

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

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Abstract

The paper unfolds the problem of time focusing primarily on the dimension of the **future**, while, in the background of its *sui generis* questionings, it is based by a continuous, and again questioning, dialogue with Aristotle and Martin Heidegger. It is **the existence of the future** which is foremost analyzed, unravelled, dismantled, and thought over in the course of this research. First, as Will-Being, then as Hold-Being.¹ As a being, that is, which – in a particular view of the future – we, humans, Holding on to ourselves, will and must Hold always, and which, with time, Holds on to us at the same time. Therefore the being of future must be grasped first as a being which ... Is Not Yet. Consequently the following meditations ask and think over the question: what kind of existence is this Not-Yet-Being after all? And then: what is the actual, **living, richly meaningful** ontological, existential, and historical horizon of this question? It is here that the problem of human history, human death, and human freedom unfolds from, with a view to the horizon of its **possible meanings** and **outlined possibilities of meanings**.

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

¹ Lesz-lét: lesz = future tense of “to be”; Fog-lét: the word “fog” = a particle used for forming the future tense of verbs, and the verb meaning “hold”, and “lét” = being. In analyzing the nature being of the future, the author actually investigates that intriguing possibility of the Hungarian language, worthy of philosophical examination, which otherwise would seem a “mere” phonetic or semantic “homonymy”. Similarly to Hegel’s treatment of the word *Aufhebung* (to sublimate), very important to him at that time, in his *Science of Logic*. There he writes: “To sublimate’ has a twofold meaning in the language... But it is certainly remarkable to find that a language has come to use one and the same word for two ... meanings. It is a delight to speculative thought to find in the language words which have in themselves a speculative meaning; the German language has a number of such.” See, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Science of Logic*, Copyright © 2001 Blackmask Online, <http://www.blackmask.com>. Letöltve: <http://www.hegel.net/en/pdf/Hegel-Scilogic.pdf> (Downloaded June 4, 2010.) (Author’s and translator’s note.)

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 future began to gain special emphasis only towards the end of the 18th century,⁴ 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, *futureology* 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”.⁵ 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.⁶ 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.

¹ See, Richard Rorty, *Philosophy and the Future* In: *Rorty and Pragmatism: The Philosopher Responds to His Critics*, ed. Herman J. Saatkamp, (Nashville (Tennessee): Vanderbilt University Press, 1995), 197–205.

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...

⁴ 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”.

⁵ Alvin Toffler published a highly successful and influential book with this title in 1970.

⁶ See Alvin Toffler, *Future Shock* (Random House, New York, 1970).

The future and its coming¹

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?**

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”.² 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

¹ The word for “future” in Hungarian (“jövő”) 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”...

² 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.

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...¹

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. 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.² 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...”³

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

¹ See Aristotle, *On Interpretation*, transl. E. M. Edghill, Section I, Part. 9 <http://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/interpretation.html>, downloaded on Febr. 27, 2010.

² For a background of all Aristotelian references and interpretations see the subchapter entitled *Poté és khrónos: ismét Arisztotelésznél* (Pote (πoтé) and Chronos (xρóvoς): again at Aristotle) in my volume *Halandóan lakozik szabadságában az ember...* (Mortally dwells the man in his freedom...), (Bratislava (Pozsony): Kalligram, 2007), 205–241. Furthermore, see: Aristote: *Physique*, texte établi et traduit par Henri Carteron, (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1990), I.–II. [French-Ancient Greek bilingual edition], and Aristote, [*Cathégorie*], texte établi et traduit par Richard Bodéüs, (Paris: Société d’Édition Les Belles Lettres, 2001) [French-Ancient Greek bilingual edition].

³ *A magyar nyelv értelmező szótára* (Interpretive Dictionary of the Hungarian Language), ed. by the Institute for Linguistics of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1959–1962).

opens up – in time and with time – the present to that what is-not. As an is-not-yet. So the horizon and force field of the Yet extends from the Is – the Is-Yet – and penetrates as far as the Is-not – the Is-not-Yet.

