és történelem – Prolegomena egy “történelemfilozófián” illetve történelemtudományainak lehetőségezhez (Death and history – Prolegomena for the possibility of a “philosophy of history” or ontology of history), in Ibid., 7–109.
philosophy – or more precisely essential thinking – can only signal us to prepare ourselves.¹

For the same reason again, this God may probably only be the God of the existential truth of becoming a mortal… Not “simply” “another one”, but much rather a radically new Divinity, essentially differing from and – what’s more! – contrasting all previous Gods. A God that man can face in the questioning and questionable fear and love-adoration of existential truth and the truth of his existence, and not in his yearning for the convictional defencelessness of the professed promises of consolation.

Instead, the God of becoming mortal can only be such that already knows about himself that he can only live mightily as long as the faith in him and those who believe in him are alive! And who, by this, somehow also becomes capable of dying. In the absence of this, with the death of the faith in him and of those who believe in him he would not die, but simply die away or become extinct.

However, all previous Deities were only Gods of the punishing-promising-comforting – in Tolstoy’s words – “lies” of “immortality”, of “deathlessness”. Actually, they all were the Gods of the incapability of human dying, or more precisely of (the man’s) actual and present becoming mortal. What is more, at least according to Nietzsche, they have long been exhausted, and they have died themselves long ago. The smell of their putrefaction however (because, as Nietzsche says again: „Do we not hear the noise of the grave-diggers who are burying God? Do we not smell the divine putrefaction? – for even Gods putrefy!"²) keeps distancing, and holds at a distance the very incidental, yet too late arrivals of an also very incidental new God…

Therefore the possibility of a human existence, of a man who not only dies but is already indeed mortal should be more seriously considered.

Despite the fact that – at least apparently – such a human existence could somehow only be a “hopeless” existence. Probably only “apparently”, because during all this while the following question has never emerged: does “hope” itself – insofar as it does not mean some witless, sensible, yet essentially turning-away kind of staring at the “evidences”, nor some etiquette-forced, smiling-optimistic approach to

¹ For more details on this, see the article “Hagyomány és a szabadság kérdése – Gadamer és Heidegger” in the volume Kérdő jelezés…, with special emphasis on the Excursus entitled “A filozófia és a ‘hatás’, avagy az önveszélyességről a filozófiában” (Philosophy and the “effect”, or on self-dangerousness in philosophy), 195–205.

the course of things – not derive from death, from human mortality in a deep and as yet unthought of, yet very determined way and meaning? Moreover, is it not precisely death that hope gains its actual meaning, and dynamic, mobilizing weight from? Just like, as we have seen, meanings themselves. And just like man’s – the hopeful being’s! – ontological “identity” or selfness…

So in order to understand hope, “first” – and also “meanwhile” – we must understand death. Because if there was no death, no mortal, and no dying – and thus no human life with real weight, then there “would be” no hope either. It is not accidental at all, what’s more, it is characteristic and very telling about hope itself too, that the ultimate of hopes is exactly the hope of immortality, that is, deathlessness. Something which, were it fulfilled, would not only render superfluous, but outright meaningless not only the hope invested into it, but all hope in general…

Well of course, hope is projected into the future. Mostly and primarily as an expectance-like waiting, which, in a way, mostly expects things to be “positively” solved. Therefore the man does not usually “hope” for natural catastrophes or failures… On the contrary, hope is always penetrated by desire. We hope that the “possibility” – or rather eventuality – that will indeed happen will be something that we desire.

So, again: the possibility of human existence, of the man who not only dies, but is indeed a mortal would still need a more fundamental consideration. It may well happen that this would truly belong to a “more glorious story than any other previous stories”. “Is not the magnitude of this deed too great for us? Shall we not ourselves have to become Gods, merely to seem worthy of it? There never was a greater event – and on account of it, all who are born after us belong to a higher history than any history hitherto!”

To a story in which it is permanently questionable and again permanently questioned, always, radically – that is, penetrating to the very roots – and anew, whether we understand, or better understand time? Do we understand, do we understand better and more seriously its pertinence and belonging to us, and the questionableness and explicit question-nature of this pertinence and belonging?

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1 This is not the place to confront this with Ernst Bloch’s philosophy based on the principles of hope and utopia. However, it must be said that the philosophy-of-historical rethinking of the utopias rooted in hope as a principle basically surfaces that the actual “necessity” of hope is not what is hoped for, but “hope” indeed. So that there is, there might be hope at all. By which then the unhopeful can just as well be easily hoped for. This would of course make hope unconditioned, or rather it would push aside any of its conditions… It is not sure however that such a thing should indeed be “hoped” for.

And together with this, do we also understand indeed that the true “problems” are not created primarily from the insufficiencies, unclearness, and obscurities deriving from the lack of “information” and “data”, but precisely by “certainties”. Namely, that all such fundamental and categorial certainties sooner or later prove to actually, originally, and precisely be: questions! Which must always be asked over and over again.

However, this may also reveal that, while being asked, these questions deriving precisely from certainties lead the all-time questioner to things which in one direction must be called (that is: we must call it) death, while in the other direction must be called freedom and history! In other words, it leads to things that are themselves cooriginary questions. And they are questionable in a way which has common origins deriving from each other and also sending to each other. And which thus – within us and by us – ask and search for the all-time truth of both themselves and the questioner. In the explicit – human – happening of history!

Translated by Emese G. Czintos
CHAPTER IV.

HISTORIALITY – MORTALITY – FACTICITY

The Foundation of Philosophy and
Atheism in Heidegger's Early Works

- Prolegomena to an Existential-Ontological Perspective -

„Die Sterblichen sind die Menschen.
Sie heissen Sterblichen, weil sie sterben können.
Sterben heisst: den Tod als Tod vermögen.
Die vernünftigen Lebewesen müssen erst
Sterblichen werden. "

Martin Heidegger

Any discussion about "foundation" is usually realized through direct or implicit reference to that which Leibniz formulated as the principle of the sufficient reason. Or, essentially this principle puts in motion - namely: brings to questioning - first of all and exactly the question: Why?

When we discuss, however, problems such as the question of the foundation of philosophy, from the beginning it seems to be decisive to try to clarify - but also to enforce - the conditions and hermeneutical situation of such a meditation. And, first of all, we ought to specify and outline the fact that the existential-ontological perspective from which we have decided to prefigure the problem of the foundation of philosophy was not, of course, "chosen" accidentally from a vast group of indifferently convenient "possibilities"… and neither was this choice determined only by the author's "professional" inclination and "specialization", but it was actually put in motion by the sole motive that, on the one hand it belongs to… and on the other hand it aims exactly at that horizon and domain, to which the problem of the founding of philosophy itself belongs, and from which it wells in its turn in a completely organic and essential way.

1 "The mortals are the men. They are called mortals, since they can die. To die means to make possible death as death. Rational beings must first become mortals." Martin Heidegger, "Das Ding," in Martin Heidegger, Das Ding und Die Sprache - A dolog és A nyelv (Hungarian-German bilingual edition, Sárvár: Sylvester János Könyvtár, 2000, 41. (Italics are mine, I.K.V.)
Since these aspects also belong to the hermeneutical clarification of the situation and of the motivations in and from which the present inquiry is outlined and unfolds, it is surely necessary to present them in detail. For the fact that the ontological-existential perspective on the one hand belongs to, and, on the other hand, aims exactly at the horizon and domain to which the issue of the foundation of philosophy belongs also constitutes in fact the motive - likewise essential - for which, we, at least, are basically and in general interested in this "problem". However, we would also like to specify from the beginning that we here use the term "interested" in its accepted basic and etymological sense. Since, as it is well known, the word "interested" originates - etymologically - from the Latin inter esse, which means exactly "to be inside and between" the elements of something... or to be between something which constitutes its common aim and affiliation right through the existence of that which is aimed at in its turn as being exactly "between". To be therefore "interested in something" means in fact to be - more precisely: to be situated - inside and in the "cracks" that occur on the horizon of that something... and the explicit efforts made to understand and interpret this "something" are nothing else in fact than endeavours to understand, and also to realize precisely the problematic of this insideness and the problematic of this "being between".

