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

István KIRÁLY
Philosophy Department
"Babeş-Bolyai" University, Cluj

Motto:

"History is denied not because it is 'false' but because, although impossible to be assimilated as present, it remains active in the present."

Martin Heidegger[1]

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

Lewis Nanier[2]

It seems to be commonplace that the present of Central and Eastern Europe is dominated by the past. This is about a certain orientation of mentality and experience and the multitude

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[1] See: Martin Heidegger, *Phänomenologische Interpretationen zu Aristoteles. Fenomenológiai Aristoteles-interpretációk*, in: *Existentia*. Supplementa. Vol. II, Szeged-Budapest, 1996-1997. p.9.
[2] Apud: Lamm, Leonard J., *Ideea de trecut. Istorie, ştiinţă şi practică în psihanaliza americană (The Idea of Past. History, Science and Practice in American Psychoanalysis)*, Editura "Sigmund Freud", Binghamton & Cluj, 1995, p.83.

of (stereotypical) self-searches in the form of "identities" but also the confusions about the future. However, the past does not dominate the present by continuing but – strange enough and peculiar – by not passing.[1]

Of course, the instinct of turning towards the past, the supradimensional discussion, dissection and research of the past reveals the problematic nature of the present and the future. It is only in cases when the future and the present are problematic in their depths that the past apparently floods the present. However, we must raise the question: What exactly is there in the being of the past that allows it to dominate something like the present?

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

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

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[1] In the **actual** centre of the town Cluj (renamed in the nationalist-communist regime as "Cluj-Napoca" after the Roman castrum situated here in the period of the Roman conquest) there is a **huge hole**. It was done for "archeological research" in order to find out more about that "past"... According to our knowledge the information gained as compared to that which we already knew is insignificant. More important and symptomatic is the fact that all this happened in the live "heart" of an ACTUAL cultural and economic centre – there were serious environmental damages – and all this was done "on account" and "in view of " the PAST... Our study analyses this possibility and this situation.

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

Where does this enigmatic nature of the past come from, whenever we try to approach it? Does it not come from the fact that the past is always something no-longer-existing? No matter how hard we try to "link" the past to present and future in "time" or "history", we cannot completely avoid that it is no-longer-existing and that this is the probable source of all the ontological, epistemological and "practical" (existential) problems connected to it. Nevertheless, the meditation about this no-longer-existence which becomes unavoidable in dealing with "past secrets" is missing from the meditation on the past! Where the question is missing as question, the answer cannot be easily given. The question is missing because it is not brought to the forefront of the horizon of "theories".

Therefore we must let ourselves be overwhelmed by that "naïve" original wonder which feeds philosophy from its beginnings and ask: what does no-longer-existing being mean? What is no-longer-being?[1]

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

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[1] Latin languages encounter a difficulty – which can nevertheless be transformed into a chance – which is still not easily surmountable. The term "déja" (already, no longer) is in disuse on account of its French kinship and its use for purely speculative topics such as "déjà vu". It is difficult to preserve its originality which is still necessary for thinking about something like the "past".

"enigma of the passability of past" (passéité du passé) (Paul Ricoeur), of the "being past" of the past[1] probably dwells in their relatedness.

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

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

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

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[1] Paul Ricoeur, *Temps et récit*, Paris, 1985, Tome III. p.245.

This is a time which deals with successive chains of "nows" and "presents" and which has intruded in Husserl's thought unobserved, although he introduced the concept of the retention of the near past as well as the retention of the (near) future in the conception of the "live present" (*lebendiges Gegenwart*), without explicitly taking into account the possibility of a (distant) unremembered past which must nevertheless be studied in connection with the organicity of its relation to the "present".[1] It is clear that we can only reach this "past" by returning to a present in which this was still a retained past and then to a present whose live and retaining core it was... In other words, we did not avoid yet the insistent problem of "had been-ness".

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

Also, it is only in a similar conceptual context that the words of Fernand Braudel have a meaning. He stated that the truth value and objectivity of his historical research is not less than the truth and "objectivity" of sociological researches although these latter investigate contemporary events.[2] The essence of this reasoning is that if historical science surmounts the difficulties that face it, then its object and truth will shine in the light of the truth and objectivity of the sciences studying present, contemporaneous events. In other words: there are no relevant ontological differences between past and present, only methodological differences. It is the temporal status of these target objects that specifies these differences. There are in fact contemporaneous-present "presents" and once (formerly)-present "presents", and history is the permanently open stage of time on which presents walk along

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[1] Edmund Husserl, *Vorlesungen zur Phänomenologie des inneren Zeitbewusstseins.* Sonderausdruck aus: *Jahrbuch fürPhilosophie und Phänomenologische Forschung*, Halle, 1928, p.40-41.
[2] Fernand Braudel, *Écrits sur l'histoire*, Paris, 1969, p.28-45.

ceaselessly, presents which, withdrawing to the dark backs of the scene gradually and perhaps only apparently lose their contemporaneity with the spectacle, but they can always be found, they can be revisited and identified by the headlights of memory and historical science turned on for this reason.

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

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

But does the fact that time "passes" lead to something like the "past"? And is our past so handy that only a "temporal distance", a hermeneutic and methodologic task separates us from it? Should we not replace general reflection on "time" and its "passage" with the explicit thematising of the issue of the PAST, formulating the burning, direct question: What does it mean in fact that something is no-longer-existent? This question is not interested in the "how" of the past – how was it what it was – but the fact that it had been, that is, it does no longer exist. What does HAD-BEEN-NESS mean in fact?

