

From the rather original recognition that Aristotle's categories are questions, this essay focuses on issues of the pote (πότε), i.e., the question of the "When", and of chronos (χρόνος), the "concept" of time. This "concept" is born from and associated with the question of the "When". It is a hermeneutical and (existential)-ontological dialogue, enabling us to think jointly about the so-called "objectivity" of time and its ontological, phenomenological, and hermeneutical relatedness to ourselves. The APPENDIX is an ontological and existential analysis of the question: "What is man?". It's conclusion: that this question cannot, and indeed must not be given a definition-like answer, filled with information and facts. The "response" – and not "answer" – cor-responding to, can only be authentic and open if it claims that: Man is precisely that being who turns his own existence – in a questioning way, both for himself and "other" people, interrogating himself via his own world – into an event. The human and mode-of-being-like questions about the meaning of Being and about the possibility of "What is man?" actually overlap both in their horizons and in their amplitude and radicality.



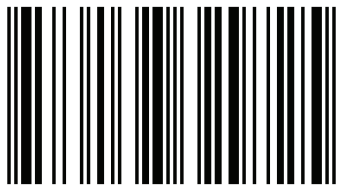
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# Time-ings and Question-Points

– An Ontological and Existential Analyzes –



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**I dedicate these meditations to  
my never seen Friend:  
*Mihaela Henon***

## Introduction

*Starting* from the rather original, but nevertheless authentic recognition that Aristotle's categories are, in fact, questions, this essay focuses on issues of the *pote* (ποτέ), i.e., the question of the “when”, and of *chronos* (χρόνος), the “concept” of time. It analyses the way in which the “concept” of time is born from and associated with the question of the “when”. Thus, it is not a “philosophical-historical” investigation, but a hermeneutical and (existential)-ontological dialogue, enabling us to think jointly about the so-called “objectivity” of time and its ontological, phenomenological, and hermeneutical relatedness to ourselves.

## Chapter I

*Historically*, we also “know” about time in philosophy as one of Aristotle’s *categories*. This is not by any accident, since the Aristotelian (categorical) theory of time directed and also served as a basis of reference for thinking about this subject for millennia. So much so, that Aristotle’s thoughts and insights about time have not exhausted their incentive potentials even to this date. On the contrary, within the provocations of always renewed questions, these potentials repeatedly reveal their intrinsic and hitherto unthought possibilities and values.

So, “time” is one of Aristotle’s categories. As such, it already stands within the turn historically represented by Aristotle’s thought on the categories as such.

Nevertheless, Aristotle investigates “time” more thoroughly not in the *Categories*, but in his *Physics*. These more detailed analyses have shed light, already then, on several aporetic “characteristics” of time, which “still preoccupy” our thinking about “it”, or rather, “still” have not been settled within a “satisfactory and reassuring” theoretical framework.

To put it succinctly, even today, we do not really know, or know any “better” what time is, although we can measure “it” with an increasingly amazing and wonderful “precision”! Thus, we can measure today “precisely” something about which we, at the same time, barely “know”, or *understand* (!), anything at all.



*Untitled, 2013, Polaroid*

Consequently, it is also questionable – and thus: *worthy to be asked!* – what the relationship between our “knowledge about time” and its (all-time) *measuring* is. Similarly, it is also worth asking if the philosophical treatment of this question is, and can be, exhausted within the – incidentally, completely futile, but almost completely common and



mannerist – *disparagement*, oriented in a double direction, with which we are used to treating, on the one hand, all kinds of measuring preoccupation concerning time, and, on the other hand, the specific “theoretical content” through which the various sciences (such as physics, social sciences, psychology, biology or even brain science, etc.) struggle with the question of time.

During and amidst all these conditions, the question is still flickering there: do we really understand the *question of “what is time” itself?* And/or do we really understand where this question itself “*comes from*”? Do we understand what its subject is, what the question asks about it, and in what sense? Is it not even necessary that we – as humans (!) – primarily, principally, and mostly apprehend, interpret, and deepen time in the form of the “actually” and undeniably real and weighty provocations of its measurement and often even as “the” measure?

Even if we meanwhile – i.e., while chasing after “precision” in really marvellously and stunningly ingenuous ways – (might) also become increasingly removed from this origin and although, in a certain sense, it is this “distancing” in which our historical fate as well as the fate of our history will be decided, or in which it will fail?

In the Western world and its history, these questions, were first raised, in several fundamental and influential ways, within Aristotle’s philosophical efforts, viz. in his “texts” which preserve these efforts fragmentarily – and, moreover, *exoterically* –, handed down to posterity with a crispness – and, of course, also with a certain “obscurity” – that proved to be decisive for posterity as well.

Nevertheless, the objective of the subsequent analyses is not to eventually lead to the onetime historical “true” “standpoints” of Aristotle’s ideas, but, on the contrary, it is Aristotle’s *question-points* which are primarily interesting for us (even today).

The question concerning the issue (and the question) of time is, ever since Aristotle and “permanently”, if we really understand the “question of time” itself at all. That is to say, do we really understand *what* and *wherefrom* the question of time asks, when *we* ask the question thus: “what is time”?

In the certainly fragmentary and (even regarding the work’s title itself) questionable texts of the *Categories*, which were handed down to us, Aristotle barely concerns himself with “time”. Nevertheless, the *way in which* the issue of time is put in these few sentences has some determining – although perhaps still unthought-of and hidden – aspects. But this is precisely what could, in fact, preoccupy and interest us!

Since, when in the “dry” – and almost ossified – sentences, which have traditionally become fixed as the fourth chapter of the *Categories*, Aristotle simply enumerates the ten names of his “categories” as “uncombined words”<sup>1</sup> – more precisely: as words “*said alone, simply*” (*symploten legomenon*)<sup>2</sup> –, where, again, our tradition continuously mentions and “translates” “time”, the thinker himself only says: *pote* (ποτέ). In other words, he only “says”: “when (?)”!

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<sup>1</sup> See Arisztotelész: *Kategóriák*. Kossuth Könyvkiadó, Budapest, 1993. 22. English translation: Aristotle: “The Categories”. In Idem: *The Categories. On Interpretation. Prior Analytics*. Loeb Classical Library 325. Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA, 1938. p. 93.

<sup>2</sup> See Aristote: [*Cathégorie*]. Texte établi et traduit par Richard Bodéüs. Société d’édition Les Belles Lettres, Paris, 2001. p. 5. [Bilingual, French-Greek edition.]

Nevertheless, when he discusses “time” “itself” – in these texts as well –, analysing what it is, or could be, Aristotle – let us now repeat it: even in the sentences of this text – uses a completely different expression – that is to say: name! –, namely: *chronos* (χρόνος)...

Even if we sometimes still notice that all Aristotelian categories are, in fact and “merely”, questions moving in and referring to certain determined directions – or rather: they are “asking-names” –, we barely assume the weight of the difficulties involved in thinking about this circumstance.

For what does it mean, and what is the sense in permanently repeating: the categories are, in Aristotle, the “highest genera”, which, as such – that is to say, as “highest” –, are “undefinable” according precisely to the meaning of the Aristotelian category of the *ousia*, i.e., “substance”, as it was articulated by Aristotle himself? And what could the actual sense of something like this be for such an exigent master of *induction* as Aristotle (was)?

However, the consideration according to which the categories are privileged ways of addressing being (Heidegger) can certainly dig much deeper than this. Nevertheless, the question arises even here: what does it mean, in fact, to “address” being – and, what is more to say, to address it in a “privileged way”? “To address being”: does this not primarily mean to actually *ask* it explicitly?! So, thus, *to ask about it* – in order that it can “come to word”?

Does not the Aristotelian statement (assertion) that we “assert” being first and foremost in as many ways as there are categories in fact mean that being can be *said and asserted* in as many ways as it can be *questioned*?

Hence, is it not the case that the categories are precisely the **fundamental** and articulated modes of *questioning* being, which are revealing in themselves and brought “into” (*kata-*) the *agora*, in order to be publicly considered and decided upon?!<sup>1</sup> These ways of questioning ask and listen to being precisely regarding its existence – and, therefore, regarding its truth.

So, indeed, how could something that is essentially nothing else than a fundamental question and a basis for asking and questioning, be “defined”, so to say, with regard to the “generality” of its “conceptual sphere”? For, *without* questions, any statement and assertion, never mind the demands of the “definition”, could merely be an empty – and thus weightless and ultimately meaningless – effort.<sup>2</sup>

In fact, is it not the actual case that we find (Aristotle’s) categories as indeed undefinably “general” because they are essentially and according to their nature nothing else but fundamental questions, or question-bases? And how could the conceptual circles of a *question of this kind* be “defined” in “more general” (generic) respects, how could its limits be set out and established conceptually?

The actual case, which still has to be assumed by our current thinking, is that each of Aristotle’s categories is, in fact, nothing else than

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<sup>1</sup> Györkösy, Alajos – Kapitánffy, István – Tegyei, Imre (eds.): *Ógörög-magyar szótár*. Akadémiai Kiadó, Budapest, 1990; Bailly, M. A.: *Dictionnaire grec-français*. Librairie Hachette, Paris, 1928. See also Király, V. István: “Alkalmazott filozófia és kategoriális elemzés”. In Idem: *Filozófia és Itt-Lét*. Erdélyi Híradó, Kolozsvár, 1999. p. 29-56.

<sup>2</sup> See Király, V. István: *Állítás (asszerció), kérdés és tagadás* In Idem: *Kérdő jelezés – több-csendbeni alkalmazott filozófiai zaj-háborítás a szabad(ság) kérdés(é)ben*. Kalligram, Pozsony, 2004. p. 62-82.

a *fundamental question-word*! The “essence” (οὐσιά)<sup>1</sup> asks, in fact, “what?”, “quality” (ποιόν) asks “how?”, “quantity” (ποσόν) asks “how much?”, “relation” (πρός τί) asks “in in what respect?” – just as “time” also “merely” asks “when”.<sup>2</sup>

Thus, in its primary sense, the Greek/Aristotelian *ποτέ* – usually translated with such careless and shallow consistency as “time” – is, in fact, “a” (*fundamental*) *question-word*, which asks “when”! That is to say, *as a category*, for Aristotle himself, that which we mostly represent as “time” is, in fact, nothing more – but certainly also nothing less! – than a very specific question. The question of the “when” (*pote*)!

It is no accident, of course, that Aristotle’s meditations on the categories start from an analysis of the different varieties of words, or rather, *names – homonyms, synonyms, and paronyms*.<sup>3</sup> Categories are not mere (question-)names, or question words, which simply occur, or can be found in our language... The categories are rather *those* names which can apprehend, present, and reveal – *questioningly!* – not only the “things”, but also (other) names, *as well as* the conceptual associations-essences (*logos*)

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<sup>1</sup> For the ancient Greek text itself, see Aristote: [*Cathégorie*]. Texte établi et traduit par Richard Bodéüs. Ibid.

<sup>2</sup> It might be the case that, when humans did not yet use question *marks*, they understood the essence, or, at least, the weight of questioning better. On the categorial question-words and on categories as interrogatives, see also the sketchy presentation in Dumitriu, Anton: *Philosophia mirabilis*. Editura Enciclopedică Română, București, 1974. 100-102. Proceeding from different motives, and for entirely different reasons, Richard Bodéüs also comes to the exegetical conclusion that the Aristotelian texts titled as the *Categories* and transmitted as the first part of the *Organon* would, in fact, according to their meaning, belong not here, but in the *Topics*. However, the latter work deals primarily with debate and the dialectical *questions*, questioning, and argumentation associated with it. See Bodéüs, Richard: *Introduction*. In: Aristote: [*Cathégorie*]. Idem. p. LXXIX-LXXX.