In brief: in a problem such as the foundation of philosophy we theme nothing that is "exterior" to us or to philosophy, and consequently nothing alien to our being, on the contrary, we theme our own existence exactly as philosophizing and exactly because we exist philosophizing. The decisive and essential motive because of which I am or we are/can be really interested in the problem of philosophy and its foundation is therefore that "I myself" at least know myself to be a thinker and I am concerned with being a thinker, and, because of this I - simply - would like, as far as it is possible, to understand this thing and its significations. I would like to specify - however and again - that the expression "as far as possible" must be taken in its original sense, for it is meant to communicate precisely the fact that we should attempt to conceive, understand and outline the cause of the foundation of philosophy exactly as a possibility which belongs to us and to our world.

Consequently, if we discuss here the question of the foundation of philosophy, this must mean - in fact and mainly - the question and the clarification of the question: Why does one - why do I also "do" - philosophy? Namely: Why do people essentially do philosophy? Or, more precisely: Why does man philosophize?

In the course of this inquiry it must be very clear (for us) from the beginning and it must also be assumed expressly that, on the one hand, by formulating and asking
effectively and clearly this question, we raise at the same time - and somehow automatically - a series of other questions, and, on the other hand, the exigency of the "sufficiency" of reasons as the principle of sufficient reason also requires from us implicitly the effort of not leaving these - apparently collateral - questions in the obscure zone of presuppositions, but of asking them and formulating them - that is: asking them - as explicitly as possible. Or, the first of these questions which usually remain and, moreover, are left unclarified when the questions regarding philosophy and its foundations are asked, is for sure the question: Who does actually philosophize? Then - together with this - the question: To whom and how does in fact philosophy "belong"?

Therefore we can state that, though it seems to be evident that only the clarification of these questions - namely: Why does one philosophize? and Who is the one who philosophizes? - could also lead us to realize and outline What is and could philosophy be? and What would be its "object" and its task, vocation? etc. (questions connected therefore as organically as possible to the foundations and, consequently, to the essence of philosophy). Philosophizing itself is however usually regarded as being rather the agitation and secretion of a kind of weightless, schematic "spirit of truth", so "lofty", "refined" and "distilled", that it becomes indeed perfectly "colourless", "odourless" and really without any "taste"… And/or a kind of "universal" (indifferently professional, professorial and university) "science of the universal"… Or, on the contrary, the mechanical performing of some circumscribed disciplinary and "terminological" "investigations", in the case of which it is no longer necessary to clarify on every occasion the problem of bases and of foundation.

The - inevitably brief - analysis that follows will therefore focus exactly on these questions. And in this undertaking they will use the chances of a clarifying dialogue with an early Heideggerian text, which - without necessarily being less known to the "public" and to the specialists in question - is however less present and "weighed" not only in the studies dedicated to his philosophy, but also in the inquiries regarding the bases and the foundation of philosophy.

We are referring to a short text entitled *Phenomenological Interpretations of Aristotle having the subtitle Indications of the Hermeneutical Situation*.¹ This was written by Martin Heidegger in the year 1922 with the aim of endorsing his simultaneous candidature for two posts of "extraordinary professor", one at the

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University of Göttingen, the other at the University of Marburg. He was rejected by the former university - mainly on account of the spirit of his investigations not being in conformity with the tradition of the respective university -, but accepted at Marburg due mainly to the positive reviews about this text by the renowned Paul Natorp and Nicolai Hartmann.¹

We must specify that in the Heideggerian text - expressis verbis - there is nothing about "foundation". It speaks, however, extremely condensed, but also amply about PHILOSOPHY, about its essence, sense and specificity. And on this occasion - in the confluence of thoughts - an exceptionally powerful, radical and articulated meditation is outlined in the text also about the "foundation" of philosophy.

Of course, such a phenomenological and hermeneutical investigation does not lay the bases, and, evidently, it does not discuss the "foundation" of philosophy by presenting it as some "original" or "primordial science" (Urwissenschaft) which is to be recovered, and out of which originate and then historically ramify the different scientific and existential disciplines and/or domains. Neither is this inquiry aimed at the philosophicality of the inner (epistemological) conditions of formal and/or thematic derivation - from "axiomatic" principles or bases -, ensuring the "coherence" of the theories from within some realizations or "cognitive disciplines", in this case: of philosophy. No. The well founded and "founding", original and fundamental character of philosophy here originates from and resides exactly in the essence of that which is identified and named its "object", and - closely connected with this - mainly from and in its sense and signification of being express activity and assuming. Activity and assuming in which - and through which - philosophy itself is actually founded.

In other words, philosophy is founded and it lays foundations itself exactly in and through the fact that it is recognized, revealed and clarified as being - itself - a mode of existence of the Dasein. More precisely, a mode of existence of the being named yet in these texts man. Philosophy no longer recognizes and identifies itself as being simply a "theory" - either of something which otherwise would be "non"-theoretical, or in the sense of an instrument specialized in reaching some specific cognitive

¹ Interestingly - maybe even oddly - the copy of the text has been preserved and found in Göttingen (where Heidegger's presentation was refused), but the scholars studying Heidegger's work "knew" about its existence from a letter in which the young philosopher "informed" Paul Natorp about the evolution of his investigations regarding Aristotle. The text Phenomenological Interpretations of Aristotle was published for the first time only in 1989 in the Dilthey-Jahrbuch für Philosophie und Geschichte der Geisteswissenschaften, Band 6/1989, with a preface by Hans-Georg Gadamer entitled - not too adequately in our opinion - Heideggers „theologische“ Jugendschrift. Since then - as in the edition used by us - this title has figured as a kind of "subtitle" of the text. However, Gadamer's quite evident intention, when giving this title to his preface, must have been to "facilitate" the approach of a larger public often ruled by theological and religious prejudices and even aversion towards Martin Heidegger's thinking.
objects and objectives (may they be outlined or, on the contrary, stratospheric and ideal) -, but "only" as "one" of the different modes in and through which man realizes and leads its existence factually and effectively in and through time. Since it is exactly man who philosophizes and it is exactly man who exists - therefore: is - philosophizing. And only the being which exists philosophizing, only that can in general depict existence as existence, that is, his existence; the existence and the being as being a problem… open to the possible. Only man can - and even must - therefore problematize himself as a being with respect to his character and relation of being… that is, as a being which is bound to and oriented towards the other beings, namely the world.

Philosophy is consequently exactly that mode of existence of the being named yet in these texts "man" - human Dasein (menschliches Dasein) - in and through which he problematizes his being precisely with regard to the unsurpassable problem and problematicity of the fact that he himself is and that - thus - he must and has to be. Therefore as being something- someone for whom the being and beingness is a problem, an undertaking, a task, a risk and a possibility dwelling exactly in his existence. Shortly: philosophy is one of man's not only essential but also exclusive possibilities and needs. Omniscient beings - among other things - do not philosophize, as do not philosophize the beings which - without existing - only "are"… On the contrary, the constitutive and insurmountable stupidity of "all-knowing" (omniscience) consists exactly in the fact that, if such a thing "could know everything"…, he could never know that he "knows" at all. Because to know one must exactly be aware of his ignorance, an experience acquired solely in the quest for truth and in its hardships. In a single word the awareness of ignorance we call of course: question, respectively inquiry. And such things as question and inquiry are not given to the "omniscient" at all and on principle. Since he (already) necessarily knows "ab ovo" always everything… Otherwise he could not be called "omniscient". It is the same with the "immortal" too: this "does not die", but "meanwhile" neither does he live a single moment at all. This therefore can also dispel the delusion that the immortals - the immortal gods - could somehow recognize, become aware of/get to know their (own) immortality precisely by means of human mortality.¹ For if these gods, besides their immortality, are also omniscient, they could not recognize these "characteristics" - in spite of any comparison -, unless their own immortality became a question, or/respectively questionable for them. That is, if they are not really

¹ Françoise Dastur, Moartea - Eseu despre finitudine (Death - Essays on Finitude), (Bucharest: Humanitas, 2006), 19.
omniscient. But, of course, it would still remain incomprehensible where from and how could originate-arise any kind of questions in this immortal.