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

True, the word "had been" in any language does not in fact say "non-being" but speaks about being-in-the-past, in the past. But what else does being in the past mean than being-no-longer?! However, in the history of metaphysics from the be-

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[1] Karl Georg Faber, *Theorie der Geschichtwissenschaft*, München, 1971, p.40.

ginnings to Heidegger, being means first of all presence. Presence has the privilege of linking being to time and thus time to the present. Therefore the main question about the being of the past will always be: how is the past present? Heidegger also investigates the presence of the past and he comes to the conclusion that the past is in fact a deprivation formed as aspect (*eidos*) and it is presence in the form of absence. The past is not "nothing", but it is something that was somehow deprived of its presence and which appears therefore "in the present" in the shape of a lack and absence (*Abwesen*).[1] Lack here means moving off and distance: what is missing is "at a distance" and not present, however, its moving off, its absence is presence and "being".

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

Let us take an example from Heidegger's work in which he exposes and interprets the thinking of absence (*steresis*): "The bicycle is gone." This statement does not say that the bicycle "disappeared" but that it is missing. When something is missing, it is of course not present, but the anger provoked by its absence is nevertheless insistently present.[2] But how does absence present and constitute precisely the past? If I say "The bicycle is gone", that is, it-is-no-longer-here or there, it is not clear what exactly "had passed"? Although the bicycle is missing now, this absence (of the bicycle) refers to the bicycle itself (that is missing), the had-been-ness of its presence but also the presence of its absence. Therefore, what had passed in fact is exactly its (former) presence! Despite the fact that the bicycle is somewhere, in the place where

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[1] Martin Heidegger, *Zeit und Sein*, in: *Zur Sache des Denkens*, Tübingen, 1969, p.12-13.
[2] Martin Heidegger, *Despre esenţa şi conceptul lui ΦΥΣΙΣ la Aristotel* (*On the Essence and Concept of ΦΥΣΙΣ in Aristotle's Work*), in: *Repere pe drumul gândirii*, op.cit. p.168.

it was before and where we now feel its absence there is only the void of its absence, the bicycle is missing as its former presence passed.

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

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

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

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

However, all this means that deprivation still remains connected to time and apparently, in an unknown way, it is again time "alone" that introduces deprivation in presence, modifying it in the direction of the past or the future. Time passes and this is how it makes past what is present and brings what will be; it is

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[1] Op. cit. p.12.

also time – passing and extending – that keeps together all that had been, is and is going to be.

In order to pierce these real or apparent "appearances" and find the "character" of the past we must go beyond its temporality grasped as absence fixed as privation which is in fact only the temporality of no-longer, and examine the temporality of no-longer-being. But before that, we still have to clarify some concepts.

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

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

When the duration passes it becomes in fact past in the sense of HAD BEEN. When something ends, it is abandoned or even becomes nothing. The "past" in the centre of historical scien-

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[1] We will later analyse this past of "since then" which is wrongly considered to be the "past of duration".

ce is first of all the past of past durations. This past can only be studied if something is preserved of its duration: remains, marks, documents, results or consequences.

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

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

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

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

Consequently: neither the past of duration ("since that time"), nor the past of the series of "nows" can help us understand

HAD-BEEN-NESS. HAD-BEEN-NESS cannot mean "since that time" and "no-longer-now" at the same time, at least not in a way that would make us understand what HAD BEEN means in fact.

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

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

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

Excursus nr.1
"The Nothing"

Martin Heidegger already dealt with the issue of Nothing in *Sein und Zeit*. His analyses of dread, the phenomenon of guilt and death led him to this topic. Shortly after the publication of his book he went over the question again. Thus the Nothing became the central issue of the lecture *What Is Metaphysics?* (1929)

Every metaphysical question is an act of interrogation with a double feature. On the one hand it covers the whole issue of metaphysics and refers to being in its completeness, on the other hand, the questioner as such is by his very questioning involved in the question.[1] Being as being in its whole can only be grasped going beyond being, and this "passage" is born in the very question about Nothing. Therefore Nothing naturally becomes the target of metaphysical enquiry.

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

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

Nothing is in fact revealed in dread which contains being in its entirety.

Still, Nothing (*das Nichts*) is something strange to being. It bears a Not (das Nicht) in which the "not" of negation is rooted and from which it originates. "The Not does not come into being through negation, but negation is based on the Not which is the nihilation of Nothing."[1] The not of negation comes from that original Not that originates in that which belongs to Nothing and therefore every negation is a mediated contact with Nothing which grounds it by nihilation. However, avoiding the provenance of negation conceived as an operation of thinking, it is the experience of mood, the "harshness of opposition", the "violence of loathing" and the pain of refusal through which we can understand the nihilation of Nothing. These bear witness to the fact that Dasein is always related in its being to Nothing even if this relation remains closed without the understanding of the opening of dread.

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

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

It is clear that "secret" is another name, perhaps a shallower one, for Nothing, but we do not know how did Nothing acquire this new name? It could only have happened in the question of the thinker.

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[1] *Idem*, p.45.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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[1] G.W.Fr. Hegel, *Ştiinţa logicii* (*The Science of Logic*), 1966, p.54-58.

has a Latin origin is also a compound, expressing Nothing as pure non-being, that is, as pure negation of being.