<sup>3</sup> See Arisztotelész: *Kategóriák*. Kossuth Könyvkiadó, Budapest, 1993. p. 15-17.

in their determined and structured, but ever problematic and problematizing relationships.



*Intimacy, 2016, Polaroid*

So, concerning “time” in its relationship with language, it is advisable to understand that the temporality of language and “the linguistic”, as well as their time-related constraints, are not opened up and first created by, say, the “verb”, or by the “verbal tenses” – dealt with by Aristotle in the

chapter “coming after” the *Categories* of the *Organon*, in his *Hermeneutics*<sup>1</sup> –, nor by temporal adverbs... but precisely by the question and the fundamental question-word of the “**When?**”! And it is the same question which also articulates them continuously.

Since it is only where and through which the “When?” is question-worthy and actually asked in the first place that the (linguistic) articulations of the (verbal) tenses (verbal “whens”) of events, actions, and occurrences, or even their subtler temporal-adverbial (linguistic) articulations – e.g. “already”, “still”, “now”, “later”, “hitherto”, etc. – have any weight and meaning at all.

Thus, within our language, it is the question of the “When?” which effectively *creates, apprehends, outlines, and structures* the linguistic relationship of language, or rather the speaker, the conversing person, the thinker, and the acting individual, with time. All other aspects of the temporality of language and speaking are secondary relative to this question.

Consequently, it is only that being who/which can be open – also as language, through his/its language, and within his/its language – to movement, to change, and perhaps even to historicity, who/which opens up – at the same time – towards the dynamics (of being), history, and/but also his/its (own) temporality and historicity within the question of the “*When?*”, as within a question related specifically to itself/himself. Of course, also with all the dead ends which are entailed by this attitude.

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<sup>1</sup> “The verb (...) has a time-reference also.” Arisztotelész: *Hermeneutika*. Kossuth Könyvkiadó, Budapest, 1994. 14-15. English translation: Aristotle: “On Interpretation”. In Idem: *The Categories. On Interpretation. Prior Analytics*. Ibid. p. 119.

So, that which we usually call “time” in philosophy, only says and asks in Aristotle, in its primary – or categorical – sense, first and essentially: “*When?*” It is for this reason that the question of “*What is time?*” should, in fact and primarily, be: “*What is the When?*”

But is it really “the same” question being asked here? Because, if the “two” questions – that is to say, the question “What is time?” and the question “What is the When?” – would really be one and the “same” question, then the question “When?” would, in fact, truly and directly be: “What is time?”

However, as we have seen, Aristotle “uses”, or “applies”, two separate names (*pote* and *chronos*) in order to name/articulate the two separate issues – which nevertheless are surely related, and refer to, each other. Therefore, it is all the more questionable if *pote* and *chronos* would (or could) be so simply “identical” to each other.

But if we simply ask the question in this manner, then we will perhaps entirely bypass, or pass over, without noticing, another important question; since, in the meantime, we have never really asked the question of “What?” this “When?” is. Instead of this – as it has, in fact, happened also within the “words” of Aristotle’s *exoteric* texts which were handed down to us –, all of a sudden, we find that somehow, almost without noticing it, we have shifted, or reached across, into the domain of the analysis, or even the “definition” of, “time” “itself”. So, as it were, we reach across, or shift, from the *Categories* to the *Physics*!

This reaching-across, or rather this seeming leap (across) – as well as the factual and contentual meaningfulness of its orientation –, are quite “manifest” also in Aristotle’s texts. Of course, the actual weight of the



question “*What is the When?*” increases therewith even more. It is this question to which we must now address ourselves.

However, within this analysis, we have to be conscious, from the very beginning, of the fact that, according to the affiliation of its area, the question of “*What is the When?*” is entirely *categorial*. According to its own *kind*, the question of the *ousia* (that is to say, the question of the “*What?*”) is a category “in the same way” – and thus, it is a basis for, and a root of, questioning – as the *pote* (the “*When?*”)! In other words, scholastically speaking, the sphere of their “generality” is coextensively one (and universal) as well.

Nevertheless, as *questionings-oriented-towards-each-other* – since this is what happens in the case of the question of “*What is the When?*”! –, they fork in two different directions. On the one hand, the question asks indeed “*What?*” the “*When?*” is, or rather, in what it consists in. On the other hand, the further and derivative meanings of the *pote* also stem from the “*When?*”. That is how it becomes: “anytime”, “sometime”, “when”, “then”, etc.!<sup>1</sup> But, of course, on the other branch, the question simultaneously also asks “*What?*” “*the*” “**When?**” means, if **asked as a question**.

The entire “doctrine” of Aristotle’s categories is nothing else than the explicit questioning-back and re-asking of the also **explicit questioning** referring back to the basic questions, or to the fundamentals of questioning. So, no “wonder” that something like this could be established as the threshold and the cornerstone of that which, as an

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<sup>1</sup> See Bailly, M. A.: *Dictionnaire grec-français*. Ibid.; as well as Györkösy, Alajos – Kapitánffy, István – Tegyei, Imre (eds.): *Ógörög-magyar szótár*. Ibid.

*organon*, was to become famous as a kind of “treaty” on “logic”. That is to say, as advices offered as necessary directions and orientations to “beginners”, with a view to their improvement...

As for the *pote* and the *chronos*, however, one should notice that the text of the *Categories* also discusses the *chronos*<sup>1</sup> primarily as a *quantity*, and uses it as a designation for *quantitatively* conceived time, while the *pote*<sup>2</sup> consistently and constantly remains within the *questioning and referring* semantic field – which is to be understood, surely, in the sense of time and temporality and is oriented in this direction – of the “When?” and the “when”.

The question of the “When?” (as well), as a matter of course and indeed, asks about time and, in fact, actually and explicitly – although **not** directly – asks the time. More precisely: it apprehends questioningly that which is **questionable in a temporal way** for it, or rather, for the questioner! And, again, how else could something be primarily, and above all, “apprehended”, actually and specifically, than by asking it? It is only *when* something manifests itself, or is represented, in a questioning manner, or explicitly within questioning, that it really is, primarily and actually, apprehended and “opened”.

The question of time is asked, of course, only by someone for whom time as such is, in some way and to a certain “measure”, important, i.e., for whom time as such has an explicit and, what is more, *questioning* weight.

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<sup>1</sup> *chronos*: 4 b, 3; 5 a, 6; 5 b, 3; etc. See Aristote: *Cathégorie – Index verborum – Listes de fréquence*. Par Bernard Colin, Christian Rutten. Université de Liège, Liège, 1993.

<sup>2</sup> *pote*: 1 b, 26; 2 a, 2; 3 a, 16; 3 a, 30; 5 b, 21; 7 b, 1; etc. See Aristote: *Cathégorie – Index verborum – Listes de fréquence*. Ibid.

And that is someone who is not a part of processes and events, and is not within the limits which would define him, completely and extremely, as a mere “element”. It is someone who actually experiences all these, and also his or her own “being-in”, as a world, and outlines it in its potentialities; someone who asks the question of “time” as a question *pertaining to himself or herself, to his or her own questionable character* and even as a question directed at himself or herself.

Now, the “When?” (*pote*) specifically apprehends time, questioningly and problematically, in this precise sense and exactly in these directions. That is why it opens itself up – *as a category* –, simultaneously, towards the “when” of the questioning, but also to the “when” which can be asked again – as *chronos* –, if the question of “What is time?” is already open, or opens itself up and protrudes within it. That is to say, only when the question of the *pote* “transfuses”, carries over, and leads over, into *chronos*, or, more exactly, into the question oriented at *chronos*.

Thus, we have “two” questions/questionings here, which, of course, move towards each other and, in fact, belong to each other as well. But one of them, the *pote*, i.e., the question of the “When?”, is primary and more original than the other. Let us repeat it: this is what so-called “time” signifies and captures.

Consequently, the question of time originates, in fact, within one of its directions, the question of “What is time?” It is for this reason that the question of “What is time?” has to contain – and, quite naturally, it indeed contains – not only the “shreds” of its origins, but also its essential imprints and parameters. Primarily and ultimately, the question of “What is time?” represents, in its origins, the problematic character of a very

specific question, the “When?”, which it carries even further; and the question of “What is time?” is, originally, the question of a being whose existential relationships with other beings and with being itself, as well as with his modalities of being, constantly and variably – but precisely as the question of “When?” – render time into something questionable, important, and ponderous.

To put it differently, the question of “What is time?” ultimately, primarily, and finally originates permanently within the horizon of **meaning** opened up by the “When?” – insomuch that it could not be born and/or would have no meaning without it.

So, before being or even presenting the possibility to become an “autonomous” question, directed at some kind of “knowledge content”, the question of “What is time?” is, in fact, nothing else than an explicit and very determined – and/but actually derivative – continuation of the question “When?”

Therefore, the permanently repeated re-asking and further asking of the question “What is time?” is, in each case – for instance, also within the horizon of expectations and intent of the increasingly “precise” and, also from a cultural historical point of view, extremely varied modes of **measuring** time –, explicitly or implicitly, consciously thought-through or not, but essentially always opens up and creates its original, horizon-like and questioning, thus ultimately ontological and existential (!) relation with and reference to the “When?”

This shows again that the primary question regarding this issue would have to be, actually and specifically – that is, as the *other* interrogative and investigative direction of the question “When?” –, “What

is the When?”, i.e., the question in which, on the one hand, the “When?” asks about its “What(ness)”, and on the other hand, in which the “What(ness)” seeks for, and jointly asks about, its “When?”

However, as already noted, similarly to the “When?” (*poté*), the “What?” (*ousia*) is also a category! That is to say, it is a fundamental question, or a basis for questioning, and moreover, one attributed with an exceptional – and thus, “substantial” – function.

The introductory analysis of the *ousia*’s interrogative name, i.e., the “What(ness)”, represents the most explicitly structured “part” and reference of the otherwise rather achromatic texts of the *Categories*; and surely not by mere accident, since the *ousia* specifically asks about the “What(ness)”. More specifically, it does so in an interrogation explicitly articulated also with regard to its own structure – “primary”, “secondary”, etc. *ousia!* –, which, actually and primarily, opens up that which is *essential* and *the* essence as seen from the perspective of the interrogative and research direction.

Asking about the “What(ness)”, the *ousia* opens up and shows within the structured questioning the *direction* in which that which is **essential** becomes an explicit and structurally articulated **problem**. So, it becomes actually problematic “for” the questioner who belongs to (his or her) own question and is incorporated in it as a questionable being.

However, the **questioner** is not thematically exhibited in Aristotle’s categories. The treatise only deals with his or her questions – the basic questions, or fundamentals for questioning – in a laconic fashion... But, nevertheless, in such a way that *without* this – i.e., without the automatically implied and, perhaps for this very reason, “merely”

**athematic** presence of the questioner himself or herself – we could not even ask, for instance, the question of “What is the When?”, not to speak of the question regarding the “What(ness)” of something specific.

And yet, in a pre-terminological sense (as well), the Greek *ousia* raises the issue of the problematical character and the question of something’s “What(ness)” in such a way that it *a priori* and precisely outlines it from the perspective of the possibility of its **apprehension**, **seizing**, and actual **ownership**. This is why the primary meaning of “*ousia*” is – even pre-“terminologically” – ‘**possession**’ and ‘**property**’<sup>1</sup>; thus also denoting that through which something can be grasped, apprehended, occupied, and seized, and being therefore **essential** for its understanding as *comprehension* and, perhaps, competence.

That which counts as “possession” and “property” is something “valuable”, or a certain “value”, which is therefore aimed at and, of course, paid attention to and preserved, primarily with “regard” to that through which it can be seized and retained. In other words: that which is ultimately *essential* for its apprehension and ownership.

As a matter of course, the property which has been seized and is/has to be owned still needs, and even demands, careful attention and preservation. So, the *ousia* references, from the very beginning and throughout, that which is **worthwhile** in it and related to it. That is to say, that which is worth the dangers and “hardships” of its seizing and ownership, so that these be urged as something truly worthwhile, or even as a worth or a merit.