Consequently, it is clear from the beginning, that what we call here "the foundation" of philosophy and philosophy as "foundation", are not and cannot be in any case some "epistemology" or some "logic" of philosophy, and in the least a purely preparatory propedeutics or some "meta-theory" of it, but only the effectiveness of interrogation, the quest - and also of the articulation - regarding its essence, senses, the effectiveness of its "weight" and "pressure". Because of this in these texts Heidegger calls this effectiveness exactly "facticity" or "factual life".

Far therefore from being pure "theory", philosophy is - as man's mode of being - a mode of being of factual life. More precisely, philosophy is exactly that mode of being of factual life, in and through which factual life itself returns towards itself - problematizing, opening, surpassing and transcending itself permanently. And more exactly: through which factual life is made - by means of assumption and effort - to return explicitly and disclosingly towards itself.

Or, this turn and return take place, naturally and each time, in a "living present" (lebendige Gegenwart), from which - starting therefore from its problematic - they are historical, that is situated. Because of this, the first act of foundation must be to bring to surface and make this same situating function effectively. Therefore: hermeneutics. For this reason the text we are speaking about here has the subtitle: Indications of the Hermeneutical Situation (Anzeige der hermeneutischen Situation). Since: "in accordance with its beingness (Seinskarakter), the philosophical research itself is something that no 'era' ("Zeit") … can borrow from another; philosophical research is at the same time also something that - if it has understood itself and if it has understood its sense and the capacities of its performances which reside in the human Dasein - can never have the pretence of taking over from the next generations the weight and pressure of the care (Bekümmernung) of radical interrogation. This weight cannot be and must not be taken over." With the specification that the term "radical" is used here consequently in its basic sense, that of: going to the roots.

It is therefore clear that the philosophical research is identified here as something like assumption, namely the assumption on each actual and factual occasion - consequently being in actu - of the weight and pressure of the care of radical interrogation. Philosophy is therefore something which is never only "continued" or "ended", but it is rather reborn - it is therefore brought to a new and repeated rebirth - in each age through and in function of the assumption of some existential challenges,
original, present and historical alike - namely assuming the pressure of the burden of radical interrogation -, which aim in a particular way and in act at each age and each actual generation apart.

And the beingness of philosophy is organized exactly in the fact that it is itself a mode of being of the human Dasein, a mode of being of the situated human presence. Namely, philosophy is precisely that mode of being of man which has as its object - necessarily and first of all - exactly this being as a being and the facticity of his life (faktisches Leben). Object examined- investigated and problematized by the philosophy thus understood and outlined even with respect to its character of being and existence.

Philosophy is not therefore placed or introduced from the outside - or in any other artificial way - into the being, and because of this neither does the being and the problem of being "enter" from the outside and artificially into philosophy, but rather and only through the existence of man. That is, through the existence of the one who philosophizes. As Heidegger himself said "...the philosophical research itself gives and constitutes (ausmacht) a determined 'how' of factual life, and, as such, it already con-temporarizes (mitzeitigt) this and itself also with the each time concrete being of life - therefore not as some ulterior application...".¹

Before proceeding, we must however point out and specify the circumstance that in the term "facticity" and "factual" life - though it evidently derives from the Latin factum - Heidegger takes into account, however, on the one hand its older significations, and, on the other those preserved and lived mostly in Vulgar Latin. But, in these senses and significations factum does not mean something "given" or "deeds" (in a, let us say, positivistic sense), but exactly the deed seen in the effectiveness of its realization, namely as real act. What is therefore essential in "facticity" is precisely the dynamism of the act, which is brought to the outlining of its effectiveness exactly in its actuality. Thus - according also to an observation of Gadamer - Heidegger conceived and used the term "facticity" exactly as a "counter-concept" (Gegenbegriff), namely as something which is right counter- that which in German idealism was named "consciousness", "self- consciousness" or in Husserl's works, "the transcendental ego".²

Only that factual life is focalized and articulated first of all by care and taking care. And exactly in this dynamism of careful human preoccupations the world is

¹ Heidegger, 8.
constituted both as a surrounding world, the world common with the others and as one's own world.

Due to care and taking care life is and feels heavy. Consequently, life too always factually strives, on the one hand, to get absorbed in the directions and the objects of its cares, and on the other hand and at the same time, to lighten the oppressive weight of its cares. And these, together, constitute that which Heidegger called the declining tendency of factual life. We should like to specify that "decline" here has of course a strictly ontological sense, and as such it is only the tendency of life to shun itself - lighten itself. It is not a decline compared to some "golden ages" or to some former paradisiacal states and the decline is not something that happens only occasionally or which would be characteristic only to a certain age. On the contrary: the decline originates from the constitutive character, for man's factual life, of the fact that it is structured by care. The care man takes first of all of the being-object and which, at the same time, urges man always towards the lightening of its pressure. Decline is therefore an ontological, intentional-factual "how" of life.¹

As it is in fact philosophy too. Defined in this way, the essence and factual task of philosophy can only be to constitute itself in an - also factual - counter-tendency against the tendency of decline equally factual, characteristic to factual life. If therefore factual life tends to lighten..., then - seriously speaking - the factual-effective task of philosophy cannot be to elaborate some programmes which would lead to ideal and utopian states,² but, first of all, it is to give weight to the already lightened "things". That is, to show, to draws attention to their weight and complexity.

If, however, the declining tendency consists really of shunning and lightening one's own factual everyday life, then this tendency of shunning and lightening can be identified first of all exactly in its usual attitude and relationship towards death. For death is something that, on the one hand, is a threat to life as such, but, at the same time, it is, on the other hand, also a how of life. Death is not "beyond" life, for human life is permanently, each time and factually finite, namely mortal. At the same time, nothing "burdens" life more, than the weight and pressure of death. Therefore, nothing urges more to lighten its pressure, than death.

Related to and against this tendency the responsible philosophical research must consequently unfold. It has therefore to ensure the human Dasein its death as being a certitude which is just before it, that is, before us. Therefore, without some

¹ Heidegger, 12.
² Heidegger, 12.
metaphysics of immortality and without the metaphysics of what would be "after death". For all these are in fact only attempts to lighten the weight of death's pressure and, as such, they are omissions with respect to the task and "object" of philosophy which are, as we have seen, the human Dasein and his factual life.¹

By this, namely the effective - and not "only theoretical" or only "mental" - existential ensuring of death as certitude, therefore, as a certain and foreseen future for every living man and generation, death ensures however - and in fact - exactly view and visibility both for the present and the past of life. In fact and essentially, it organizes and constitutes therefore the temporality of factual life, temporality as such. Being exactly the "mortal" quality, namely the quality to be con-temporary with death and, thus, with the "holding" and "possession" of death.

And historicity, more precisely the basic sense of historicity - namely: historicality - as such, can be determined only starting from this temporality. History as history and the historicality of the human Dasein - living, (as at his time, the Dasein of the already dead, but also of the yet unborn) - originates therefore from his/their finitude, consequently from his/their character of being mortal. History as history and historicality originate therefore in fact from death. That is, from the future, neither from the past, nor from the present. The certain future of the living human Dasein's death is therefore that, which gives in fact weight to his life and which consequently gives weight both to the past and present of the Dasein. It gives therefore weight to the factual life of the human Dasein as such. The immortals consequently can neither have history, since, properly, neither can have history the beings which - though "they are in time" - do not exist, only are.