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

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

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[1] In his thesis dedicated to the analysis of negation from a functional grammatical perspective Peter Kahrel suggests the analysis of the word "Nothing" from the point of view of negation conceived as a zero quantifier merged with an "indefinite". We must stress therefore the fact – essential for *thinking* about the word – that this indefinite is and remains a "thing". However, behind this superficial understanding there are deeper non-understandings regarding the understanding of the *sui generis* **searching** nature of the negation of Nothing and its relations with negated Being. Left in the inarticulation of the indefinite and the void of the zero quantifier, the negation and the articulation of the negated Being do not let themselves be understood.

This is probably about a limitation and a trap of the English language and the lack of meditation of the method. However, Kahrel analyses - through tables and statistics – 40 words for Nothing, including the Romanian and Hungarian words. In spite of this, negation is a zero quantifier in his opinion! This is why it can be applied in an indefinite way. It is only in the indefiniteness of negation that "nothing" and "nobody" can be considered similarly indefinite and co-original.

But "nothing" is really **"more" original** than "nobody". We can realise this fact by understanding the real meaning of the searching "not". "Nimeni" in Romanian means "nici oameni" ("not even people"). In "nimeni" ("nobody") there is the reference to the searcher. Where there is "nobody", there is he who is in search of others. Only in the meantime the horizon of search can be "full of things". In Nothing, more precisely in "Semmi" we surpass undetermined "things" arriving to ourselves, "us" ("mi"), searchers who do *not* find and, on the other hand, we become ourselves, those who do not even find ourselves. Where there is "nobody", there is only the lonely searcher. Therefore "nobody" does not mean "neither of them" but "alone". The searcher of "nici" in "nimeni" will not

The French word for nothing is equally interesting. It means "thing" which is mostly not there, or was not there, a hypostasis in which it is negated.[1] Thus the word "rien" gains its actual meaning by assimilating and associating thing-ness and negation so that negation and the quality of "thing" are not articulated but melted together.[2]

We face a different situation when we try to understand the Romanian word "Nimic". It is a compound, made up of the negative "nici" ("not even") and the adjective "mic" ("small"). However, the negative "nici" is completely different from the German negation in "das Nichts" and from the unarticulated English No in "No-thing". The Romanian "nici" articulates negation as a **searching negation**. On the other hand, the adjective "mic" means the **quantitatively reduced** being and thus the Romanian "nimic" says that then and there where it is uttered there is not (or cannot be found) even one Being that could be grasped "at least" in its "smallness". That is, negation grasped in its searching hypostasis loses its "quality" of abstract logical operation and fixes in the language its originally **existential** nature. In the meantime the Romanian word "Nimic" articulates, even if in its quantitatively reduced quality, being in its quality of thing (res), because only things can be "small".

The Hungarian word for Nothing (*Semmi*) expresses negation as **searching**. Its analysis reveals perhaps more than the words analysed so far. The Hungarian word "semmi" is also a compound. It was formed of the negative "sem" ("not even") and the pronoun "mi" ("we"). The negative "sem" says in fact "not here", "not there", "not then", "not me", "not him", etc. That is: we

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encounter "nimic" (nothing) but only his lonely Self. "Nimeni" is therefore the lonely self which comes from "Nimic". See Peter Kahrel, *Aspects of Negation*, Academisch Proefschrift, Amsterdam, 1996, p.30-43.

[1] Dauzat, Albert, Dubois, Jean, Mitterand, Henri, *Nouveau Dictionnaire Étimologique et Historique*, Paris, 1964.

[2] This is perhaps why French thinkers use the technical term of non-being instead of "rien". The former one, as every artificial word, links only pure concepts, that is, Being in its conceptual inarticulatedness and/with negation in its logical-conceptual inarticulatedness.

have searched everywhere and have not found. The not referred to by the negative "not even" is not the negative "not" or the Privative "not" revealed by Heidegger when analysing the references of the German "das Nicht".

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

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

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

"MI" in Hungarian is both an interrogative pronoun (meaning "what?") and a personal pronoun ("we"). Whether this phonetic coincidence is accidental or not, it has rare and important speculative possibilities. We must not avoid them. Together with the negative "sem" the prononun "mi" says that **WE** are those who search asking, but also do **not** find anything. Combined in their reciprocal space "sem" and "mi" express that in the plural of searching questions the searchers revealed in their **plurality** met

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[1] The term "never" will be analysed later.

what is expressed by "SEMMI" (NOTHING) by coming up against NOT or negation.

In the inner space of its articulations the Hungarian word "semmi" allows us to think more deeply about what it "expresses" because it fixes from beginning not only the search and its defficient modalities but also the fact that WE are those who search and ask, even if we cannot even fond ourselves in "nothing". The fact that one of the meanings of Nothing is the strangeness and unfamiliarity of our self, and therefore our efforts to eliminate it from the space of our existence (omitting and avoiding it) are always useless.

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

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

We have in fact found an older form of "not", the **searching "not"** in the Romanian and Hungarian word for "nothing". "Nici" and "sem" are "open" nots capable of bearing the existential, profound and dynamic sense of negation. This searching Not bears and originates in fact the privative not and the Heideggerian negative not. In its Hungarian name there is a special tension that cannot be found in any other word of "nothing" known

by us. Although it is predestined to negativity, the question what? ("mi?") is reverberated in it as a question that belongs to us (MI).