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<sup>1</sup> See Bailly, M. A.: *Dictionnaire grec-français*. Ibid.; as well as Györkösy, Alajos – Kapitánffy, István – Tegyei, Imre (eds.): *Ógörög-magyar szótár*. Ibid.



*Untitled, 2014, Polaroid*

Pre-terminologically, the “*ousia*” denotes the careful attention to that which is worth to be seized as a richness and as an enrichment in every sense of the word – and thus, as a “real” value –, deserving for this very reason, primarily and essentially – and even *as* essence –, the associated and, on its own turn, also essential effort through and as a result of which we ultimately and permanently deserve, as it were, or can deserve,

*ourselves*. That is to say, that through which we (can) really come to be deserving of existence within our being.

Clearly, the *ousia* moves in this – actually existential and not merely “conceptual” – horizon of meaning – now, of course, terminologically – also in Aristotle! Interrogatively, it turns itself, and turns us, precisely in the direction in which something can be essentially grasped and exhibited, or highlighted, **first and foremost**, as something – with regard to its being; that is to say, as the essence, or as that which is essential. Because the “What?” of something is answered by the interrogative apprehension of something whose “How?”, “How much?”, and “When?” is then also worth, and even needs, targeted questioning and determination.

Therefore, when asking the question “What is the When?”, we first and foremost do nothing else than drawing the *pote*, i.e., the question of “What is the When?”, into the interrogative force field of the *ousia*, i.e., the essence-question regarding the “What(ness)”. Without this, (also) the question of “What is time?” would completely hang in thin air! At the same time, let us not forget that the “generality”, or the “universality”, of the “two” questions as categories, the “What?” and the “When?”, is, after all, “identical”.

If we ask what the “When?” is, then we first have to answer that, with a **substantive** regard to the *ousia*, i.e., the essence, or its essence, the “When?” is actually and primarily a *question*! It pertains to the *essence* of the “When?” that it is a question, and also the fact that it has to be *taken into possession* as such – i.e., as an explicit question – according to its essence, its *ousia*.



At the same time, the “When?” is a question which somehow specifically asks about time and temporality. That is to say, this question actually and specifically questions time in a temporal manner.

Thus, the emphasis on, the seizing and apprehension of, the “What(ness)” of the question of “When?” is “essential” and decisive precisely from the perspective of, and with reference to, the *ousia* of the “When?” – in such a way, and to such an extent, that without it, the question of “What is time?” cannot even be clearly stated.

Thus, it is the specific essence of the “When?” that it is, on the one hand, explicitly a question, and on the other, it somehow specifically asks time itself, addressing itself to time as such. However, since it is a question, it does this in a **reflexive** manner! In other words, the “When?”, actually and specifically, asks about time in a temporal manner.<sup>1</sup>

Asking about time, the question of “When?” “will”, on the one hand, attempt to reach, grasp, and take possession of it with regard to its essence. On the other hand, this is possible only if, as a question, it stays open to all the “echoes” of the interrogative orientations opened up and articulated by it. Including, of course, the questioner himself or herself!

Consequently, we have to ask now: how does it pertain to the questioner himself or herself that he or she permanently asks the question of “When”? Moreover, he or she asks it in such a way that this question leads him or her, continuously and permanently, to asking specifically the question of “What is time?”

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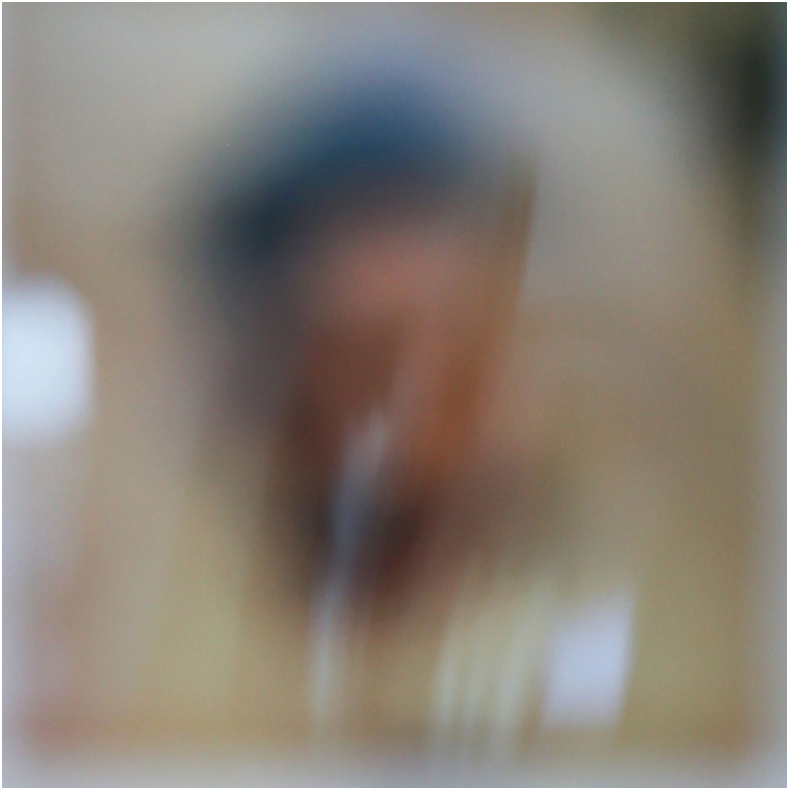
<sup>1</sup> On the *sui generis* **reflexivity** of the question and questioning, see also *Állítás (asszerció), kérdezés és tagadás*. In Király, V. István: *Kérdő jelezés*. Ibid.

Thus, if the stake is, again, to find out “What” the “When?” is, then we first of all have to say about it that the “When?” is a basic question, or a ground of questioning, which moves itself, and us as well, in the direction of time. Hence, the question of “When?” cannot be “answered” with responses such as “green”, “servant”, or “waved”... Contrariwise: asking the question “What is the When?” brings to the surface the fact that asking the question of “When?” – regarding precisely the *ousia* – moves this question itself “towards” time, and more specifically, towards a **specifically** delineated – but not determined! – “time”.

In other words, we ask the question “When?”... and the “answer” is constantly: “then”, “at another time”... This is what the specific delineation of undetermined self-identical – “certain” – **temporal** uniqueness is, conceived as a **primary** *ousia*: the mere “then” or “at another time”. Because this or any other “then” or “at another time” does not mean by far, for instance, “whenever”.

On the contrary, this “whenever” is precisely a **secondary** – or, more exactly, specific – *ousia* of the “then” and the “at another time”. Just as the **generic** *ousia* of the “whenever” is, on its turn, exactly the question of “When?” (*poté*) – that is to say: its *category*.

However, in order for us to be truly able to tell the “When?” in the primary sense of the “then”, or of the “at another time”, we will certainly have to **measure** that which was, of course, originally targeted and opened up, in a determined and articulated way, precisely by the “When?”! And that which we can especially explore through asking the question regarding its *ousia*, i.e., the question of “What is the When?”



*Untitled from the "Identity" series, 2016, C-Print*

However, “to measure” means, primarily and directly, to establish **quantitative** relations, i.e., to establish a certain **relation**, or relations, within the horizon of the category of “When?”; and vice versa: “to measure” means to open and to focalise the relation – that is to say, the horizon of the category of relation – on the category of quantity.

But let us ask further: what is it we measure, targeted and outlined precisely by the “When?” – within a question primarily directed, with

regard to its meaning – in the meaning of its primary *ousia* –, at its essence, which is articulated and to be seized (also) with a view to its measurement? Evidently, the name of that which is delineated precisely within the question of “When?” and exactly in this way is, in fact: time itself. That is: *chronos*!

Hence, it becomes clear that *chronos* – that is to say: time – maintains a very intimate relation with the “When?” And it also dawns upon us that neither *chronos* itself, nor its relation with the “When?” (the *pote*) does not **exhaust** itself in the mere measuring of time, in the momentarily given facticity, mode, and technology of the measurement.

On the contrary: time “itself” stands always, entirely, and as such – of course, in a way that is **always** definitely articulated –, within the explicit and “complete” asking of the question “When?” In any other way, it would be completely incomprehensible, e.g., why we humans constantly measure time in always changing ways, again and again, with increasing “precision”.

Consequently, if, on the other hand, we indeed ask “What is the When?”, then, through and within this question, the “When?” (*pote*) – i.e., “time” in its actual categorial sense – also opens up and appears in an articulation in which its (“highest”) generic (interrogative-categorial) direction is also shown. This happens, of course, in an articulated way, precisely within the articulation directed and organized, as well as outright represented, in an interrogative way, by the *ousia*, the essence itself.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> On the categorial structure of the *ousia*, see, in more detail, *Alkalmazott filozófia és a kategoriális elemzés*. In Király, V. István: *Filozófia és Itt-Lét...* Ibid.

This also reveals, of course – continuing to ask the question of the “When?” in an essential (*ousia*) way –, that the determination of the “When?” (*pote*), regarding its primary essence (or, using a rather bad terminology, its primary “substance”), means precisely its identifying and capturing as another “then”, or “at another time”. Since, however, the “then” and the “at another time” proved itself to be nothing else than the – direction-like, but nevertheless – actually undetermined self-identical Whenever, through this, and simultaneously, the “When?” (*pote*) was delineated as well with regard to its *specificity* (or, using again a bad technical term, referring to the species of its secondary “substance”).

All this took place, and takes place, within and through the Whenever, since it is precisely specific, and as such, it collects in itself and contains in itself all kinds of “befores”, “afters”, “thens”, “alreadies”, and “not yet” – which, of course, would also lack all meaning and “foundation” without the question of “When?”

The question of “When?”, viz. its quite determined direction-like interrogative and existential power, opens up most intimately, and moves further the horizon of, the Whenever, and this horizon primarily fixates itself – while continually remaining entirely within the interrogative force field and in the horizon of the “When?” – tendentially precisely in the “then” or in the “at another time”; as in a “When?” which, although undetermined, has come to a self-identical content, and still did not lose or exhaust its interrogative power.

Since, when it comes to the “then” and the “at another time” standing completely within the question of the “When?”, one **has to** tell

about it **when it is!** More precisely, one has to tell first if it **is, was, or will be** “then” or “at another time”!

This is, of course, already the *chronos*, or “time” itself as it is opened up, delineated, and constituted within its being-questioned, in which it actually **has to be measured**. Without this – i.e., without measuring –, we cannot in any way answer to the question of “When?” that which **is in a certain way** *whenever* as a “then” or an “at another time” possible both as a “*was*” and/but also as a “*will be*”, in fact really **is**.

Now, that which asks about “How?” (πῶς) something is at all is called precisely the category of **quality!** So, as one can see, it is precisely the interrogative horizon of quality into which the “When?” (*pote*) leads into, as it is asked from the direction of its *ousia*, or its “What(ness)”, and interrogated again within it.

However, that which becomes clear in this situation is precisely that the “When?” of the whenever, which emerges with a view towards the whenever of the “then” or of the “at another time”, and vice versa, towards the “then” or the “at another time” of the whenever, as well as waits for measuring and prompts us to measure, “is”, in fact, in such a way that it can be questionably “was-is”, “will be-is”, and “now-is”. In other words, anticipating our further discussion, **by analogy with motion – it passes!**

Also, we have seen that the question of “When?” (*pote*) thus actually already reaches the *chronos*, i.e., “time” – about which, however, Aristotle says in his *Physics* precisely that it is the **number** of movement **according to** (*kata to...*) the “before” and “after”. This “**according to**” (*kata to...*) is that which proves itself to be moving; that which the categorial question “When?” (*pote*), as it is constituted within the interrogative field of the

categories and also functioning as a category in itself, targeted, explored, reached, and ultimately, even constituted through its interrogative force. It is *chronos*, time itself!