Nevertheless, - if we really try to penetrate it with our thoughts - we can also realize the fact that the "term", which, who knows why, always occurs when "death" is discussed… namely the term "death-lessness", refers necessarily to something, which - in conformity with "its definition" contained implicitly in its formulation - is in fact intangible - that is un-touchable - precisely as regards the aliveness of his life. Surely, it is not therefore useless to attempt a mental exercise and to try to penetrate the "depths" of this "term". Because only he, who has lived, can be "dead". In this sense the dead one's lack of life, the lack of life of death belongs in fact to its connection with and to life, as being exactly its loss. Similarly, only he, who has lived, and he, who, consequently lives ceaselessly and eternally, can be "undying".

For this is what we, mortals call... "deathless", and we call it thus exactly because we think of it as something - which being alive - is devoid of death, and, as such, is without death... Such a thing would be thus something whose living being - that is, whose life - is unconditioned and intangible. On the one hand, it depends on nothing, and on the other hand, it can be touched by nothing. The immortals' living being has therefore no connection and no contact with either nothing and - consequently - with the Nothing.

For this reason, all that is immortal is necessarily and ceaselessly in a way in which the How of his eternally living being can be, in general and to himself, only totally and ceaselessly indifferent. Consequently, though he can be whenever he wishes "sometimes" "so" and "sometimes" "different", all these can only be for him eventualities without any weight or pressure. Weight and pressure which would really have repercussion on his ever living being, for his (ever living) life does not depend on and is not - and cannot be - touched by them in any way or form. In other words, for something that would really be immortal, no such touch-eventuality can have - itself - character of being. The immortal's ceaseless aliveness can be therefore neither endangered, nor touched by anything and, because of this, not even he himself can endanger his aliveness. Consequently, for he himself can only be indifferent How he is... that is, How he is of whom we, mortals think - imagining - that we refer to with the term "immortal" and "immortality".

Taking therefore more seriously the task of thinking: one can think with the terms "immortal" and "immortality" of no (other) quality, as being his constant quality, therefore as being an actual quality in an equally ceaseless way. On the contrary: one can associate with the immortal and immortality ceaselessly and eternally any kind of "qualities" and at any time. Therefore, only in the eventual way and only devoid of any reflexive "ontological" and existential weight. Consequently: any striving, for example, for "good" or for "justice" etc. of anything which would be really immortal - and all the more some ontological and qualitative constant of such an aspiration - can be only something devoid of sense and meaning. That is, in Aristotelian terminology: a kind of "goat-stag".

In any case, something like this is always and totally situated hither of any "good" and "evil", any "just" and "unjust"... In this way, in fact, he cannot even "reach" them, therefore, he cannot even attain to be at least in contact with them.\footnote{Nietzsche's critic of Kant takes of course all these aspects fully in consideration.} Consequently, something like this can in no way and never go "beyond good and
evil". That is: far from being able to "establish" the ethics and legal systems of justice etc., it cannot even "criticize" them. Therefore, domains, problems and efforts such as ethics, deontology, jurisprudence etc. as well have a role, a sense and weight only for those beings for whom, due to their existence, the How of this being and the How of this existence must always and really have weight, sense and signification. In other words, who are mortal and who die.

Death, dying is therefore something which - though in most of the cases not a theme - starting however from the core of existence, is the source of and articulates in fact - and exactly with respect to their weight and ontological and historical senses - any ethics, any deontology, any legal system, any scientific or... philosophical theory. Domains for which therefore it is not at all useless to realize this, mainly when they judge from above exactly death, therefore in fact exactly their source, origin and precisely their foundation.

The historicality of history is, however, structured and outlined both by the declining tendency and the existential efforts to counteract this. And these efforts are - in their turn - as factual as the decline. Their possibility therefore also resides in the factual possibilities of the human Dasein. But, Heidegger names here the ensemble of these possibilities of authenticity: existence. Which cannot be outlined and distinguished because of this unless through and as the consequence of the factual destruction of the declining states which are however always the dominant states of facticity.

Consequently, with respect to these dominant states "negation has primacy over affirmation".¹ Negation, however, means exactly to open facticity to the possibilities of (its) existence, namely the possibilities of authenticity in the given, concrete hermeneutical-historical situating, this being the critique of the present and - by this - the critique of tradition and of history. For this reason philosophy can never be something "popular". Therefore it can never enjoy "popularity", for it usually asserts itself against popular, common and liked things and "places". Philosophy is however constrained to act destructively not only against these popular dominances, but also against its own traditions, which too get in the present to the way of decline. Because of this the foundation of philosophy and philosophizing as foundation means each time the destructive, decided and negating feature too of this tradition.

To "make philosophy", to philosophize is only possible on the basis and after a decision. Only through this decision can in fact the object of philosophy be obtained and assimilated, the object that concerns existence evidently and fundamentally.

¹ Heidegger, 18.
Existence stands, therefore, now - defied and defiant - both before its own traditions and possibilities. Or, from the point of view of tradition, the philosophy of the present situation moves - in general - on the one hand in Greek conceptuality (which itself has gone through the most varied interpretations in the course of time), and, on the other hand, in Christian idealness. They therefore determine together - from the perspective of the problem of facticity - also the current dominant interpretation of life (Lebensauslegung).

Only this tradition and interpretation are essentially devoid exactly of the certitude of death. That is, exactly the quality of death as death, as dying and as such the quality of death as certitude. In complete accord with and even by virtue of these directions and tendencies - however paradoxically and dismayingly, perhaps - almost all the occidental traditions - the metaphysical tradition, the religious tradition, the tradition of common beliefs and opinions etc. - in their dominant aspects have been operating in fact for thousands of years with a "concept" of death which does not refer to dying as such, but, on the contrary it hides - or at least evades - it. Beginning with Plato - his texts from Phaidon and Criton - and continued by Epicurus... not to mention the Christian tradition... but also the tradition of those who criticized Christianity - thinkers of the size of Schopenhauer or Nietzsche - and up to E. Lévinas or J. Derrida... the western metaphysical tradition - with the maybe sole exception of Martin Heidegger - thinks of death constantly without dying... That is, on the one hand even as immortality and deathlessness, or, on the other hand, evading constantly the express-explicit thought of dying.

It is therefore all the more necessary the decision on the basis of which philosophy can really become a force capable of radical effectiveness in the movements against the tendencies of decline. Briefly: capable of emancipation related to this tradition and capable to become at the same time "able" to liberate and open the human Dasein towards the possibilities of authenticity of (its) existence.

In other words - as Heidegger textually declared - it is necessary that this philosophy should become and should be decidedly and fundamentally atheist (grundsätzlich atheistisch ist). Namely: to become a philosophy, which has decided to gain and to assume its object and senses not determined by ideological exigencies and "visions about the world", neither continuing mechanically its own traditions, but starting from its own con-temporarized factual possibilities.

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1 Heidegger, 22.
2 Heidegger, 18.
Therefore the fundamental and necessary atheism of philosophy did not mean for the young Heidegger an ideological inclusion in some other movement or trend (e.g. "materialism"), but we encounter here a completely constitutive element. (And which, for this reason, is much more radical than any "usual" movement, tendency of "denying God".) Instead this is the founding affirmation of the fact that, in general, any philosophy which understands itself seriously and honestly, with this understanding has also to understand the circumstance that philosophy as such and philosophizing in general is and means already implicitly some kind of "raising one's hand against God" (Handaufhebung gegen Gott ist) as well.¹ Only thus can philosophy ensure its critical autonomy, which is necessary to existential criticism through which on the one hand tradition is destroyed, and, on the other hand existence is opened. And only thus can philosophy avoid becoming - by yielding to the allure of ease - a simple and already usual "metaphysical calmative", through which man takes refuge in a "soothing" world (beruhigende Welt).²

¹ Heidegger, 18.
² Heidegger, 18.
And to really avoid these traditional and already much too usual pitfalls and allures, philosophy must unfold, construct and reconstruct itself only on the basis of its real, factual-effective and radical sources and possibilities. And in this existential reconstruction, the human Dasein - which therefore philosophizes - can only rely on the facticity of its own radical interrogations... and not at all on some God.