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

Indeed, the attachment to the deaf but unremovable question WHAT? (MI?) is wonder. It will sound like MI-CSODA? (csoda = wonder), that is, "What wonder?" and the immediate answer in Nothing is SEM-MI-CSODA ("no wonder"). Where "there is" Nothing, not even a "wonder" "can be found".

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

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The nothing remains one of the most interesting and characteristic topics of 20th century philosophy. Although non-being attached to being or the "void" in being have always been a provocation and a nuisance for philosophy, the Nothing has only become subject of explicit thematisations and part of a basic problemising disposition in this century. This was due to the generalisation of the so-called postmodernism which had originally nothing to do with it.

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[1] "Attachment" is something which although "can be attached" to something on account of correspondance remains nevertheless exterior.

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

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

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

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

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

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

NO LONGER expresses a negation which gathers other two negations and thus fixes a triple negation. The triple negation of NO LONGER is not the "negation of negation" in the framework of thesis, anti-thesis and synthesis. On the contrary: it negates two negations at the same time which also negate each other. NO LONGER is the bringing together and turning simultaneous of these negations. The negating temporal adverb

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says that what HAD BEEN "is-NO-LONGER", that is, it is neither Being, nor Nothing. Consequently, the real "function" of NO LONGER as a negative is NEITHER (NOT EVEN), the searching NOT.

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

Let us analyse this in more detail. HAD BEEN is that which is-no-longer. "Is not" in itself means "does not exist".[1] However, that which "is not" can be "no-longer" or "not-yet", therefore it is clear that "is not" is only a present of the series of "nows" in which "no-longer" and "not-yet" are both non-being. "Is not" is always the present in the sense of "now"; that which is "presented" in it as negated is either "no-longer" or "not yet" non-being. Therefore "is not" is, according to Kant, nihil privativum whose "objects" are in the void of a permanent "now". Irrespective of whether what "had been" "will be" or "may be", they can only manifest themselves in the void of the horizon of "is not". The first is "no longer", the second is "not yet".

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

Of course, we can search for the past and the future and this does not seem to be an empty search. In the past we can find HAD BEEN and in the future we are promised that which WILL BE. However, we do not realise that none of them "is". The first "no longer", the other "not yet". Despite this, every time when we find something that "had been" or "will be", we face in fact the

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[1] The whole meditation that follows is based on the peculiarity of the Hungarian language of expressing the negation of the verb "to be" by a special word: "nincs". The negation of "is" is not expressed by simply adding the negative "not" as in most languages ("nu este" in Romanian, "ist nicht" in German, "is not" in English, "n'est pas" in French), but by a special, comprised word. This makes us think in a special way.

void of the horizon of "is not": we are in search of the past because it "is-no-longer" and this holds good for the future too.

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

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

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

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

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

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[1] We think that it is superfluous to emphasize that we are not speaking about the negative reinvention of Augustinism but pointing out its lack of foundation.

Excursus nr.2:

On NEVER
1) **The temporality of the "phenomenon of guilt" in Heidegger's work**

The issue of time and the topics connected to it traverse the whole work of Martin Heidegger. We can perhaps better understand his concept of time if we do not deal with his direct and frontal analyses of "time" but direct our attention towards those passages where time **functions** effectively. Thus the analyses of the issue of death, moral conscience (*Gewissen*) and the phenomenon of guilt are of such a nature that they can throw light on several apsects of (our) temporality which may remain invisible from other perspectives. We will only give a summary examination of the temporality of the "phenomenon of guilt".

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

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

Although thrown into the world the Dasein is still the ground (Grund) of its potentiality to be of its Self which is itself

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

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

Only we always know that the ground or being the basis (*Grund-sein*) which brings to presence the Dasein and which therefore always precedes it is exactly its parent. Every Dasein as being the basis thrown into the world exists through its ground. But precisely because of this, "The Self, which as such has to lay the basis for itself, can never get that basis into its power; and yet, as existing, it must take over Being-a-basis."[2]

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

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[1] Martin Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, Erste Hälfte, 1935, p.284.
[2] *Ibidem*

basis, but only from it and as this basis."[1] Being-a-basis also means that we have never complete power over our existence.

This NOT is included in the existential meaning of the fact of being thrown in the world; whenever the Dasein begins to exist as the ground for its own Self, it is already its own nothingness, because it already bears a previous existence which was not grounded by itself but which it must take on. Therefore it is originally guilty and this guiltiness is the nothingness of the grounds of the Self.

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

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

2) The analysis of "NEVER"

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

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

Strange enough, time itself appears in all these negations, it is "articulated" in various forms. When we say "never", time is negated in its articulations of date. The "date" can **not** be dated in "at no time". In "never" we catch time in its **categorial** meaning. Time as a category is exhausted in negation. Time is almost **abandoned** in the expression "nevermore"and "never ever"

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[1] *Ibidem*

through the negative reference to "ever" (eternity) where there is no time.

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

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

What do these words say? The French language uses the word "jamais" for "never". Etimologically "jamais" means something that does not have in store any "surplus" time.[1] Completely exhausted the word has extremely various meanings like "determined time", "eternity" and "never".[2]

Unlike this, the German word "nie" means "no time" and also expresses a negation which takes place every time.[3] The English "never" (no-ever) says "always no" or "eternal not".