One of the most important consequences stemming from these circumstances is, of course, that the question of “What is time?” – which is rather merely formulated than explicitly and actually *re-asked* in the categorial sense in post-Aristotelian philosophy and science – proves to be completely incomprehensible and hanging in thin air without the question of “When?” and the explicit asking of this question! In other words, without its actual categorial relevance being uncovered and exhibited as a determined question, according to and as its similarly determined articulation, while explicitly and directly validating it as such.

This is, certainly, that which the investigation moving in the direction of the “What is the When?” as an essentially interrogative meditation actually serves. In lack of which – although there can be several “sound” considerations regarding this issue – we could not even really understand why we humans constantly, again and again, measure time in ever renewed ways; not to mention why we measure almost everything.

In any case, where there is measuring, there we must have a certain question and something questionable, which necessarily opens itself up. Hence, where something like “time” is measured, there it is certainly the question of “When?” that which essentially and precisely opens itself up and functions in a determined way. However, it does so with its entire categorial amplitude and **not** merely as a measurement technology, chasing after mere measurement data!

Measurement needs the measure, and the measure needs the unit of measurement. Thus, in a certain – derivative – sense, the measuring is nothing else than establishing the number of the measurement unit’s “application”, on the basis of certain rules of measurement, using some measuring equipment.

In this sense, time (*chronos*) is precisely the number (*arithmos*) of movement according to the “before” and the “after”. Time is not movement “itself”, since it also measures immobility or rest. Nevertheless, “to be in time” means, for the movement, to be measured by time;<sup>1</sup> and to be measured by time is, for the movement, to be determined and uncovered with regard to its very being (*einai*).

The analysis of the relation, or “linkage” between movement and time, which is to be conducted via the issues of measuring and measurement, is, of course, inescapable. It is crucial, however, to permanently take into consideration during these analyses that the question of “What is time?”, in association with which the issue of time measurement and of the relationships between time and movement arises, stands and lives, completely and throughout – regarding both its origins and its entire development –, within the horizon of the categorial question of the “When?”

It is clear, says Aristotle, that there is no time without movement and change.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, time is not directly movement and change, because, in contrast to these, time is equally and consistently everywhere. That is to say, Aristotle still thinks that time does not accelerate and slows down, as

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<sup>1</sup> See Aristotle: *Physique*. Texte établi et traduit par Henri Carteron, Les Belles Lettres, Paris, 1990. Vol. I. p. 154, 156. [Bilingual, French-Greek edition.]

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. p. 148.



movement and, consequently, change does. Not to mention that – which is perhaps an even more important and time resistant point – the speed (or slowness) of movement and change is already defined through time.

Nevertheless, there is no time without movement, and we as humans perceive time and its passing precisely together with, and through, movement<sup>1</sup> – when we perceive the “before” and the “after” in movement. Time, on the one hand, means, and on the other hand, gives, or measures, this number: i.e., a “number” which is the number of time according to the “before” and the “after”.

However, time is not simply that with which movement is counted (by us humans), but, simultaneously, also **that which** we count. We count, of course, using numbers – and this does not have anything to do directly with time. The relation is “merely” **analogical**, i.e., proportional and based on similarity. Things which are analogous can be considered “similar” and be compared to each other because they are proportional to each other in some respect.

This is the case with numbers, movement, and, of course, time itself. Numbers also follow each other in a certain sequence. In other words, they follow each other, although – in contrast with time – the sequence of numbers is not continuous but discrete. The sequence of numbers is – similarly to the sequence of time – separated according to the “before” and the “after”, as we say “one” before “two” when counting.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid. p. 150.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. p. 151. See also: Arisztotelész: *Kategóriák*. Ibid. p. 36-39.



*From the “Identity” series, 2017, C-Print*

Hence, the question is, on the one hand, what is counted, and on the other hand, what are we counting, in fact, when we apprehend, or establish, the number of movement according to the “before” and the “after”, i.e., when we apprehend movement according to the “before” and the “after” as counting. Since, according to the definition, this is precisely what time is.

In order to understand this question, we once again need to make and consider certain clarifications. First of all, if we analyse the question more

carefully, we can find out that time – even before being outlined as a task to be determined – has already been **presupposed** in it “for a long time”; as the question is: what do we count “when”...<sup>1</sup>

Hence, the question of time, or the interrogation of time, stands always already, and in each case, “within” time. It is also clear that it stands within time in such a way that it is actually situated within the question of the “When?”; moreover, exactly in such a way that it actually merely **asks this question further!**

Secondly, one also has to consider that, when defining time as the number of movement – according to the before and the after –, while also emphasizing, along with counting, that subsequence itself is not merely the specific and exclusive characteristic of time, then with this definition we have created a situation for the above question, i.e., “what is it actually that we count?” – as, in fact, already noted –, in which its answer exhausts itself and reaches its climax, actually and precisely, only in the “How?” of counting, i.e., in the measuring of time!

Hence, we answer the question about what we are counting by actually saying “How?” we are counting! That is to say, although barely visibly, but nonetheless essentially, the question of “What is time?” is identified with the question of time **measurement** in one of its decisive directions.

Time is not generally movement, but – according to Aristotle – time is only when/if movement has a number;<sup>2</sup> with the specification that time

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<sup>1</sup> This is what was meant earlier, when it was said that the question of “What is time?” asks about time in a *timely* manner.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. p. 151.

itself is what is counted, and not only the instrument with which movement is counted...

Paying attention to all these warnings, we can now more precisely, and perhaps also more clearly, say that time is that which counts movement itself during movement (while moving) and *as* movement; the measuring of time is nothing else than the problematic and understanding taking account and expression of precisely this issue, within a certain “then” or “at another time”.

But how does movement count movement during its movement? Clearly in such a way that the different movers and movements, as they move differently, also evidently move with each other and into each other, thus also mutually “influencing” each other. Certainly, moving movement is counted, while moving, by the (other) movement, which moves along with, and into, the movement, if the counting movement itself is circular. That is to say, if it is **periodical**. It is for the same reasons, of course, that such counting becomes also a counting according to the “before” and the “after”.

The counting movement, which moves within its own period, moves within the continuous and consecutive, repeated alternation of circles and periods, into the movement of which it “meanwhile” becomes the number, as time! – irrespective whether the concerned movement is periodic or otherwise.

Time, however, is precisely this: the weight, involvement, and pathos of numbering and being numbered, as it is articulated within the sense and the **touch** of the “before” and the “after”, through the movement

of the (other) mover which moves along with and into it. Aristotle in fact says: time is the pathos of movement (*chronos pathos ti kineseos*).<sup>1</sup>

Nevertheless, we cannot come to know anything about this, if we just go on analysing the different “kinds” and “types of movement”, separately or even “classifying” them, as they are discussed by Aristotle. Not to mention that Aristotle himself also warns us – at the very beginning of the chapters dedicated to time of his *Physics* – that he will only disclose as much as can be exposed **exoterically** (*exoterikon logon*)<sup>2</sup> about the subject... Which means that “the rest” is not even explained!

In spite of this fact, it is quite clear, and it is primarily time which clarifies it most clearly, that we have to think about the different kinds of movement **together**. What does it mean that the tree, involved in the movement of its very existence, is “in time” and – according to the above consideration – this movement of its life “is”, and takes place, in a being-counted which is actually time itself? What else can such a statement mean than primarily the fact that, as a living being of Earth, the tree does not only live the movement of its life within the earth (the soil) and along with the planet Earth, while also meaning that the movement of the tree’s life moves and is moved along together with the Earth?

That is to say, it means that the tree, moving within its living vivacity, in fact also periodically moves – among other forms of movement – in the annual elliptical rings of the Earth around the Sun, with all the impacts and repercussions which are related to the various seasons, etc., of this movement. Furthermore, these movements also very

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<sup>1</sup> See Aristotle: *Physics*. Ibid. Vol. II. 251 b. 28. p. 104.

<sup>2</sup> See *ibid.* Vol I. 217 b. 29. p. 147.

effectively **count** the tree's life and its movements as tree rings, according to the "before" and the "after", from the beginning of the tree's life until its end. The situation is very similar, e.g., with what are usually called the "epochs of Earth's history", etc.

But is this, in fact, not the case with all movements? Periodical movements actually move together with, and into, other periodical movements – among other types of movement –, as the Earth moves along with the Sun and the Moon – which counts the months of the year. Furthermore, the Earth also revolves around its own axis along with its movement around the Sun. Meanwhile, these all count each other and, of course, being periodical, they also actually count **themselves**. In other words, they count since when and for how long the Sun, the Earth as a planet of the solar system, the Moon as the moon of Earth, etc., "lives". And the same thing also holds in all respects, in the micro as well as in the macro dimension.

Hence, we can actually and legitimately say that time is the numbering, the weight and the pathos of numbering, through the (other) periodical movement which moves along and into the mover's movement. In fact, as we have seen, Aristotle actually says that time is the *pathos* of movement.

However, when we are measuring **time "itself"**, and not movement as such, then we do nothing else than to count along and together **the** movement which is now actually time as determined in the above sense, with the essential periodical movement representing the appropriate, but never completely arbitrary, unit of measurement for the situation. The year, the month, the day, the hour, etc. are, in themselves, all periodical

and (yet) very different movements, which in this respect serve the calculation and the measurement of time as such.

Meanwhile, they are also appropriate for measuring and counting each other. For this reason, time is never identical in the absolute sense; but we could only learn this, of course, from the theory of relativity. On the other hand, within a determined system, if analysed abstractly, time can indeed seem identical, or steadily moving, according to the “before” and the “after”, even with regard to itself. Although its number is usually always different in each case.

When we measure the movement **of something**, i.e., some (other) movement, with regard to time, then we are counting together, within the measurement, its movement with the counting of the movement which we already established as the periodical movement of the appropriate temporal unit of measurement.

For instance, when the performance of the runners at world championships is measured in, and with, time, what happens is that the movement of seconds and their fragments, according to the “before” and the “after”, is counted along with the counting of the runners’ continuous movement. This is, in fact, that which establishes the “time result”, and, on the basis of this entire procedure – i.e. not only based on the end result –, several calculations can be made regarding the average or partial, etc., speed and performance of the runners, within the framework of further questioning.



*Sunday afternoon, 2014, Polaroid*

It is the basic characteristic of periodical movements that they are essentially and in the original sense **analogous**.<sup>1</sup> That is to say, they are essentially proportional and thus, on the one hand, similar, and on the other hand, they can also be compared, even if the exponent of their

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<sup>1</sup> Perhaps we all too seldom notice and take into account the enormously important role played by the **analogy**, analogies, and analogical thinking as such in Aristotelian philosophy, as well as in philosophy and philosophizing in general.



proportion is an irrational number. Furthermore, periodical movements actually not only move together, but also into every other type of movement...

In any case, there is no movement on this Earth, periodical or otherwise, which would not move together with the Earth and its periodical movement(s) as well as with the “other” periodical movements with which the periodical and non-periodical movements of the Earth also move together and into...

Furthermore, since the *periodos* and the “periodical” means a (circular) movement with an **interval**, the movement of the periodical into that of (any other) mover is necessarily **interval-like**. The interval of the movement-into is primarily established (given) precisely by the **interval** of the period. Since we have to deal here with only movement, in all its respects – these intervals necessarily and evidently **follow** each other, and they do this necessarily and precisely according to the “before” and the “after”.

Hence, this is in fact the “time”, with which, e.g., physics also has to deal with, even if mostly without even clearly knowing it – with the specification that there is also no physics without the questioners who are called physicists... And that this circumstance is quite important for the actual outlining of something like “physics”...