It is therefore clear that "atheism" - term used here in its basic and constitutive sense, namely a-theos, meaning "without God", and not the "rough" denial of God - is essentially and fundamentally connected to the issue we are discussing, namely the foundation of philosophy. For by atheism philosophy does not simply "gain" some "autonomy" - let us say from the church or religion - wished for or only dreamt at occasionally, but in fact it is founded. That is, through its atheism, philosophy acquires, as against the dominant tradition, not only his own object, but essentially it obtains itself as decision, as opening and as radical questioning and investigating happening.

For this reason Heidegger asked himself here, whether: "Is not even the idea of some philosophy of religion, moreover if its considerations are realized without taking into consideration man's facticity, a pure nonsense?" (Ob nicht schon die Idee einer Religionsphilosophie, und gar wenn sie ihre Rechnung ohne die Faktizität des Menschen macht, ei purer Widersinn ist?) But why would even the "idea" of a philosophy of religion be a "pure nonsense"? Of course, first of all because if "religion" would be let us say the "object" of such a philosophy, then with this a philosophy outlines in this way would miss from the beginning its true, fundamental and founding "object". Namely, the comprehensive facticity of the human Dasein. Secondly, if - as it is usual as a rule - by "philosophy of religion" it is understood or meant in fact some kind of "religious philosophy", then through this so-called "philosophy", philosophy misses in fact exactly its tasks and senses. For - by virtue of its bases - the sense and task of philosophy is and can be only to outline, take care of and ask the radical questions. Which - moreover - it is realized exactly in order to "burden things" and exactly through the exercising of the primacy of negation. And any "religious philosophy" - through its name itself - only narrows the openness of questioning, since it either "knows" already from the beginning the believed and "religious" answers to his "questions", or, together with this, it refrains - if it does not

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1 Heidegger, 18.
forbid - from the start from asking some (let us say a-theistic) types and direction of questions.

Philosophy is founded and identifies itself therefore as being in itself a factual mode of existence of the human Dasein, which, "originating" exactly from his factual life… also returns to the facticity and "vitality" of this life. For this reason and consequently, philosophy lays in fact its own foundations. Thus Kant's words, according to which philosophy alone can - and even must - lay its own foundations, prove to be true and acquire a new contour and a new weight. And this is never a purely theoretical-epistemic happening, since - as we have seen - self-foundation of philosophy takes place only starting from and in its being-like and factual affiliation - as a mode of being - to factual life itself. As being therefore itself a relationship of being, in which the being itself "grows" and is enriched, turning towards itself in the form and in the mode of radical interrogation which must be assumed, performed and effectuated each time in an actual, existential-historic and factual way.

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Anyhow: this early Heideggerian text outlines the foundation of philosophy exactly by placing it into the soil of its equally factual, historical and existential origins and senses. Placing it therefore exactly into freedom and exactly into what Kant named in his time "the autonomy and interests proper to philosophy". Consequently, the foundation of philosophy also meant for Heidegger - already in 1922 - implicitly its opening towards the meditation on the essence of the foundation and through this towards the ceaseless re-interrogation of the world, of the transcendence and of freedom.

Or all these would become - in the year 1929 - the express themes of the study On the Essence of the Ground, in which therefore "the ground" and "foundation" were already interrogated expressly and - of course - radically.

Translated by Ágnes Korondi
Terrorism is the usage of death essentially inseparable from the secret. We could very well describe terrorism as the breeding ground of terror and anxiety turned into an instrument and evoked by death-causing, respectively by death-causing presented as constantly possible – that is: threatening – in its secret unidentifiability. For the power of terror consists exactly in the quite particular instrumentalization of death, as well as of man’s attitude towards death – especially the instrumentalization of the fear of death. One basic and essential characteristics and aspect of this instrumentalization is the secret.

Man instrumentalized death in several ways and/but this always turns into a basic form, modality by which the living can be dominated. The instrumentalization of death, however, works and is effective time and time again and exactly amid the denial of death. Therefore because of this – respectively only to this extent – it is true that: “The primary motivation of terrorists and suicidal bombers is theological and it consists of two principia: duty and reward.”¹ It consists of the usage of death instrumentalized in its denial by means of secrecy…

For terrorism cannot be understood without the secret and the instrumentalization of death – which presupposes and is conditioned by the denial of death! Since it is the secret that organizes, articulates, wraps and brings to reality the terrorists as individuals, the terrorist organizations, their activity, their aims, instruments, members, plans and in short all their deeds. In the terrorist act exactly “this” secret blows fatally into (and often also blows up in) the public…² Because of this it is so “difficult” for the public to defend themselves against it.

If not in this sense strictly, but essentially this is what Jürgen Habermas formulated in his discussion with Giovanna Borradori regarding the interpretation of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attack.³ For, he said, the so called “war on terrorism” is waged against an actually unknown enemy… Jacques Derrida too said in an

¹ Patrick Sookhdeo, Să înţelegem terorismul islamic (Understanding Islamic Terrorism) Oradea, Fâclia, 2006, p. 136. (Emphasis mine I. K.V.)
² Since terrorists “want” to kill as many and as important/well-known people as possible and “want” this act to be communicated to as many people as possible in the most vivid and effective manner.
interview published in the same volume, that: “We do not really know what we are speaking about when we talk about September 11.”¹

To this we must only add – in order to make the matter clearer – that the enemy of the war on terrorism is “unknown” not only and not primarily in the sense as something which – either because it has been neglected or because it is a novelty – has not been “investigated” yet… but in the sense that it is essentially an enemy which organizes himself exactly against the possibility of being known, respectively identified. Namely, in secret and with the secret.

Consequently: some quite special and, at the same time, essential relationship must be created and must operate between secret and death in terrorism – that is, in the mechanism of this particular usage of death – so that this could exist at all and that it could really “operate”. Because killing is not “an aim in itself” for a terrorist – in contrast to a person running amok –, he expressly uses death and the special

¹ Ibid., p. 135.
weight, power and stress of this usage is conferred by the secret connected to it constitutively. For the secret is not “one” feature or “attribute” of death-causing terrorism which its experience and interpretation meets somewhere afterwards abandoning and superseding it… on the contrary, it is the atmosphere and the horizon in which terrorism is outlined as an existentiale – that is, as the mode of existence of the being which is after all usually called “man” – and in which, hence, it must be considered.

The secret leaves its mark on the organization of terrorism, it protects the plans of terrorist actions, their most detailed parts, respectively the modes in which they are carried out and the participants – and often the culprits too –, respectively/or it has the role to ensure their success. Therefore the secret actually produces, keeps in “life”, moreover strengthens – with its invisibility, unidentifiability etc. – the terror of (death)threat too.

Thus terrorism and terrorists existing-operating in secret and by means of the secret cause, deal out death. The difference between a terrorits and a conspirator – who otherwise also exists in secret and by means of the secret – is, that, on the one hand, conspirators’ targets and victims are always determined persons and their positions and that, on the other hand, the conspiracy is usually aimed directly against (existent) power, against it, but its aim is to seize power expressly and directly.\(^1\) In contrast to this, the terrorists’ targets are usually innocent people who are in no direct contact with the actual decision making mechanisms.\(^2\) Consequently, the terrorist act cannot have for an aim and direct result the “taking over” or obtaining of power.