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

SOHASEM is a compound which "starts" with the searching "not" of "not even". It does not only start from it but also **returns** to "not even". From the beginning to the end it is in the horizon of this searching "not". Moreover, it is a multiple com-

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[1] Dauzat, Albert; Dubois, Jean; Mitterand, Henri, *Dictionnaire étomologique de la langue français*

[2] Littré, Emile, *Dictionnaire de la langue francais*, Édition integrale, Paris, 1967.

[3] *Wörterbuch der deutschen Gegenwartsprache*, Berlin, 1981.

pound. Its first part, SOHA is also a compound, formed of the negative SEM ("not even") and the adverb HA, used as "when". SOHA in itself says "never".

However, SOHA in itself does nothing else but sends or expels "when" with the help of the searching "not even" in Nothing. Its real meaning is SEMMI-KOR, the "when" of Nothing. We say for example that the effect "never" precedes its cause, or, the apple which comes off the branch does "never" fall towards the sky...

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

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

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

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What does all this mean in the understanding of HAD-BEEN-NESS? First of all it means that we must be more attentive to the "data" (chronological ones, too) gathering around HAD-BEEN-NESS. We must ask by what right do we use this data to

replace HAD-BEEN-NESS? Or: what does ontologically mean "When HAD it BEEN what is-no-longer"? And how does this form the PAST?

We have seen that HAD-BEEN-NESS is a triple negation held together by "no-longer" which functions as the searching "not" of "not even" and in which Being, Nothing and Time come together in a special way. Therefore, ontologically speaking, HAD BEEN does not mean "some time" or "in a certain previous time". First of all HAD-BEEN-NESS does not have a meaning interior to time, it is not time-space or spatialised time. On the contrary: that which had been remains unchanged and, on the other hand, it is something that is-no-longer. This is why the Greeks said, "What had been, had been, not even the Gods can change it or consider it cancelled."

But this does not mean that what HAD BEEN is simply closed, on the contrary, it "comes out" of time. The apparent eternity of HAD-BEEN-NESS is exactly the "never" analysed before. The temporal meaning of HAD-BEEN-NESS – not the one in the "interior" of time – is that it underlines the fact that "never" belongs to **our** temporality as the Nothing which, although nestled in its de-phasings, brings it "outside" time.

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

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

"former" tiredness, his tiredness "in the past". That is, the present being is the foundation of the past, says Sartre.[1]

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

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

However, it becomes clear that HAD-BEEN-NESS in itself is not at all transitive, but it is "outside" time and it is up to us whether we nihilate it or make it PAST. Without this it does not pass, even though it is-no-longer, because HAD-BEEN-NESS – which no-longer-being is still not Nothing – comes to the temporality of "not even-when-not even", that is, it becomes de-

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[1] Sartre, Jean-Paul, L'Être et le Néant, Paris, 1980, p.152-153.

tached of time. This does not mean however that what HAD BEEN, was, is or will "never" be, but that it is the mode of being nestled in the temporal de-phasings mastered by "not even-when-not even", in the temporality detached of time.

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

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

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

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

The essence of the problem focuses round the essence of "presentification". Is the essence of presentification the fact that it makes something from the "past" simultaneous with the present in order to understand and interpret it? We must not discuss here the mainly methodological problem of the issue of "document", "mo-nument", "remnant", "trace". But we must underline that presen-tification does not mean the automatic understanding of the past,

or the presentification of the past, but it is the necessary condition of the understanding of the past which is based on the essential fact that the past appears as simultaneous with the present through that which has been maintained of it. The real problem is that something that is-no-longer "is shown" as simultaneous with the present. Consequently, the problem of presentification does not eliminate but, on the contrary, acknowledges the importance of problemising no-longer-being and, consequently, that of HAD-BEEN-NESS. This is the ontological structure which is capable of gathering the temporal distance fixed chronologically and movable and, on the other hand, the feature of HAD-BEEN-NESS that it can appear by presentification as simultaneous with **every** present.

It is true that history and tradition influences the decisions of the present which inevitably contain references to the future. The "past" has a "structuring performance" as concerns the selections which become parts of the present.[1] Memory, historical knowledge and the understanding of tradition are always selective. The image of the past does never contain the whole of what "had been". In scholastic terms, the sphere of the "image of the past" and that of HAD-BEEN-NESS do not overlap. What happened to the HAD-BEEN-NESS which, although it took place, was not preserved by memory or the constructions and images about the past? This HAD-BEEN-NESS was nihilised.

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

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[1] Bergmann, Werner, *Az idő a szociológiában. Szakirodalmi áttekintés az időszociológiai elmélet és kutatás helyzetéről* (*Time in Sociology. An Overview of Time-Sociological Theory and Research*), in: *Történeti-szociológiai tanulmányok*, Budapest, 1990, p.136.

those which were not selected (*sic!*)...."[1] In other words, the problem of those which were not selected, is buried forever.

This is what happens with the "most modern historical conscience", although it "temporalises (*verzeitlich*) the past" (N. Luhmann) distinguishing the past horizon of the present from present in the past, even if seems that an important aspect of the concept of time comes to the fore, its "reflexivity" which is revealed through the interconenction of its dimensions.[2]

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

It is characteristic of these existential situations that the past of present is replaced by other past presences. In Central Europe 1848 is more lively present in people's conscience (especially during such important moments as the elections) than 1971 which is only 30 years away from us. We must not speak about "reflexive modalising" but a temporal change of place which is of course not accidental but it can take place whenever "the conscience about the past" is no longer structured by any live tradition but by classical historical science. This latter avoids the "near" past, the past of "**present**" and quickly fills the remaining gaps with data and information about PAST presences. (The statements of Alina Mungiu are very interesting in this respect. Her psychosociological research shows that the memory of Romanian "social masses" about the **near** past is selective and in the gaps appear "unscientific" data and information coming from farther pasts.)[3]

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[1] *Idem*, p.138.
[2] *Idem*, p.139.
[3] Mungiu, Alina, *Românii după '89. Istoria unei neînțelegeri* (*Romanians after 1989. The History of a Misunderstanding*), Bucureşti, 1995, p. 125-131.