Indeed, time is the number of movement according to the “before” and the “after”. And also indeed: time is not (simply) the movement, but we only have time when the movement has a number and is counted, in the sense established above. The movement (of any type) which moves “alone”, without any (other) periodical co-movements, and is not even

measured – if it “exists” at all –, is actually not really “in time”. This is what, for instance, the “perpetual movement of the sole perpetual mover” would be, in a coarse approach...

Thus, **time itself** is essentially measured by the moment (*to nyn*): *nun ton chromos metrei*.<sup>1</sup> The moment is the “actual”, moving “when” of time (*o pot' en*);<sup>2</sup> or, with a rather bad term, the “now” of the mover. As such, the moment is always different and, at the same time, always identical as well. This is exactly the essence of the moment: it is always different and, simultaneously, also identical. The moment is insofar as the “before” and the “after” can be counted within the movement; and, vice versa, since the “before” and the “after” exists in such a way within movement that it can be counted, something like the “moment” can – and has to – also exist within time itself.

For its part, this “something” is analogous to the number, and it is even something like the unit of the number. In other words, it is an element of **quantity** which we do not, and indeed cannot, outline with regard to its parts.

Time is continuous and simultaneously discreet within the moment, through the moment, and according to the moment. In this respect, it is similar – analogically speaking – to the point. The latter is also itself, or it could not be situated at the beginning and/or at the end of length lines, or “line segments”, as a beginning and end point. At the same time, however, the point is permanently the end of each (length) segment and the

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<sup>1</sup> Aristote: *Phisique*. Ibid. Vol. I. 219 b. 10. p. 151.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. 219 b. 11.

beginning of the continuing (length) segment. Thus, similarly to the point within the (length) line, the moment is also both simultaneous and discreet.

The number, however, is not continuous, but only discreet. It is, of course, discreet according to the before and the after. Hence, the measuring of time as the number of movement can only measure and reach, via its measuring in time – through counting, being counted, and numbered –, only that which is separated within the moment. This is why it is deeply questionable if we can really measure time with the moment – i.e., with that which, as we have seen, in fact measures time itself...The case is/could be rather that we are in need of proportionality and similarity, i.e. **analogy** here.

In any case, we measure movement with time and time with movement.<sup>1</sup> More specifically, we do this through establishing a certain – periodical – movement, which will then become the unit of measurement for the whole. This is done in a double sense: explicitly counting within the measuring, we actually count together the numbers of the mover’s movement and those of the movement of time. The – always determined and specific – number of the movement’s “distance”, length, etc. is counted together with the – always determined and specific – number of the length or of the shortness of time.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid. p. 154.

<sup>2</sup> This is, of course, the meaning of the expressions “meters per second”, “kilometres/miles per second”, etc., in physics.



*Untitled, 2015, Polaroid*

Consequently, measuring movement with time, and time with movement, means that we **meanwhile** also determine both the movement and time with regard to ourselves and to our being (*einai*)<sup>1</sup> – and, in fact, we could not proceed in any other way: movement would be impossible to be

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid. 221 a. p. 154.

determined without time, as time would also be impossible to be determined without (its) movement.

Thus, we cannot define time without measuring it, or, more exactly, the definition of time actually always coincides with its measurement – and, even more exactly, with understanding and interpreting the **What(ness)** of time measurement!!!

## Chapter II

*Thus*, if the question of “What is time?” actually appears within the interrogative force field of the question “When?”, then, for its part, this question will sooner or later lead to the question of time management (as well). That is to say, it will give rise, on the one hand, to the question concerning the meaning of time measurement, and on the other hand, to questions regarding the way in which we actually measure time, and how we should measure it.

For this very reason, “to be in time” does not simply mean to co-exist with time... that is to say, to be “when”, incidentally, time also happens to be... “To be in time” is primarily, rather, to be **touched** by time! Secondly, “to be in time” is to exist surrounded by time, enveloped in time and covered by it. Thus, it also necessarily means: to be within an **encounter** with time and to suffer its touch, as corruption and generation, and hence not as some merely “indifferent” countedness and counting!

Therefore, time also covers the things which, having passed, do not exist anymore – i.e., *are* no more... –, as well as those which, being in the future, do not exist, *are* not yet. These are the things of the past and future, which time envelops into the horizon of its orientation and meaning, while, at the same time, also counting them.

Now, this counting happens through the moment, which also represents the continuity of time, as it both links and separates past and future. Hence, the moment is, in fact, the limit (*peras*) of time.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid. 222 a. 13. p. 157.

As a separation and a separator, the moment is always something else and “other”, while, as a connection and bond, it is always the same. Accordingly, we also consider the “before” and the “after” as belonging together and also as being distinct from each other. This is the case not only with the present moment, but also regarding the past and the future. That “former” is prior within the past, while that which is more recent follows (it) also within the past – compared, of course, to the present moment. Naturally, this also is the case with the future.

Again, as far as the measuring of time is concerned: as seen above, we actually measure time through a certain determined time – i.e. the number of a specific motion –, considered in this matter a (measurement) unit, i.e. a measure. This measure is nothing else than uniform circular motion, since **its number is the best known!**<sup>1</sup> It is this motion which measures – through its periodicity and, specifically, through its period – both other movements and time.

It is from this angle that the quite difficult (*aporeseien*) question has to be asked: does time, conceived as the number of motion, **exist at all without the existence of “man”, i.e. the counting soul (or the existence of he/she who is counting)?**<sup>2</sup> Aristotle does indeed choose the answer that, without the soul and the counting activity of the intellect, time exists only as movement itself; that is, movement as the “subject” of time.

Thus, since the “before” and the “after” are within the movement, they constitute time as countable or, more exactly, measurable! Hence, time is not a mere phantasm of the soul, but something that the soul, quite

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid. p. 161

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. 223 a. 22. p. 160.

“actively”, not only brings to mere “actuality” as an otherwise latent potentiality, but which it somehow actually structures, thereby **enriching** it.



*Travesti, 2015, Polaroid*

In any case, time is something counted and measured – precisely through its existential and ontological interrogation! – in such a way that its **counting/measuring** is not – and cannot be – the mere “representation” of



something “externally” given, but actually presents a **new** dynamic, **new** outlines and a **new** dimension within, compared to, and in relation to the moving-together of things that are in motion.

Hence, the actual question is not, let us say, what we measure when we measure time, but rather **what happens** when time is measured. What happens with time, what happens with its measuring, and what happens with the measurer?

Let us not forget: the soul – or, more specifically, the counting soul – is itself “movement” and even something which moves by putting itself in motion.<sup>1</sup> There is not only proportionality and analogy between the soul and movement, but an identity; since the soul is the essence of a specific natural body containing the principles of both movement and rest.<sup>2</sup> The soul is the essence of the body as, e.g., sight is the essence of the eye.

So, the time “in” which we think is related to thinking itself<sup>3</sup> – just as thinking is also related to the time it meditates and reflects upon.

### *Excursus*

## **Measuring and Measure**

*As* far as measuring and the measure(s) necessary for it are concerned, Aristotle also takes into account only two main factors. First, all that is measured has to be measured with itself: distance with distance,

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<sup>1</sup> See Aristotle: *De anima – Parva naturalia*. Editura Științifică, București, 1996. 403 b. 25-32; 404 a. p. 11.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. 412 b. 15-18. p. 31.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. 430 b. 10-25. p. 73-74.

temperature with temperature, weight with weight, etc., and time also has to be measured with time. Otherwise, the measuring and the measure can be neither correct nor precise and adequate. The other aspect, or factor, is thus that the measuring and the measure has to be practically adequate as well, i.e., it has to provide for the most accurate measurement possible in a relatively easy, effective, and expedient way.

As a presupposition and a horizon, we already have here the assumption and requirement (postulate) that the various acts of measuring and the measures used during these acts have to become *increasingly accurate*. This also means, of course, that the measuring acts are, ultimately, increasingly approaching the *ousia*, i.e. the essence of that which they apprehend and express through measuring.

In other words: what we have here is the presupposition and postulate that, if we develop and apply increasingly precise ways of measuring, then we can capture with increasing accuracy the essence of that which we measure. This is, of course, implicitly presupposed the other way around as well: if we understand the “whatness” of something more authentically, then we can also measure it more precisely.

In science and technology, these are the presuppositions that have and continue to shape not only the various branches of science, but also the existence and development of scientific disciplines such as *metrology*, whose task and meaning is to tend to the precision criteria of measuring as such.<sup>1</sup>

However, as metrology apprehends it, measuring itself is rather only a specific technology and the study of equivalences. More specifically, it is

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<sup>1</sup> Bejan, Mircea: *În lumea unităților de măsură*. Editura Agir, București, 2000.

the technology dedicated to quantitatively apprehend, express, and take into account certain essential and categorial aspects – along with their derivative relations to each other – as they are related to different and, preferably, mutually independent units.

The question of “What does it mean to measure?” has been, in fact, articulated along these parameters for thousands of years. As Aristotle also says in his *Metaphysics*: science is, in fact, the measure and measuring of things!<sup>1</sup> This is also what turns and carries the meditation on measuring, on the one hand, toward the reflection on the one and unity, and on the other hand, in the direction of meditating on numbers and counting.

The precise measurement unit is that of which, also according to Aristotle, we ascertained that one can neither add to nor take from (something else). For this reason, the most precise measure is that of the number, and all other measures are nothing but the variously determined units of the number.<sup>2</sup> Hence, the number also counts all other units of measurement within that which is measured.

This is how the number becomes the thematic oxymoron of the measure and measuring as such... **Instead** of, on the one hand, the horizons of roots and origins, and on the other hand, the horizons of the meanings! That is to say, instead of us meditating *on the meaning and significance, within the ontological identity of humans, carried by the fact that we as humans mostly attempt to – or are forced to – apprehend almost everything through measuring and measures.*

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<sup>1</sup> See Aristotel: *Metafizica*. Editura Academiei Republicii Populare Române, București, 1965. p. 309.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. p. 308.



*Untitled, 2014, Polaroid*

The point is that, ultimately and with respect to their essential ontological identity, humans –even if poetically! – **dwell questioningly** upon this earth! Thus, the one who measures is only he (or she) for whom the measure, essence, quality, quantity, temperature, time, etc. of things, events, and issues is problematic with respect to his (or her) own existence, or even essentially – i.e. the being for whom the stake of the “game” within and of its existence is this very being itself!

All these are present, of course, also with respect to their origins, in each act of measuring and in each specific “problem” of measuring and measurement as such. Measuring itself is essentially a **mode of being**; more specifically, the mode of existence of a being who, also otherwise and generally, exists questioningly, as it carries actual weight for him (or her) to be aware of the existence in which he (or she) understands, validates, and carries out his (or her) own existence.

Neither measuring nor the measure originates and stems only from that which is measured, and even all those “practical” aspects which always inevitably assert themselves when we determine the measures and carry out our measurements do not “exhaust” those components – of “imperfection” – specific to measuring, which are most often fatefully (tragically) and incorrectly termed as “anthropomorphic”, “tragic”, “epistemological”, etc.

On the contrary, it is, in fact, an **assertion of being** that takes place and is carried out through measuring; which is, furthermore, such that it **occurs and intervenes** meaningfully – and full of meaning! – within being, in the existence of beings, and also in the being of the measurer and measuring!

To put it briefly: the point is that – at least from the perspective of science – **observation** and measuring in fact essentially coincide. That is to say, in the scientific sense as well, to observe actually means to measure, and vice versa, measuring is that which actually counts for observation; since all acts of measurement are looking for the “How much?” of “something” within a specific “When?” and an equally specific

“Where?” – attempting to tell henceforward “more effectively” and “more precisely” “What?”, “How?”, etc., that certain something is.

However, no measurement is the merely “objective” representation and reflection of that which “is”. Rather, the measured entity is outlined, constantly and exclusively, within the always preliminary outlines of (its) measuring. Nothing proves this better than the authentically exciting cultural history of measurement units, measuring instruments, and measuring methods, as well as the articulations of the technologies used in everyday life and in the sciences, which are outlined by them.