The relationship between the secret and terrorism is therefore sui generis and furthermore extremely ramified. Such a short analysis can naturally outline only some decisive aspects in order to attract the attention of future researchers. Since we have to examine and possibly answer some essential aspects of the question: how is terrorism possible existentially – that is as actually as a mode of existence!  

Namely: how is it possible that well-determined, but in most cases unidentifiable people murder other undetermined, but identifiable people in systematically outlined and surprisingly successful-effective – often self-destructive – acts?

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\(^2\) The victims’ only crime is that by paying their taxes, by their votes, ideas and views on the world in some way, nevertheless, support the power “inimical” from the terrorists’ point of view. One has to provoke such reactions by means of terror that these people – using the same tools (namely votes etc.) – might influence the decision-making bodies and processes in the directions wished for by the terrorists.
For it is a big question whether it is really enough to mention religious, nationalistic or political fanaticism in order to sketch and “understand” such a thing. And, if it would seem to be “enough” the mentioning of all these, we could not disregard that if it were not for the secret, all these fanaticisms would not in fact succeed or erupt as “terrorism”, but as something completely different; namely, they would be something else!1

Like terrorism, in fact the secret is also a mode of existence, moreover, a quite complicated and little understood mode of existence. Namely, the secret is primarily secreting, respectively the existentiality of the co-original and derivate, respectively generated structures related to secreting. Therefore the secret is in fact a secured, respectively restricted disguising – according to a former analysis and outlining of the phenomenon of the secret we made. This exposure, as such, is constructed expressly against its own discovery, revealing. We do not know the secret (secrets) because it is disguised – and in a restricted, secured way disguised –, and this means that everything which is a secret is necessarily constructed by erecting actual obstacles, barriers, blockages – from invisibility through appearances to all kinds of interdictions – in an openly planned and projected way against its discovery and “unauthorized” acquisition.

By means of the secured disguise the secret’s existentiale, mode of existence is organized consequently and in fact against the public in general. Of course, taking into consideration exactly the public – or a determined part of this –, and exactly as the – restricted or general, but special – authority, disposal, power and domination over this. And this authority, disposal, power, domination over the public is

1 Nevertheless, the question, in what degree the secret, secrecy of terrorism or the sui generis relationship between terrorism and the secret is however connected with national or different religious fundamentalsisms, respectively, in other aspects, with the psychological particularities-pathology of terrorist persons and terrorism and with their study cannot constitute the theme of this investigation if only because the lengthiness of such a discussion. After all, countless erudite studies have been and are written on these subjects, while this constitutive relationship between terrorism and the secret is scarcely raised with thorough theoretical exactingness. Consequently, the secret does not even figure in an otherwise high quality synthesis dedicated to “the psychology of terrorism”, which even presents the statistics of the most frequent criteria used in the definitions of terrorism [Cristian Delea: Psihologia terorismului – Studiu psihologic asupra teroristilor (The Psychology of Terrorism – Psychological Study on Terrorists), Cluj-Napoca, Editura Albastră, 2004, p. 18.] Nevertheless, the question is formulated whether the psychological theory of terrorism can scientifically explain how and why “terrorists are born” (Ibid., p. 26.). Of course the result of the serious analysis is, however, that: “It seems that psychologists agree in the fact that there is no specific psychological attribute which could describe terrorists or any other ‘personality’ which is destructive – could be used for destruction (the comment is mine – I. K. V.) – for terrorists” (Ibid., p. 108.). It is important to clarify all these things lest we should believe that there could be no fanatical (ideological or national) terrorism – leading even to suicidal attacks – in Christianity for example. The Irish and Basque terrorists, the events of the recent Yugoslavian wars which did not always lack religious aspects, can offer sufficient warning in this respect (too).
characterized by the fact that it operates by the – theoretical – exclusion of the public, and expressly in this exclusion itself. This naturally confers to the secret a particular power, efficiency and success as well, both on a factual – purposefully in what regards the fruitfulfulness of the secret – and a symbolic level.

For symbolically, the secret is exactly in the public. Nevertheless, it is obviously there as a secret. And the symbolic power of the secret consists of the fact that it can use that against which it was created and against which in fact exists – sometimes even making this its accomplice – being present as a secret. This meaning that it can use the public symbolically as well. First of all, it “informs” the public of its existence – as a secret and exclusively as a secured secret. The public is informed that there is e.g. inquisitional court, secret political police, that there are secret – even terrorist – organizations etc. Meanwhile these exist in fact in secret, which means that the public can never openly know what, how and when they are going to do. Therefore, it is a defining, essential and organic aspect of terrorism that it is, on the one hand, a secret violence, on the other hand a death-causing violence striking into the public, which, by means of its determined acts and beyond these as well, as a permanently caused and maintained terrorization, fear and dread, means, signals and threatens with – a secret, therefore inscrutable and unidentifiable – public danger.

The secret always requires one or more secret makers, who create and operate it, and who meanwhile necessarily keep it – in secret. They are therefore the owners of the secret and of its power – as well as of its weight and pressure. They are those who by means of the secret are and through whom the secret is: powerful.

This raises the unavoidable question: How far does the power of the secret reach? Has this power any limits, and, if it has, what kind of limits are they? Are they only pragmatic or categorial limits instead? These questions can be answered only if we make a digression starting with an idea we formulated above.

The secret, in order to be operational, must be necessarily kept as a secret, and its preservation be – continuously – ensured. For this reason the communication referring to the secret is peculiar. Since the secret – in every respect and direction, at least self-evidently, respectively primarily – can be communicated, acquired as a secret and in secret. That is, in the case it is – effectively or symbolically – diffused.

This means first of all that the secret can be communicated, diffused as a secret only if its future preservation is previously guaranteed. This – and the primary

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1 Let us remember that in many respects – among other things – this was/is the source of the terrifying-attracting power of the Inquisition, secret political polices, secret societies – e.g. freemasonry – etc., and of the terrorist organizations as well.

2 See also Cristian Delcea, op. cit., p. 17.
(mainly ritual etc.) aspects which surround it – is what we call in fact **initiation**.\(^1\) Secondly, the initiation must offer previous guarantees first of all against **betrayal**.

We can only really understand betrayal if we perceive it not as the revealing of the secret, but exactly as the **communication** of the secret in (the) **secret as well**. For betrayal is in fact the (secondary-derivate) communication, transmission – in secret – of some secret-contents belonging to determined secret-structures to **other, opposite** secret-structures.\(^2\) Consequently and in brief: any secret can be betrayed, surpassed in secret without being ever expressly disclosed. (To **disclose** or to **break** a secret are essentially different from this, since these acts bring the secret and its contents to the public sphere, and thus destroy its existence. A secret disclosed, made public is no longer a secret!)

Regarding its existential structure the secret is a **danger to itself**, being able to consume itself. And exactly against this must/should the initiation – which means the primary communication of the secret as a secret – offer guarantees. For this reason contains each initiation ritual a – compulsory – promise which obliges the initiated to the keep the secret in every respect, namely: **an oath**.

The oath required, obtained and taken during the initiation is naturally a **secret oath**,\(^3\) in which the oath taker obligatorily and previously swears to keep – first of all to conceal and be silent about – the secret in the **future**.\(^4\) The oath is an assurance and security measure first of all as the guarantee for a commitment securing the secret against betrayal, which is a threat – a threatening possibility – opening in and from the secret itself.

The secret oath is the step, the existential gesture, ontological bridge and mechanism through which the **transition** from the “profane” sphere to the initiated, from the public sphere to the secret takes place. Its secrecy, firstly, completes the oath as an act of public validity extending it to the limit, secondly, it also means the actual **surpassing** of this (public) validity towards a “sphere” – the secret – in which the public regulators are only incidentally, functionally and instrumentally “valid”.