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

It is very important that we examine and understand what has really passed of the past and how does it relate to that which has not passed, that which lasts or is born. For example, what does it mean that certain things happened to me when I was 18 or that I did this and that when I was 18? Of course, I am no longer 18 and I will "not even-when-not even" be in that situation. I am, but 18 years ago I was. I can remember what happened and what I did then and my memories can be supported by discussions, readings or further information about it. I can see that all these belong to me, even if I would rather like to get rid of some of them.

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

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

We can only liberate us from what HAD BEEN and what we ourselves HAD BEEN if we realise that we will never or no-longer be like that. In other words, the maintainings, sustainings

and freeings are not in fact decided when we think that "time" is lasting or, on the contrary, passing, but when we realise that the past is not simply connecetd to time but to ourselves, whne we understand and fix the relationship between no-longer-being and not even-when-not even as a defiance in which we are as long as we live.

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

From another point of view but led by similar reasons, Jacques Derrida speaks about "dead time" and "absolute past" when he criticizes Husserl's concept of the "conscience of time".[1] What is this dead time and absolute past? How could time die or extinguish if there would not be something like not even-when-not even in it?

Therefore it is not accidental that one of the foundations of the revision of psychoanalysis is the rethinking of its concept of past. Initially, psychoanalysis said that the events of the (personal) past are kept repressed in the subconscious and, on the other hand, they act as causal factors in the present conditions of the life of the psyche. Similarly, the reconstruction and reconstitution of the past were equalled to examining the hidden causes of the (per-turbations) of the present behaviour.[2] However, this is not only an epistemologic and methodologic problem; there is an ontological and existential problem hidden at its basis.

It came to light that it is impossible to decide whether there is a true relationship between the past brought to the surface during psychoanalysis and what really happened in the past. It has also been cleared that the relationship of psychoanalysis and the

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[1] Derrida, Jacques, *Lingvistică şi gramatologie* (*Linguistics and Grammatology*), in: *Pentru o teorie a textului*, Bucureşti, 1980.
[2] Lamm, Leonard J., *Ideea de trecut* (*The Idea of Past*), op.cit. p.56.

past is not only and first of all a theoretical issue but also a therapeutic one which should lead the patient to a new position and a new attitude towards his past. The essence of these modifications is, ontologically speaking, the realisation that psychoanalytic **pathology** is nothing else than the "actions" of the un-passed HAD-BEEN-NESS of former trauma. The new position and attitude gained during the therapy means that the patient realises that the past is something stable, something that ended and which nevertheless belongs to the present world of his psychic experience; it is exactly his past.

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

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

It is also clear that nihilation itself is linked somehow to the "passing" into the past and this is why we consider that the past is most exposed to the possibility of nihilation. This is why Hegel thinks that "passing" (disappearance)[1] is the passage from being to nothing. Of course, he means first of all "disappearance" and "cessation", something mediated which reaches non-being through

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[1] Hegel, G.W. F., *Ştiinţa logicii* (*The Science of Logic*), Bucureşti, 1966, p.87-88

a certain result. This is why he always links disappearance and cessation to becoming, in the conditions of an Aufheben which is unfamiliar to time. Even if we link disappearance and cessation (passing) to becoming in its relation to time, it "becomes" definitive and thus what "had passed" is not in fact pure non-being but no-longer-being.

It is not accidental that Sartre places the issue of "Nothing" in the past: "The Nothing, says he, is not; The Nothing is 'had been'; the Nothing does not nihilate; the Nothing 'is nihilised'" (*"Le Néant n'est pas; le Néant 'est été'; le Néant ne se néantise pas; le Néant 'est néantisé'".*)[1] Mixing the issues of past, Nothing and nihilation we give up the possibility of considering the existential problem of the Nothing in its real nuancing and weight, a problem which again seems to be organically linked to the past.

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

Nothing is a feature and a component of the mode of being of man in the world and relating to the world and through it to Being. It "is" not "in" man or "in" the world but it creeks and fissures through in the existentials through which man exists or is in Being. It is not a limit marked by destiny, nor a curse, nor the

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[1] Sartre, Jean-Paul, *L'Être et le Néant*, idem, p.57.

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defficiency of one of our modalities of being which would thus ask for corrections. Man exists in a way that Nothing is always born and it always intervenes in its being. Nothing is neither the "exterior" ground of all negativities with which we are completely helpless, nor the expression of our imperfection which asks for elaborate programs of action, but it is one of the fundamental, tensioned features of our being in the world which moves the understanding of being in the direction of determining our protection against its determined "nihilations". Nothing is therefore not an "empty" region "in" man, "in being" or "beyond" being, but it appears whenever the intra-mundane existence of man is going on. This is where Nothing is born and nihilates, and this is why Heidegger links the metaphysical question leading to it to the constituting circumstances that the questioner is always involved in the question. Thus there is no "nihilism" in "Nothing".