Thus, it is questionable even if today, when we define the “(1) meter” as the distance travelled by light in .00000003335640952 seconds, as measured with the caesium clock<sup>1</sup>, we mean by this that which we did when the Earth’s latitude circles were used for the determination of the meter, since, e.g., time did not yet figure at all within that...

It is no mere accident that the two great 20<sup>th</sup> century revolutions of physics – the theory of relativity and quantum mechanics – were essentially related to the new and fundamental awareness about the nature of measuring. Einstein’s theory of relativity did not renounce the Newtonian ideas of “absolute time” for reasons related to world view or for purely theoretical considerations, but because it has become clear that there is no absolute observer and measurer. Because the measurer, along with his (or her) measuring instruments, cannot step outside the system in which he (or she) carries out his (or her) observations and measuring. Thus, he (or she) already inevitably acquires his (or her) own time

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<sup>1</sup> See Hawking, Stephen W.: *Scurtă istorie a timpului*. Editura Humanitas, București, 1994. p. 38.

measure, which differs from that of the observer and of the measurer who carries out his (or her) measuring from and within another reference system.<sup>1</sup>

Similarly, in quantum mechanics, it was realised that the fact of measuring and the events associated with it really do influence both the events themselves and the processes which are measured and studied. These influences are aspects with such fundamental – essentially, ontological – relevance that they cannot be eliminated from our physical and measuring relations with the world, e.g., through certain future corrections. In other words, all this does not only have some “physical scientific” or bleak “anthropological” correspondent, but also a weighty anthropological “reality”.

Therefore, to sum it up, it is only someone who asks about the “Where?”, “When?”, “How many?”, “In what way?”, and “What?”, about the Relations and the Effects, etc., who also measures things such as time<sup>2</sup>, place, speed, weight, temperature, atmospheric pressure, electrical charges, information quantities, blood pressure, IQ, etc. And vice versa: he (or she) who indeed asks these questions **also** has to measure – while asking his (or her) questions –, since otherwise he (or she) could not apprehend, assume, and explicitly ask, always further and again, his (or her) specific questions!

Hence, the (ontological and existential) origins, roots, and the permanent essence of measuring lies in the actuality of the (determined)

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid. p. 112.

<sup>2</sup> “(...) it is only for beings such as man that it has any meaning and goal to establish such organizing relationships between certain processes, such as between the universe and the light, as well as the seemingly circular motions of the Sun.” See Elias, Norbert: *Az időről*. In Idem: *Időben élni – Történeti-szociológiai tanulmányok*. Akadémiai Kiadó, Budapest, 1990. p. 40.

**question** and the (determined) **questioning**, in its also determined emergence and – historical – development (which, in turn, of course, also shapes history).



## Chapter III

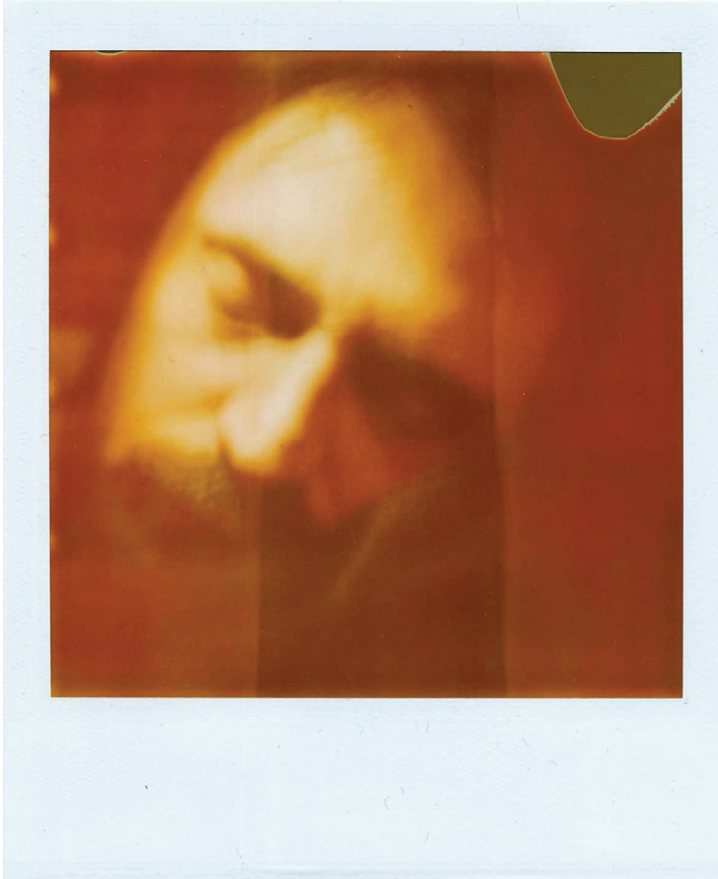
*As* we have seen, Aristotle also raises the question, referred to explicitly as a **difficulty**, whether time – conceived as the number of movement – exists at all **without** the counting and measuring activity of the soul, and if it does, in what sense. It seems that, for him as well, “time” is that which is categorially asked about in the “When?”, being thus – although derivatively, but also necessarily – measured and counted... and not something that would be, as it were, both “subjective” and “objective”...

That is to say, it is not a mere *composite*, but, in fact, a different and **novel ontological dimension**, which is not even constituted without the unique – i.e. specifically interrogative and centred specifically on the “When?” –, actual and very much real existence of the being who asks the question of the “When?”, thus ultimately counting and measuring it. The further asking of the question “What is time?” – constituted, developed, and structured within the horizon of the “What is the When?” – reveals precisely that the “whatness” of time – the being of time – is related explicitly to the question – and thus, to the questioner who asks it.

The existence of this being is, on the one hand, itself “counted”, but on the other hand, it is counted in such a way that – meanwhile and specifically because of this – he (or she) himself (or herself) counts time and outright exists through counting time.

Hence, if there would be only a “single motion”, or if there would be different one, not contacting and influencing each other in any way – that is to say, if they would not move together in any way –, then time would

also not exist, because no movement could count, or contact, any (other) movement.



*Untitled, 2014, Polaroid*

Similarly: if the counting soul would exist in such a way that it would not “move”, or would not be in a *sui generis* relation and contact with something that moves and exists within the dynamism of moving things

and the moving world... then the problem and question of “time” could also not exist for it, including the questions related to the essence and the measurement of time.

Consequently, “the problem of time” itself – including all the problems and issues of its measuring – is nothing else than **an ontological dimension belonging to being in a very specific way, as something completely unique – and, more correctly, novel!** –, emerging among the moving things and within the moving world, within the atmosphere of counted things, which move together while counting each other!!!

Thus, it belongs to being and to the temporality of beings in such a way that its own temporality and temporal existence is outlined as a weighty, provocative and universal – categorial – question regarding its own being, as well as the way of conducting its own existence.

However, categorial questions – or, more correctly, the categories themselves – are particular questions. They differ from the more usual dialectical questions primarily in that the categorial questions – that is to say, the categories themselves – cannot be answered with a simple “yes” or “no”, i.e. a mere affirmation or negation.

Already in his *Hermeneutics*, Aristotle remarks that, precisely because of the above considerations, “What is (that/this)?” type questions – that is, in this case, the category of the *ousia* itself – are not dialectical questions.<sup>1</sup> This is, of course, the situation also with the questions represented and imposed by the other categories. These are also not common dialectical questions, as they cannot be answered with simple “yes” or “no” type statements.

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<sup>1</sup> See Arisztotelész: *Hermeneutika*. Ibid. 20 b. 25. p. 45.

Aristotle discusses the dialectical, i.e. debate, questions primarily in his *Topics*. It is no accident at all that the issues related to the categories come up exactly where Aristotle discusses the **problems** themselves, emphasizing that, in fact, all that determines these problems has to ultimately *belong to one of the categories*.<sup>1</sup>

Furthermore, the arguments – dialectical arguments – also, in fact, circle around the categories, just as those elements of which these arguments are constructed.<sup>2</sup>

In any case and *a priori*, all dialectical **premises** are **interrogative sentences**, i.e. explicit questions, which, as it were, expect and demand answers. Now, all such premises – i.e. questions! – state – interrogatively! – an essence, a quality, a quantity or something else that is asked and belongs to another category!<sup>3</sup> At the same time, it is precisely the categories in whose horizon the categories become, or are, directly and *a priori*, plausible.

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<sup>1</sup> See Aristotel: *Topica*. I. 9. 103 b. In Idem: *Organon*. Vol. II. Editura IRI, București, 1998. p. 312.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. 104 a. p. 312-313.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. 103 b. p. 312.

## Conclusions

*The* objects of these actual, explicitly questionable and interrogative investigations are not these premises, seemingly taken in a mere formal sense, but the determined problems that the dialectical questions, ultimately and explicitly, raise for the investigations.<sup>1</sup> It is absolutely clear, however, that, for Aristotle, all possible questions, along with the investigations and researches triggered and prompted by them, actually and throughout stand within and stem from the interrogative and, of course, specifically structured basic horizons of the categories, as well as within their convergent force fields! Furthermore, during and throughout all dialectical researches, they also have to be kept the entire time within them. This is, in fact, what the *Topics* is all about!

This applies, of course, to the issues of time as well, regarding which all further questions and problematic investigations stand throughout within the categorial-interrogative horizon and force field of the *pote*, the “When?” Thus, it is surely this very same horizon in which the determinative and/or measuring activities related to time stand within, develop, and are structured. Hence, these are actually inconceivable without the category of the *pote*, the category of the “When?”, its categorial question, and explicit or implicit asking.

Let us repeat it: since the “before” and the “after” are in motion, they constitute time as countable – or more correctly, measurable! – entities. So, time is not a mere phantasm of the soul, but something that the soul,

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid.

quite “actively”, not only brings to mere “actuality” as an otherwise latent potentiality, but which it somehow actually structures, thereby enriching it.

In any case, time is something counted and measured – precisely through its existential and ontological interrogation! – in such a way that its **counting/measuring** is not – and cannot be – the mere “representation” of something “externally” given, but actually presents a **new** dynamic, **new** outlines and a **new** dimension within, compared to, and in relation to the moving-together of things that are in motion.

**Translated by Lóránd Rigán**

## APPENDIX

### An Ordeal Around the Existential Question of “What is man?”

*Motto:* “Phoenix Rebirth is easy:  
my shadow also turns into ashes at times.”

**Péter Demény (alias Ivan Karamazov)<sup>1</sup>**

*During* his still timely and vivid contemplations on the essence and meanings of philosophising at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Immanuel Kant concluded that philosophy, both in a so-called *cosmopolitico* and *eminenti* meaning, can actually – “in *actus*” – gain its authentic meanings through its articulate and explicit relations to the “end goals or humanity”. It is also important that Kant formulated these end goals as *fundamental questions* distinguished not only because of their importance and greatness, but also because they are end-questions. These are, we know them, “What can I know?”, “What ought I to do?”, “What can I hope for?”.

It is also true that Kant himself connects the hassle with such questions to certain “branches”. And it is not clear about all of these whether and how they relate indeed to philosophy itself. Because, according to Kant, the question “What can I hope for?” should be “answered” – at least seemingly – by religion and not by philosophy. (Of course, this is also an end-question, namely that even before we “listened to” and accepted the hopeful answers that religion can give to this

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<sup>1</sup> From the Facebook page of Péter Demény (alias Ivan Karamazov)

question, we should first consider what religion itself actually is.) *Recte*: the end-questions are “ultimate” questions because, on the one hand, one must reach to them – meaning that we must break and build the way that leads to them – and, on the other hand, because we can hardly *pass beyond* their horizons and halos. We cannot go beyond, or know more than, say, the question of “What can I know?”. For, at the centre of things, it is only through it that we can know “everything” or “anything”. Including that what we do not know (or cannot know).