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\(^1\) Regarding more details on initiation see our study entitled *Beavatás, hallgatás, álarc* (Initiation, Silence, Mask) in our volume entitled *Határ – Hallgatás – Titok*, op. cit., pp. 134–153.

\(^2\) This characterizes, by this can be understood, for example, the existential structure of spying.

\(^3\) On oath and secret oath see a more detailed discussion in our study entitled *Az összesküvés – Titok és eskü* (Conspiracy – Secret and Oath). *Ibid.*

\(^4\) The oath gives special weight, stress and basis to the human acts it accompanies, since its inner tension, impetus and dynamism takes the oath taker beyond the direct, respectively incidental meaning of his acts. Because of this the **future** has a particular emphasis in the temporality of the oath. The future of the oath is always anticipatory. And “to anticipate” means: to take before, to act in advance. This means going forward in “time” and taking, assuming the results, consequences of present actions. See also Rudolf Hirzel, *Der Eid – Ein Beitrag zu seiner Geschichte*, Leipzig, Verlag von S. Hirzel, 1902, pp. 152–171.
Therefore in the secret not only any secret “becomes” surpassable – in betrayal, respectively in its inner and categorial-structural possibilities, which are born in spite of any initiation-like prohibition –, but first of all any public regulation and/or regulator as well. Consequently, by means of initiation there is a way not only to the material contents of the secret, but also to the acquisition of that entirely inner power, which carries the secret over the validity of any regulator (norm, value, content and prohibition) from an existential, theoretical and ontological point of view. Therefore in secret and by means of secret actually any – secret or public – regulation, norm, value and/or prohibition can be surpassed.\(^1\)

But this also means that decisive aspect that the secret in itself – first of all as a technique and instrument, but basically with respect to its categorial structure – is not enough guarantee to assure, enforce its preservation, operation etc.

Despite this – and exactly as a result of this – a new Being-here, a new “subject”, a new secret maker – a new “man” – is born in the initiation. Namely, the initiation is at the same time a re-personalization which, through and besides establishing a relationship with and committing oneself to the secret, means and provides an overview on and the acquiring of the categorial power of the secret itself, therefore an existential inclusion in it. And this inclusion in the secret has repercussion to the entire existence and the entire – new – ontological identity of the initiated person. This re-personalized new identity thus essentially originates from the secret and is outlined and divided by means of the secret.\(^2\) Its force and consistency therefore originate from the power of the secret, and from its promise, obligation and ability to meet the requirements and imperatives of this power.

In spite of this – as we have seen – the secret is not enough guarantee to assure, enforce its preservation, operation etc. For this reason in the initiation – in particular in the oath connected to it –, which is the guarantee of the keeping and safe operation of the secret, the horizon of this safety, respectively the actual limit of this horizon can only be the limit of the being – the initiated himself – who has been

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\(^1\) This is why jurisprudence and legislation cannot handle the secret. Referring to this see also: Michel Coïétoux; Fortuné di Ruzza; Jérôme Dumoulin; Jean-Jacques Gleizal: La justice face aux fonctions sociales du secret, Grenoble, Ministere de la Justice, Service de Coordination de la Recherche, I.R.E.P. – Université des Sciences Sociales de Grenoble, 1981, p. 207.

\(^2\) For this reason the so called “psychological” aspects of this, though “real” in each case, essentially can only be derivate, therefore secondary. This means that the – quite trendy – observations and studies on the “psychology of terrorists or terrorism” are also mainly such.
included thus in the secret. And this limit is – and can be – none other than death, the
being’s death.¹

Thus the initiatory oath takes away from death its certain, but undetermined when – and in most cases even its how as well² –, outlining, concretizing death – on the one hand – expressly in relation to the betrayal of the secret: “...when I reveal the secret, respectively, when I break my oath connected to it... may I die or be killed so and so!” Usually at the moment when the initiation-swearing act connected to the secret goes astray, proves to be faithless according to himself, his promises. Which means: though the initiatory oath explicitly specifies the how and the when of death, it presents life – the oath taker’s life – as something non-whole, therefore non-real originating from his faithlessness. In terrorism and the initiation connected with it, however, – on the other hand – death is pictured as a fulfilment, the carrying out to death of the mission taken on with an oath, and exactly with the goal to redeem the life of “others”.

Anyway: the person who takes a – necessarily secret – oath to keep and operate the secret offers/can offer as an actual guarantee of his faithfulness only the interruptible non-whole of his own life. This is, of course, as we have mentioned, true to terrorism as well.

For this reason the possibilities of the secret’s success are two-fold. The first is the alternative of the “either-or”: the successful mastery of either death or life – surpassing death and its threat referring to the secret, the secret maker (surviving the threat). This is victory “over death”, over the explicitly formulated death threat and the dominion over life. This “either-or”, however, is not an alternative which opens “on the way” and becomes more and more clearly outlined as one is getting nearer to the goal, but it stand at the end of the road from the beginning, from the moment one is included in the secret. The second alternative is also success over life, but one which leads through death-causing; a – from every point of view deathly – success which (suicidally) denies death (at least) with reference to the secret and the secret maker (too). By this the initiation-like secret vow presents the oath not only in its –

¹ Similarly, the public oath – which nowadays tends to lose its importance – as well is an act which validates the oath taker’s life and aims at its actuality. The relational situation of this act – with regard to the possibility of perjury –, by anticipating the possibility of degradation, refers to the entirety of the oath taker’s life. But it does not present this life as a whole to be looked at from the perspective of the end – which means, in its referentiality to death, expressly thematizing death.
² For this reason figures death necessarily – and not as an emphasis originating from elsewhere – in the curse clause of secret oaths as well. In the majority of such curse clauses death is concretely mentioned: in case he would break his oath the oath taker calls death upon his head, moreover he tells the mode of the death as well, “may I be quartered”, “may I be killed with the dagger on which I swear” etc. In more detail see: Az összesküvés – Titok és eskü, ibid., pp. 184–185.
truly universal, therefore exceeding the authority of any public and secret regulator – legislative quality, as a source of rights, but also as something from which the “rights” of disposing over life and death originate from. Consequently, the omnipotence of the secret manifests itself in the initiatory indrawal, insight and commitment to the categorial power of the secret.

With this, however, we have got a general outline of the ground on which we can to some measure answer the questions we asked above: How far does the power of the secret reach? Has this power any limits, and, if it has, what kind of limits are they? Has the secret – existentially – only pragmatic or categorial limits instead?

The analyses we have made afore clearly suggest that existentially the limits of the secret are primarily not categorial, but pragmatic. That is, they consist of the mode its usage – dedication and determinedness, awareness related to it, respectively “expertise” in it. This does not mean that the secret has no categorial limits (as well). For we have just seen this related to betrayal. Obviously, all this can be applied and utilized in the contemporary fight against terrorism, for it is obvious that we can fight – openly, “directly” and to some measure effectively – against the secret of terrorism only with the rather polysemous and many-edged instrument of the secret.

Meanwhile, we should know about this present terrorism, considered a global threat, that historically speaking, and in the majority of its essential aspects – therefore with respect to the secret as well! –, it is the rather direct result and consequence of the Cold War, respectively to its (apparent) outcome. As its name reveals, the Cold War was a non-military contest and clash between two – otherwise incompatible – social systems, its permanent and real goal being after all and all the time the annihilation of the rival. For this reason the secret had a peculiar place and role in it, since the “warfare” of the Cold War did not meant the use of brute military force, but an extensive and oppressive rivalry extended to back countries and allies.¹ In this warfare socialism for example – for the first time in history – really centralized and totalized the secret and the category of secrets.² But the hottest front of the Cold War was the Third World.