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

Although we have discussed this in another context, it is perhaps useful to fix it, giving two more examples. There are two volumes edited by the History Department of the Bucharest

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[1] One of the most eloquent examples is Hans Georg Gadamer's work, *Igazság és módszer. Egy filozófiai hermeneutika vázlata* (*Truth and Method. Sketch of a Philosophical Hermeneutics*), Budapest, 1984.

University which together throw light on the issues in question. The first one is *Miturile istorice românești* (Romanian Historical Myths) (1995), the second one *Miturile comunismului românesc* (The Myths of Romanian Communism) (1995). A study from the first volume analyses the myths about Voivode Mihai Viteazul and reaches the conclusion that school manuals present this voivode as a permanent contemporary of successive generations. The analyses of the other volume showcase the gaps, hindrances and difficulties of the research about the recent history of communist Romania. One of the consequences is the hollow memory of this history. In the meantime the 16th century voivode remains permanently contemporary, it has not "passed" as PAST but it is "present" as a HAD BEEN placed in the gaps or de-phasings of live and actual memory.

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

We underline: the problem at stake is not the **qualification** of this "procedure" or mentality, whether it is "scientific" or authentic. What interests us is: what exactly in the "being" of the past and our relation to it founds and makes possible such a placement of it?

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

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

This reveals that what is called "past" is usually made up of extremely heterogeneous elements from an ontological point of

view: it consists of HAD-BEEN-NESS and SINCE THEN. What is extremely interesting and important in this "past" is that HAD-BEEN-NESS in itself does not pass while SINCE THEN lasts. What is this enigmatic past which lasts on the one hand and does not pass, on the other hand?

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

For example: the building in which I am writing today is the Central University Library in Cluj which was built in 1906. SINCE THEN it functions in this building. Only, in the meantime, its fence was demolished; new wings were added and generations of employees and readers have died. The past of the present state of the building and institution is "composed" of a series of factors which, as SINCE THEN, already exist and others, as HAVING-BEEN, no-longer-exist. This heterogeneity of the past cannot be diluted in slippery dialectic formulas. We must not reinstall the initial conditions and resurrect the dead employees in order to fix and authentically identify the past of this building and this institution, but we must fix its elements which are-no-longer as no-longer-being and those which are-already as already-being.

It is very important to bear in mind that what we usually call the "past" is – ontologically speaking – extremely complex and heterogeneous. Even more important is that the past is not formed by the simple "passage" of time.

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

Exactly this is why HAD-BEEN-NESS and HAD-BEEN-NESSes must be known and researched. Only their research and knowledge must be guided and founded by the ontological and

existential opening of their HAD BEEN nature. Only this way are historical constructions and narratives authentic.

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

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

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

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

The enigmatic nature of the past consists first of all of the fact that we consider it as a "natural" feature (time) instead of a

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[1] Published in the weekly *168 Óra* (*168 Hours*), Budapest, nr.24 (January 1995).

zone of our existential possibilities. Of coures, the past is not a possibility to the effect that it can "not be". However, it may happen that we do not see the possibilities inherent in it.

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

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

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

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

Consequently, this is not only about the privileged affinity of not even-when-not even as compared to the past but the osmosis of HAD-BEEN-NESS and SINCE THEN in the "past" thus formed. HAD-BEEN-NESS and SINCE THEN mix in this past

and also become indistinct, because all that HAD BEEN can last and everything that lasts SINCE THEN can appear as already surpassed and vice versa, depending on the momentary needs of any time "now" but which, unobserved, remains exposed to the domination of the "past".

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

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

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

Modernity and especially historical science whose birth is linked to it, objectifies the past. Thus a completely new situation arose in the relation of historical mankind to his own temporality. Unlike the temporality based on the continuity of tradition, there is

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[1] *Politique de la mémoire. Commémorer la révolution*, Lyon, 1993, p.191-199.

a dephasing in line with the gap between history and memory. In fact, my memories go back to the end of the 1960s. However, there are no historical syntheses about that period. In other words: memory is no longer supported and integrated into the possible organicity of a "continuous past". However, the past of my memory is the past of the formation and articulation of my being which has not yet passed but is in search of the fact of being thrown in the world.

The objectified past became the only real and therefore privileged dimension of time. In St Augustin's age it was natural to say that if the past "exists", it is in the present and, consequently, the present seemed to him the only "real" dimension of time. From modernity onwards we live in fact in the fissure of the dephasing between memory and history.[1]

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

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

Historical science which objectifies the past, happily finds in it the "whole" time, time in the totality of its dimensions: past in past, present in past and future in past. All of them in the past, not

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[1] St Augustine, *Confessiones*, Bucureşti, 1994, p.344.
[2] Kosellek, Reinhard, *Vergangene Zukunft. Zur Semantik geschichtlicher Zeiten*, Frankfurt am Main, 1995, p.12; 33; 58.
[3] Nyíri, Kristóf, *Hajnal István időszerűsége* (*The Timeliness of István Hajnal*), in: Ny.K., *A hagyomány filozófiája*, Budapest, 1994, p.134.

"really" anywhere else; the past becomes thus the only "real time". Therefore it is privileged and precious. The fact that we found the whole time in **one** of its dimensions is not questioned. Similarly, the fact that this might open the way for the domination of the past, is not questioned. If the whole time is renewed, does it not carelessly leave behind an un-passed, "outdated" past?