However, amidst the analytical and constructive meditations on the end-goals of humanity formulated by these end-questions, Kant reaches the conclusion that the relationship between them, the *sending them to each other* and *pertaining to each other takes further* of *beyond* them. That is to say, the end-goals of humanity actually always send to and meet in a *newer* – but *most important* – (end)question. This question, the ultimate of every end-goal, the ultimate (and most concealed) of every end-question, always sounds: “What is man?” Even if, very problematically, Kant send off the treatment of this issue to a new “discipline”, the so-called “anthropology”. And which, moreover, he had no time or force left to ask or “elaborate on”, no matter how much he considered it a very personal intellectual task.<sup>1</sup>

Regardless of this, the ultimate end-question of “What is man?”, and in the philosophical/existential end-goal of human(ity), Kant did not only formulate something advisable or an important task just for himself and

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<sup>1</sup> It is well-known that Kant’s anthropology outlined and published from a “pragmatic” point of view is actually a slightly revised version of his university lectures held under the same name, whose publication caused a considerable disappointment for the audience.



the coming generations (of philosophers) but, much rather, he surfaced an aspect which, for philosophy – although in a hidden way, and seen as secondary – has always been and remained *inherent*. With respect both to its essence and its all-time origins and meanings. This, although tiresome, is not “difficult” to point out historically all the way to Husserl, Heidegger or Gadamer.

Therefore we cannot undertake such a task here. My concern is much rather what it means philosophically – for us people, for our being as humans – to ask the question of “What is man?” and, with respect to it, what is the state of this question these days? Or what is our state today?

Man is of course always “concerned” with... man. Whether he wants it or not, whether he “questions” it or not. And this is also the greatest problem with the question “What is man?”, and also the greatest difficulty. For, on the one hand, man always shows, “says” about himself what he is, and how he understands or validates himself in this self-revelation, while, on the other hand, he does it in an “a priori” given situatedness in understanding which always also *suppresses* the inevitable, but *explicit* fundamental questioning of himself. Because his “world” is always filled with all kinds of ready-made answers given or desirably given to this question. This is what the mythologies coming into being even before the appearance of writing, the religions, and also the so-called human sciences do as well, whether these sciences call themselves “natural” or “social”.

The mere existence of these proves that some kind of – basically historical – interpretation and situatedness of itself *pertains* to the being of man. And this is unimaginable without its “being inquired”, that is, questionableness, also pertaining to him.



*Untitled, 2013, Polaroid*

Consequently, when Kant treats the question of “What is man?” as the highest and most important issue of philosophy, then he – as every essential thinker all the time – does nothing else in fact than INQUIRINGLY brings to the surface a fundamental ontological aspect of being connected to the essence of man.

This meditation is of course also connected to my previous inquiries, both extending and deepening them. For, in their most important lines,

these inquiries and studies, starting from the existential ontology of the *secret*,<sup>1</sup> articulated the *ontological metaphysics* of human finiteness – *death*,<sup>2</sup> the existential characters of the temporality (*past* and *future*),<sup>3</sup> the ontology of *historicity* and *freedom*,<sup>4</sup> and the *existential* questions of *human illness* through the *ontology of possibility*.<sup>5</sup> In the sense of the

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<sup>1</sup> See: *Határ – Hallgatás – Titok – A zárság útjai a létben és a filozófiában* „Komp-Press”, Korunk Baráti Társaság, Kolozsvár, 1996, p. 318. ISBN 973 9766110 (**Downloadable:** [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/273331704\\_Hatar\\_-\\_Hallgatás\\_-\\_Titok\\_-\\_A\\_zárság\\_útjai\\_a\\_filozófiában\\_es\\_a\\_létben](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/273331704_Hatar_-_Hallgatás_-_Titok_-_A_zárság_útjai_a_filozófiában_es_a_létben) ) and: *Fenomenologia existențială a secretului – Încercare de filosofie aplicată*, Paralela '45, Pitești, 2001, p. 286. ISBN 973-593-376-5 (**Downloadable abstract in French:** [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/288466489\\_Fenomenologia\\_existentia\\_a\\_secretului\\_-\\_Încercare\\_de\\_filosofie\\_aplicata](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/288466489_Fenomenologia_existentia_a_secretului_-_Încercare_de_filosofie_aplicata) )

<sup>2</sup> See: *Haladóan lakozik szabadságában az ember*, Pozsony, Kalligram, 2007, p. 321. ISBN 978-80-7149-977-0; (**Downloadable:** [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/273329578\\_Halandoan\\_lakozik\\_szabadsag\\_aban\\_az\\_ember;KÉRDÉS-PONTOK\\_a\\_történelemhez,\\_a\\_halálhoz\\_és\\_a\\_szabadsághoz](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/273329578_Halandoan_lakozik_szabadsag_aban_az_ember;KÉRDÉS-PONTOK_a_történelemhez,_a_halálhoz_és_a_szabadsághoz) ) and *Death and History*, Lambert Academic Publishing, Saarbrücken, 2015, p. 180. ISBN 9783659802379

(**Downloadable:** [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/273330986\\_KERDES-PONTOK\\_a\\_tortenelemhez\\_a\\_halalhoz\\_es\\_a\\_szabadsaghoz](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/273330986_KERDES-PONTOK_a_tortenelemhez_a_halalhoz_es_a_szabadsaghoz) ) and *Death and History*, Lambert Academic Publishing, Saarbrücken, 2015, p. 180. ISBN 9783659802379

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. and *Filozófia és Itt-Lét – Tanulmányok*, Erdélyi Híradó, Kolozsvár, 1999, p. 156. ISBN 973-97099 -6-6 (**Downloadable:** [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/273332010\\_Filozofia\\_es\\_Itt-Let\\_-\\_Tanulmányok](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/273332010_Filozofia_es_Itt-Let_-_Tanulmányok) )

<sup>4</sup> See: *Kérdő Jelezés – több-csendbeni alkalmazott filozófiai zajhaborítás a szabad(ság) kérdés(é)ben*, Kalligram, Pozsony, 2004, p. 216. ISBN 80-7149-672-3 (**Downloadable:** [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/273329855\\_Kerdo\\_jelezésTobb-csendbeni\\_alkalmazott\\_filozófiai\\_zajhaborítás\\_a\\_szabadság\\_kerdezeseben](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/273329855_Kerdo_jelezésTobb-csendbeni_alkalmazott_filozófiai_zajhaborítás_a_szabadság_kerdezeseben) ) and *EXISTENCE(s) – Short deep-forage Chapters*, Lambert Academic Publishing, Saarbrücken, 2017, p. 249. ISBN: 978-3-659-39612-0 (**Downloadable:** [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/322164396\\_EXISTENCEs\\_-\\_Short\\_deep-forage\\_Chapters](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/322164396_EXISTENCEs_-_Short_deep-forage_Chapters) )

<sup>5</sup> See: *A betegség – az élő létlehetősége - Prolegoména az emberi betegség filozófiájához* / *Illness – A Possibility of the Living Being – Prolegomena to the Philosophy of Human Illness* (Kétnyelvű, magyar-angol kiadás). Kalligram, Pozsony,

particular ontological identity of the being called “human”, and the *thematization* of our own *modes of being*.<sup>1</sup>

These meditations take us further to a direction which was already formulated by Kant: “*What is man?*” It is a great question whose thematization needs a serious consideration. The most considerable is of course not only the “elaboration” or history of *merely* a more “adequate” “philosophical anthropology” and its research, or *merely* the emphasis of

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2011, p. 204. ISBN 978-80-8101-499-4 (Downloadable: [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/273330709\\_A\\_betegseg\\_az\\_elo\\_letlehetosege\\_-Illness\\_a\\_Possibility\\_of\\_the\\_Living\\_Being](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/273330709_A_betegseg_az_elo_letlehetosege_-Illness_a_Possibility_of_the_Living_Being))

<sup>1</sup> The terms *thematization* and *theme* I use here in the horizon elaborated and “tested” in my own works. In this sense, by *thematization* I mean not a pre-defined circle of things to be analysed, but much rather their *origin* and the particular nature of their philosophical assuming. The “intention” of thematization is in fact that it prompts philosophy to present itself as *actual*, being in *actus*, also in relation to the inevitable subjects it discusses. In the sense of an attempt of *correspondence* to an existential challenge. Therefore the “answer” to a thematising inquiry is always *emancipation*. This way the assuming of a question in the sense of its explicit thematization always receives the pressure of *urgency*. Because it speaks about something that *pertains to us*, and inevitably burdens us, therefore it cannot be postponed. Our own existential challenges. The “theme” only discloses through thematization, and only this reveals its inner tensions as well. These of course send to *newer* and *newer* themes. Therefore the only meditation that can be called “thematization” is the one that, together with its burdening “timeliness”, always reaches back to some essential and central moment of “philosophy” and gives new points of view for shedding light on it. Undertaking it in the “living” historical present of philosophising, with regard also to the future. Thematization is thus characterised by the fact that it is the thematization of questions beyond the inner automatisms of philosophy, *but that do not lack actuality*. (This is the place to clarify some older etymological meditations on the Greek word *thema*. The centre of its meaning horizons is the thing which is “completed”, “finished”. But, on the one hand, in such a way that it also carries the process of its completion, and on the other hand, in the sense that it only begins to exist – have an effect, suffer, etc. – once it is completed, once it places itself within its boundaries and outlines (*peras*). See the study (*Út)-keresés és téma-találkozás – AZ ALKALMAZOTT FILOZÓFIAI TEMATIZÁLÁS „MÓDSZERBELI” ÉRTELEMLEHETŐSÉGEIRŐL* in *Kérdő Jelezés – több-csendbeni alkalmazott filozófiai zajhíborítás a szabad(ság) kérdés(é)ben*, Kalligram, Pozsony, 2004, esp. p. 50 – 54.) I am grateful for my colleague Rigán Lóránd in relation to the meanings of *théma*.

the “philosophical significance” of contemporary anthropological discoveries, but: HOW DOES THE QUESTION AND INQUIRY OF “WHAT IS MAN?” BELONGS TO MAN HIMSELF IN A MODE-OF-BEING-LIKE WAY?

Therefore the “end-goal” of meditation cannot be a “general definition of man containing useful information”, nor the description of how man “occurs” – then and now. Because all kinds of conceptual “definitions” of man atomises the horizons of the *possibilities* raised by the question and its questioning, and the description of endless conditions of being of how man existed and exists offers no directions as to the ontological essence of the question of “What is man?”. Because that/this question, in fact, on the one hand historically always *simultaneises* in a being-like way, on the other hand it *opens up*.

Well, a dialogue (re)initiated with Heidegger may mean a milestone precisely in this respect. For on the one hand he problematises precisely the “concept” of MAN – radically precisely in the term of *Dasein*, of *Being-here* –, but on the other hand it does it which such a historical clarity that finally it finds it “providentially” “unsurpassable”...<sup>1</sup> Inasmuch as it proves: it is actually the man who is for Himself always *such* a “problem”... from the thinking over of which he always *escapes* or *turns away* in a mode-of-being-like way...

For this, as I have signalled, it must be proved that the question of “What is man?” is not only a “great idea” of Kant, but one in which he surfaced an essential aspect, which lurks not only in the roots and

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<sup>1</sup> So it gets back to it “by the end”.

foundations of the efforts of a philosophy “always” brought to rebirth, but actually in every mode of being in which a historical man *is*.



*Remember childhood, 2014, C-print*

But let us ask again, whose question the “What is man?” actually is, and whether he, we understand(s) this question – its amplitude and depth – when we search or give hasty “factual” answers to it?