Present day terrorism – identified as a global threat – (too) sprouted in the secret fields of the Cold War, in the different countries where – in secret! –

² On the relationship of socialism and the secret see our study entitled Titok és szocializmus in our volume Filozófia és Itt-Lét, Kolozsvár, Erdélyi Hiradó, 1999, pp. 57–78.
individuals explicitly called and acting like terrorists (even) now were trained, and where organizations were initiated or supported.¹ For this reason present day terrorism primarily is not “international” in the sense that its organizations operate in unison in several countries, but rather in the fact that – meanwhile – they bring together and profit by the competencies of several national secret services.

However, present day terrorism is not simply the “consequence” of the Cold War, but at the same time the way in which this grasps the secret sui generis for itself: seeing and showing it omnipotent, as the master of life and death.

The terrorism and the terrorist existing-operating in secret and by the secret therefore cause and deal out death, while the terrorist himself often dies. He commits suicide or is killed. But DOES the suicide or liquidated terrorist really DIE? And DO the victims “punished” by terrorism really DIE? Or do they rather DEPART? The Islam terrorist departs to his heavens – to others’ hell –, and his victims too – depending on the point of view – move to their heavens, respectively others’ hell. Actually none DIES really; losing their lives, they pass instead to a – never indifferent, either salutary or damned, but nevertheless – eternal life.

At any rate, terrorism (too) – as the actuality of the dominion over life and death – can hardly be imagined without the instrumentalizing denial of death and dying. The instrumentalizing denial of death, dying in terrorism happens mainly and mostly, as we have mentioned above, by means of the radicalization of very traditional cultural – usually, but not always religious – bases and premises. On the basis therefore, that the denial of death has become a fundamental historical characteristic of “culture” refined to a “function”. Secondly, however, by the fact that – amid the specific instrumentalization of death – terrorism wishes to give some special, determined sense to dying, especially to the terrorist’s (own) possible or actual dying.² A sense by which this – also as a possible or actual dying – will

¹ Let us consider how the secret polices of several communist countries trained or supported terrorists such as Carlos or Jasser Arafat and his organization etc., respectively that the present day number one public enemy, Osama bin Laden, was trained and helped to create his first organization by the CIA. This organization was later joined by “specialists” taught and trained by the KGB and the Mossad etc., so that there the trainees could exchange their experiences and learning. In these movements, nowadays identified as “terrorist movements”, therefore competencies connected to the secret, which otherwise – actually – nowhere and in no circumstances could be united, are gathered and “impregnate” one another in the secret. Since the official, “public” national information services – defending themselves, and functioning against one another – “can communicate” only well-determined information, and not “techniques” and structures to one another.
² This of course does not mean that death and dying could not be “given” some determined sense at all. For this happens for example in every heroic death as well. But we should understand that, basically, on the one hand, every sense in human life originates – non-thematically – from death, respectively mortality (for without this the importance of senses would be meaningless!), and that, on the other hand, by such things the circle of “meaningful” deaths, and of those which should be considered as such is unauthorizedly and
become exemplary and memorable at the same time. That is, it “outlives” the dying person – who can and wants to “survive” not through his life, but instead through his dying – expressly and directly as dying. Because of this reason, this is in fact the denial of death. For this dying is not really heroic, – even if we speak about profane, atheistic (“god-less”) terrorism – only sacrificial. As far as the assailant is the sacrificer – the one who sacrifices others –, but he is also the self-sacrificial, sacrificing himself. He differs from his victim in this respect. The weight of his sacrifice, self-sacrifice is essentially and exactly in the actual and factual denial of death, (his) dying, namely the existential facticity, the definiteness of this denial – as denial. In other words, in the negativity of the denial, in the active and articulated actuality of this negativity (in the “positivity” of death-causing). Terrorism instrumentalizes, uses and dominates death in these occasions by means of this denying actuality.

The terrorist’s “death” is therefore such – respectively that – life-losing which – according to him and for him! – directly and expressly ensures his existence beyond life, in other words the non-death, the non-dying, the non-passing. His victims’ death, the interpretation and interpretedness of this – beyond the fact that they are directly the victims of the terrorist act –, on the other hand are committed to the rolling and expanding waves of terror caused, surrounded and magnified by the effective contribution of the secret. Which means, that death and dying are instrumentalized – by means of the secret which got to dominate the disposal over life and death – on the grounds of the denial of death, and thread by the denial of death.

Psychologists, anthropologists, etc. experience and interpret the denial of death as a “basic human need”,¹ as a defence against death – mainly against its pressure and the anxiety caused by its actuality (mortality salience) –, by which people try to manage the terror caused by the threat of death, in other words, the terror of that with which they are confronted by (their) experiences, moreover, referring exactly to them. This then creates and starts a series of narrow or far-reaching defensive and

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declining mechanisms. One of the most essential among these is the belief and idea of immortality, which, however, is confronted with actual, factic death time and time again.

In this way death is turned into something which is life-loss, but not dying, while dying becomes something which now uncomprehended and unmanaged terrorizes. Therefore it must be denied again and again.

But we can see, in a denied death not only death, but life too loses from its weight. For life becomes something, the loss of which – in Kierkagaard’s words – in fact is not deathly! Or, as Nietzsche said in another respect: man has lost far more essential things in his life, than life...

Of course, accidentally the question might occur whether confronting death is not man’s basic need in the same measure as its denial. A basic need which is moreover, again and again, suppressed and deformed by the denial of death!

Therefore, coming back to the issue of “sense”, “giving” a determined instrumentalizing sense to death means, in fact, to outline the denial of death – instrumentalized – amid this same denial. For this sense of death – always attempting to define it – in most cases is/gets not only beyond dying, but also beyond life itself. In these cases, it seems that not human life is that which, being mortal and exactly because it is mortal, permanently surpasses itself, but only the losing of life – recte: death – carries, can carry it “beyond” one’s own dying.

One may suppose therefore that people would at least more seldom blow – and generally kill – one another and themselves up if they understood that their single life is finite, in other words: uncontinuable and unrepeatable as well; if they did not deny death, their death.

In fact, the war on terrorism (too) should/must widen into a “fight” against the denial of death. A fight which should/must be fought (after all) not only and not exclusively and mainly on the secret fields, but, on the contrary, in the depth and womb of history – which becomes more and more visible in the fractures of history by means of present day terrorism. Therefore, we should speak of far more and of far more essential things than the fact that, consequently to and amid the developments of terrorism, which has reached new dimensions since September 11, 2001, we ought to re-evaluate critically (once again) – and for the sake of a new “cosmopolitan” world order (Habermas) – the legal, international legal and political institutions and ideas of the Enlightenment and of the age based on this.\footnote{As Habermas and Derrida suggested this in their colloquies with Giovanna Borradori. See: Giovanna Borradori, \textit{op. cit.}} Though, naturally, this latter
issue might be of interest as well, moreover, seemingly it is more direct and accessible. But it is probably not enough.

In the “age of terror” philosophy could first of all offer a view on this to us, living people – though it cannot constrain us to look at it.

Translated by Ágnes Korondi
The analyses in the book investigate the possibilities and foundations of a completely new philosophy of history, although outlined in dialogue with M. Heidegger. The fundamental questions the author asks are: Why, wherefrom is there history? Why are we humans historical? Why is there historiography? Primarily and ultimately, the response to each of these questions is: because we are MORTAL. Accordingly, the first chapter tackles the possibilities and lays the foundations of an ontology of history. Built upon these, the second chapter analyses the being of the PAST and its existential characteristics – as NOT-BEING-ANY-MORE, as HAD-BEEN-NESS. Chapter three turns towards the FUTURE and analyses its existential characteristics as NOT-YET-BEING. Chapter four is an explicit return to the dialogue with Heidegger, which surfaces the main aspects of the essential belonging together of the fundamentals and origins of philosophy and history. The Appendix is an applied philosophical research related to the previous subjects which examines the interlacements of DEATH and SECRET in the phenomenon of TERRORISM.

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