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 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 –

¹ On the concept of Already and its roles and ontological characteristics in constituting the Had-Been-ness and the Past, see my study entitled “Had-Been-ness and Past”, *Philobiblon* – Bulletin of the Lucian Blaga Central University Library, IV–VII(1999–2002): 312–360.

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 Híradó, 1999), 79–126; and also Király V., “Had-Been-ness and Past”.

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 study¹ – 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 sense³ – **is** exactly in such a way that it is not precisely as Any-more. Because that what Had-been

¹ See István Király V., *Had-Been-ness and Past*.

² For details on the Nothing see my study *Elzárttság, elfedtettség 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.

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).

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.¹ 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 and utters a time which *follows* the present. Often with an objecting, denying affective charge.²

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.³ 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 not temporal means that its **meaning** – or rather the horizon of its meaning-constitution and its “runway” – is beyond time “itself”.

¹ See: *A magyar nyelv történeti-etimológiai szótára* (Dictionary of historical etymology of the Hungarian language), ed. by Loránd Benkő, (Budapest: Akadémiai, 1967), and *A magyar nyelv értelmező szótára* (Explanatory dictionary of the Hungarian language), ed. by the Institute of Linguistics of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (Budapest: Akadémiai, 1959–1962).

² Ibid.

³ See, Martin Heidegger, “Zeit und Sein”, in *Zur Sache des Denkens* (Tübingen: Max Niemayer Verlag, 1969), 1–26.

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!¹ 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**.² 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.

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?**.³ For it is clear that we are speaking explicitly about **meaning** – or rather **horizon of meaning**

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 (πότη) és khrónos (χρόνος): ismét Arisztotelésznél*, in Király, *Halandóan lakozik szabadságában az ember...*

³ See again “Poté (πότη) és khrónos (χρόνος): ismét Arisztotelésznél”, *ibid.*

– 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!¹

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).²

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.³ 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],

¹ Ibid.

² See: *Erdélyi Magyar Szótörténeti Tár* (Historical collection of Hungarian words from Transylvania), collected and ed. by Attila Szabó T. (Bucharest: Kriterion, 1984) and *Magyar Értelmező Kéziszótár* (Hungarian Explanatory Hand-Dictionary), ed. by József Juhász, István Szőke, Gábor O. Nagy, Miklós Kovalovszky (Budapest: Akadémiai, 1972), as well as *A magyar nyelv történeti-etimológiai szótára*.

³ See again Király, *Poté (πότη) és khrónos (χρόνος): ismét Arisztotelésznél*.

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 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.

¹ See: Anna Madarász né Zsigmond and György Farkas, “A miért kérdések szemantikájáról és pragmatikájáról (Logikai megközelítés)” (On the semantics and pragmatics of why?-questions (A logical approach), *Magyar Filozófiai Szemle* 4(2003): 425–460.

² On question and questioning, its ontology and existentiality see the writings of the volume: István Király V., *Kérdő jelezés – (több)csendbeni alkalmazott filozófiai zajhíborítás a szabad(ság) kérdés(é)ben* (Question marking – a (multi)silenced applied philosophical breach of noise in free(dom’s) questioning), (Pozsony (Bratislava): Kalligram, 2004).

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 categorial 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, 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’, ‘fogni’ [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 primordially 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.

*

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

¹ See, Martin Heidegger, *Being and time*, transl. by Joan Stambaugh (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996), 371, 448.

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 which at least all other earthly “organisms” felt and endured “at all times” and in which they had also partaken.³ This of course has its own “biological”, “physiological”, “neurological”, and even genetic consequences, which would not only be hard, but also irresponsible to deny.⁴

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,⁵ 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

¹ About the original and primary meanings and senses of the *physis* see: István Király V., “The Sacred, Or the Bright Sounds of Silence – A thinking-experiment on nature, related (and created) to Heidegger and Hölderlin”, *Philobiblon – Journal of the Lucian Blaga Central University Library* 14 (2009): 301–309.