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

The first historical breakthrough accomplished by Martin Heidegger, which is of then on the way of forgetting, is perhaps the interweaving of hermeneutics and phenomenology. In its confluence with phenomenology hermeneutics lost the primacy of its orientation towards the past of tradition, being led – phenomenologically speaking – towards the "things themselves". Tradition is no longer brought again to the present but to a new present the novelty of which must be determined by its phenomenologic contemporanization (*Mitzeitigung*) with the present. The "object of philosophical research" in *Phänome-nologische Interpretationen zu Aristoteles* is the presence here of man (*das menschliche Dasein*) which is not a certain posterior application but it becomes of the same time (*mitzeitig*) with factic life.[1] The idea returns with *Sein und Zeit*: "the phenomenology of the Dasein is hermeneutics in the original meaning of the word", for the understanding of hermeneutics as the methodology of the historical sciences of the spirit promote its derived meaning.[2]

Hermeneutics has opened towards the reception of the novelty of newness even if, historically speaking, this novelty is predominantly prefigured as an advance in decay. I think that it is mistaken to consider Heidegger's "critical" position towards technique, the problems of humanism and modern science, as the expression of an obsolescent "traditionalism". The novelty of modern technique, the novelty of modern science are critically

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[1] Op. cit. p.8.
[2] Op. cit. p.37,38.

evaluated but the opening towards the novelty of the present and the future is preserved unaltered.

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

At its most dramatic point this tendency is expressed by the later thinking of Paul Ricoeur who asserts expressis verbis in an interview in 1991: "Nothing is so unclear and opaque as the present in which we live; Only those who come 20-30 years after us will be able to tell who we are and what we are now. But we now live in the opacity of the present epoch and therefore we are unable to qualify it..."[1]

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

It is no wonder that Ricoeur is honestly surprised that the issue of memory does not appear in the three volumes of his book

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[1] Ricoeur, Paul, *Az "oltvány", az "üledék" és az "emlékezet". Két beszélgetés Tóth Tamással (The "Graft", the "Residue" and " Memory". Two Conversations with Tamás Tóth)*, in: *Magyar Filozófiai Szemle*, 1997, nr. 5-6.

Temps et récit. "As though I would have skipped over it", says he in surprise. Only, the lack of dealing with memory has more serious conseqences than those which affect the quality of a single book. The issue of he who remembers and the way he gained his memories becomes unavoidable, and the assertion that it is in fact the memory of a present and living person is also inevitable. "Every memory is pervaded by something personal, says Éva Ancsel and therefore an unrecoverable past disappears with every death, a past that only that single mortal being bore with itself in that way."[1]

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

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

The destiny of the subject of application in hermeneutics is in the middle of this issue. Conceiving philosophy and philosophising as an existential or a factic mode of being of the Dasein

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[1] Ancsel, Éva, *Lélek, idő, emlékezés* (*Soul, Time, Memory*), Budapest, 1992, p.15.

through which it becomes of the same time with it, Heidegger rejects expressis verbis any "posteriority" of application.[1] In *Sein und Zeit* he speaks explicitly about the hermeneutic traps of tradition.

Hermeneutics with Hans Georg Gadamer lost its very freedom in its relation to tradition, however, in its dialogues about the temporal distance of the past it still took care of the "thing itself" which appears in texts and interpretation and its moment of application is regained although without the capacity of remaining receptive to the novelty of the new.[2]

The loss and later on the renouncement of hermeneutics to the "present" and then the "future" coincides with the degradation and disappearance of its preoccupations with the problem of its "application", together with its detachment and distancing from phenomenology. Therefore it is "natural" that Vattimo Gianni writes: "The future, be it a process or appearance of novelty, is paradoxically guaranteed today by the automatisms of the system; it is the past which risks disappearance, that continuity (*sic!*) of experience, that concatenation (*sic!*) of meanings."[3] But what else does it mean to renounce to the present (and the future) or to leave the present to the "automatisms of the system" but to deepen through sanctioning, without resignation, the split between history and memory, the temporal dephasing that is born and born again with the generations that are not in fact "born" but flow acci-dentally.

This is perhaps why we became ready to avoid certain issues which are nevertheless extremely important, first of all the realisation of the ontological novelty of our existential relation to the past. True, it was necessary to put in paranthesis the great philosophical category of time because only this way could we reach, starting from the problematic nature of our existential situation, through guilty meditation, the specificity of a single

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[1] Heidegger, Martin, *Phänomenologische Interpretationen...* , op.cit. p.8.

[2] Gadamer, Hans Georg, *Igazság és módszer*, op. cit. p.201.

[3] Vattimo, Gianni, *Dincolo de subiect. Nietzsche, Heidegger şi hermeneutica* (*Beyond the Subject. Nietzsche, Heidegger and Hermeneutics*), Constanţa, 1994, p.13.

dimension of time. Only this way could meditation on HAD-BEEN-NESS and the PAST become a distinct research detached of the allpowerful, all-embracing and absorbing concept of "time".

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

Heidegger also analysed the situations and possibilities of temporality being formed by "starting" from the different ecstasis of time. He thought that auethentic temporality must be formed by "starting" from the future. However, he did not think about the trap of temporality and time of showing itself as a whole in its orizontal structure in each of its ecstasis "taken separately". Neither did he deal with the ontological and existential differences between HAD-BEEN-NESS and SINCE THEN.

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