² On details for the particular pertinence to existence of freedom, questioning, and the question of being see the article *Hagyomány és a szabadság kérdése – 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.

³ See Karen Wright „Times of Our Lives”, *Scientific American*, august 2002.

⁴ 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.

⁵ Let us think for instance of the psychological effects of the periodicity of seasons and seasonal changes.

previous and the next, the growing proportion of existence of the beings moving or staying still in its world, with regard to their existence...¹

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 to 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 the fact that there is at least one intelligent being created in it,² 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.³ It is the same thing in

¹ 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.

² See Stephen W. Hawking *A Brief History Of Time*, <http://www.generationterrorists.com/quotes/abhotswh.html>, downloaded 27 Febr. 2010. The principle falsifies from the start any theory of the universe based on parameters which exclude by their laws the creation and existence of human or similar intelligent beings in the universe.

³ See Norbert Elias, *An Essay On Time* (Collected Works of Norbert Elias), (Dublin: University College Press, 2007), 182 p.

fact that Heidegger stresses when he connects time-measuring to counting with time, especially with respect to the beings living within the world.¹

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. 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.²

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.³ 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!** 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”.⁴ That is,

¹ See Heidegger, *Being and time*, 448–450.

² 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.

³ See Pierre Chaunu, *Trois millions d'années – Quatre-vingts milliards de destins* (Paris: Éditions Robert Laffont, 1990), 16–17.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 55–60. *Religiosus et morituros*.

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”.¹ 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.

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 that 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.

¹ 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, 1991), 17–31.

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,

¹ See Armin Nassehi and Georg Weber, *Tod, Modernität und Gesellschaft – Entwurf einer Theorie der Todesverdrängung* (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1989), 483.

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.

death factually – that is, in its essential metaphysical fact-nature as the 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 too 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 – suspends 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.

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”.² That is, in the most possibly complex and serious meaning – in the questionableness of meaning itself – it becomes finite.³ 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.)⁴

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.

¹ For more details on this, see the article *Hagyomány és a szabadság kérdése – Heidegger és Gadamer* in the volume *Kérdő jelezés...*

² See: Jan Patočka, “Az idő, az örökkévalóság és az időbeliség Mácha műveiben” (Time, eternity, and temporality in Mácha’s works), in Jan Patočka, *Mi a cseh? – esszék és tanulmányok* (What is the Czech? – Essays and studies) (Pozsony (Bratislava): Kalligram, 1996), 122.

³ 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”...

⁴ See, Heidegger *Being and time*, 43.

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.¹

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,² 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”.³ 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**.

¹ 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 future exactly, including the so-called “adaptive future” as well. See also Antonio Damasio, *Descartes’ Error – Emotion, Reason, and the Human Brain*, (New York: Penguin, 2005), 243–264.

² “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 Patočka, *Mi a cseh?*, 117.

³ It is not by chance that Kant connects not only the morals, but also freedom to duty.

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!

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 philosophy – or more precisely essential thinking – can only signal us to prepare ourselves.³

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...*, which on this account bears the title *Halál és történelem – Prolegoména egy „történelemfilozófiai” illetve történelemtológiai lehetőséghez* (Death and history – Prolegomena for the possibility of a “philosophy of history” or ontology of history), in *Ibid.*, 7–109.

³ 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 önvészélyességről a filozófiában” (Philosophy and the “effect”, or on self-dangerousness in philosophy), 195–205.

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!”¹) 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 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...

¹ See Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science* (125), http://nietzsche.holtof.com/Nietzsche_the_gay_science/the_gay_science.htm. Downloaded Febr. 27, 2010.

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.¹

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!”²

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?

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

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.

² See Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, 125.