Of course, like any other question, it is “also” a *human question*! For we do not know non-human questions. We cannot even know them, because – if by some miracle we found out about them – they would immediately become human questions.

The question of “What is man?” is a question through which the man – we – inquire about ourselves. More precisely: we inquire about ourselves with our own world.

For man, inquiry, questioning is a *mode of being* and not an accidental state in which he occasionally and possibly finds himself. The question of “What is man?”, regarding its origins, is nothing more than the self-opening of man’s self-problematic nature. For every inquiry is opening, the opening of the questioned – and the inquirer – with regard to its problematic nature. Because the question is only asked by he who is himself questionable, and only thus can anything become questionable for him. So only he can redirect or suppress his questions too.

However, we humans apply the inquiry only in a “logic” of question and answer, due also to our traditions. The quotation marks draw the attention on the fact that questioning does not have a real logic, no matter how many attempts for “correctness” or “rules” there have been for it. Gadamer’s words, which claim that there is no method that would teach how to ask a question send us to great depths...

If there is a question – says the traditional man – there must be an answer. We have been formed in our traditions so that we do not want or cannot go without – any kind of, but possibly very fast – answers. And also so that we offer in advance the answers given to the “questions” that have not be re-asked authentically. So that we no longer ask the really uncomfortable, serious questions.

This of course belongs also to the question of “What is man?” with a special emphasis! Somehow we always “know” and receive the answer for it everywhere. Or rather, the all-time surrogates of the answer. The ancient

Greeks also knew that who did not speak Greek, were not really humans, but *barbaros*. Or that a slave is merely a talking tool. The Christian also knows that a non-Christian is actually an infidel. The Muslim too, except that on the other way round. And both of them know that a man without a god (*a-theos*) cannot actually be considered a human... And that all *such people* can only be (our) enemies...

Anthropological researches actually only widen and colour man's horizons connected to his *non-knowing-himself*, to his mistaking himself, which the postmodern today sanctions as narrations with an equal value. Patriarchy also knows that the human is actually a man, and those with a "wider perspective" know that the human equals: a woman and a man, or vice-versa (the so-called "sheman" is not included, of course). And so on!<sup>1</sup>

Therefore, when the man questions himself about himself, about his nature, he somehow already knows the answer from the beginning. Because it is "given" to him, prepared for him by himself. But what else does that mean except that the man always questions and "defines" himself through fake questions?! For a question which already has a prepared answer is of course a fake question. And anthropology – although it is a human mode of being as well – mostly actually asks *How?* does man exist everywhere.

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<sup>1</sup> It should be noted that I am talking about theoretical considerations, and this is not the place to discuss the differences between various "images of man" or explicit or implicit "definitions of man", both in its social and ethical dimensions. There are significant differences, of course, for instance between the various images of man of the Islam, and that of the Islamist terrorist organizations. The same is true for Christianity, etc. (I must thank Cecilia Lippai for this insight). On terrorism, see my paper *Live – Death – Secret and Terrorism* (In: *Philobiblon – The „Lucian Blaga” Central University Library Bulletin*, Cluj University Press, Vol. XIII, 2008, p. 206-220.) **Downloadable:** [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/273131802\\_Life - Death - Secret - Terrorism](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/273131802_Life_-_Death_-_Secret_-_Terrorism)



The fake question is the repression, the dilution, the delimitation of the “real”, the authentic question in its *definition-like* answers. Because the answers mentioned above – or, more precisely, the apparent definitions – also actually derive from the question of “What is man?”. But, with respect to the question: *uncomprehendingly*. We could say that the history of mankind, of man is the history of the unavoidable and uncomprehending, and thus *bequeathed* inquiry (*recte*: answering) of the question “What is man?”. So the question itself should not be widened or focussed, but *comprehended!* For we cannot “free ourselves” from inquiring it.

The mortal – and as such, historical – man is a being who is always “problematic” and “problematizing” for himself, that is, an inquisitive-questioning being. This is how he can become a *creating* and world-forming being between other beings. It is therefore not “all the same” either for himself or for the other beings how the man “defines”, situates himself amongst them. It is not at all the same for our “environment” whether man understands and validates himself as an empowered “lord” of organic and inorganic nature. And, of course, such a thing has a historical effect on man as well.

But can we – or rather, “may” we – “give” definition-like or solution-like answers to our self-opening and being-opening question “What is man?”, while it is precisely anthropology that teaches us about the amazing (sometimes wonderful, sometimes shocking) diversity of human existence? Do we not misunderstand the question itself this way? Or rather its existential weight and ourselves as well?

The information-providing “answers” that seem to offer “solutions” are not enough for questions of existential weight. As I have repeatedly

mentioned, we cannot give any practical, non-exclusive and non-reductionist, but truly sustainable answers to the question “What is man?”... Therefore the answers corresponding to question of existential weight we must call *response*! Which *cor-responds* to the essential, permanently thematised *challenges* of the question.

So the human! question of “What is man?” must be given a *response*. Because man asks and validates his own ontological specificity in the question! For it is an essential aspect of man’s – the all-time, living, mortal man’s – ontological specificity that he is questioning... therefore a permanent “problem” for himself... The question of “What is man?” surfaces this same original and permanent aspect of existential weight. Which is asked not only since Kant, but ever since there has been man and as long as there will be man, explicitly or implicitly, in a being-like and permanent way, uncomprehendingly. And also “answered” and “solved”...

In the depths of uncomprehending lies precisely the non-understanding of the existential weight of the question and questioning. The non-understanding of the fact that it is precisely through it, because of it, and by it that man becomes man! We are who bring-to-life amidst the other beings, amidst our own life/lives.

The most appropriate *response* to the challenges, characteristics and weights of the *human* question of “What is man?” is and can only be: Man is precisely the being who makes himself, all the other beings and his existence amidst them a *happening* in a way that is questionable for all the “other” man and himself, that is: (mutually) questioning himself.

The corresponding response is therefore not the – necessarily narrowing – “answering” of a question, but “only” its mode-of-being-like,

explicit, disclosed re-questioning. This is no “small” thing, but, just like reaching ourselves, it is the most difficult.

But without it...?

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If we come to think about it more deeply, then we may realize that actually the question “What is man?” is reborn with every new man or generation, in a historically timely way. And, somehow, necessarily, it is also “answered”. If in no other way, than with prefabricated, traditional fake “answers”. By which the question is always turned in to a face question. Because man does not merely – just like everything that lives – have a finite life, but he is *mortal*.<sup>1</sup> Whether we admit it or not, this is why life has a weight and stake for us as well. Life is weightless for “immortals”. Nothing can ever endanger or threaten it. For the other living beings, life is a natural – or man-created – givenness, changed and outlined by conditions and possibilities. It is born, it grows, changes, develops, then dies. Or gets extinct. But *it does not happen!*

Only for the mortals do their lives have the weight, the difficulty and the stakes of happening. This is why the mortals look at the other beings,

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<sup>1</sup> These considerations are also inquiringly connected to Martin Heidegger’s questions. More on the question-points used as starting point in *KÉRDÉS-PONTOK a történelemhez, a halálhoz és a szabadsághoz* (Presă Universitară Clujeană, Cluj-Napoca, 2008, 254 p.) and *The Future Or Questioningly Dwells the Mortal Man... – Question-Points to Time* (**Downloadable:** [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/273322619\\_The\\_Future\\_Or\\_Questioningly\\_Dwells\\_the\\_Mortal\\_Man\\_-\\_Question-Points\\_to\\_Time\\_-](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/273322619_The_Future_Or_Questioningly_Dwells_the_Mortal_Man_-_Question-Points_to_Time_-))

the other mortals, to themselves, to their world etc. as *possibilities*<sup>1</sup> – some that can be used and some as threatening. That is, as possibilities that open up, or close down. And it is precisely why questioning is the *essence of human freedom*.<sup>2</sup> Always and everywhere articulated in a specific manner. That is, in a historical and history-creating manner. Through its particular – authentic, cor-responding or, on the contrary, wrong-going – modes of being.

The achievements of cognition, sciences, arts, technology, the establishment and perfection of religions, institutions, or philosophy itself are all human modes of being which the mortal man, or the questioning-inquisitive historical man builds up and continues as – facilitating or hindering – acceptance of his own existential weights. This way the search for sciences or scientific truths are not sets of curious observations, experiences or theories, but *human modes of being*. Which mankind develops and cultivates through its functionaries called scientists. By the cultivation of natural sciences we humans actually locate ourselves amidst nature, the universe, etc. And precisely so with regard to *possibilities*.<sup>3</sup> Therefore we do not love more the – of course “relative” and historical – truth because it is nicer or more exalted than falseness, but because it is

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<sup>1</sup> On possibility see for more details the analyses in my volume *A betegség – az élő létehetősége - Prolegoména az emberi betegség filozófiájához / Illness – A Possibility of the Living Being - Prolegomena to the Philosophy of Human Illness* (Bilingual, English-Hungarian edition, Kalligram, Pozsony, 2011, p. 204.)

<sup>2</sup> See *KÉRDÉS-PONTOK a történelemhez, a halálhoz és a szabadsághoz...*, ibid.

<sup>3</sup> We humans look even at the harshest laws of nature we discovered with regard to the *possibilities* they may offer. Including also the threatening possibilities! E.g., we examine the laws of gravity that keep constellations together precisely with regard to their use and threatening possibilities. Without it, airplanes, spaceships, even house building would be unimaginable. The flow of rivers and streams offers the possibility of sailing and mills, as also the dangers of floods.

only the truths that can make us humans reveal and outline our (more authentic) possibilities of being. Together with the dangers of things. The situation is the same of course also with human and social sciences.

Thus the original and ultimate establishment of sciences – just like any establishment (based on sufficient motivation) – cannot mean anything else than the clarification of *Why? Wherefrom?* do we humans make anything we call (historically ramified) sciences?! And the question also refers to arts, technology, religions, and institutions and forms of human relationships.

My answer based on my previous meditations and researches to this cluster of questions largely says: Because we are mortals. And because of this – or thanks to this! – we are always actually finite. And not undelimited and infinite, or dumb “omniscient”... For the case with the omniscient is the same with the immortal. Because an omniscient could only be who knows *without learning/cognition*. It is only he who does *not* know everything who is forced to the dangers and efforts of cognition. More precisely, who always does not know something he would need to know. So he asks questions and searches. And this, for him, also has an existential weight. Therefore, when he finally finds out something with efforts and danger, then he also finds out that ... he KNOWS. In contrast, the “omniscient” may know possibly everything, except the fact that he knows at all. The winding, dangerous, and usually wonderful, perplexing or shocking road to the knowledge of knowing leads only through the knowledge of not-knowing – *recte*: through inquiry, question, and its

explicit questioning. In contrast, one can hardly imagine a *dumber thing* than an “all-knowing”.<sup>1</sup>

These meditations have brought to the surface another new, original and founding aspect. Namely, that the challenging question of *Why?* do we humans actually make, as our modes of being, as particular beings, what we call sciences, arts, technology, religion, institutions and forms of human relationships, can be answered in a way that corresponds to the weight and amplitude of the question in the following way: Because man is precisely the particular being who makes himself, the beings, and his life or being conducted amidst them a *happening* for himself and the “other” beings, questioning himself through the world, in a mode-of-being-like way. This is therefore the most appropriate *response* to the essential question on the *meaning of life*, often forgotten but sometimes still revived by thinkers. Because this question of *Why?* is not *primarily* a causal question or one that refers to the reality of something, but precisely a *meaning-question*, inquiring about the foundations, the roots, and the origins.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> On the analysis of the weightless-facilitating desires of “immortality” and “omniscience”, see the Excursus entitled *Az eutanázia, avagy a méltóság(á)hoz segített halál* in the volume *Halandóan lakozik szabadságában az ember. And: Euthanasia, Or Death Assisted to (Its) Dignity* (**Downloadable:** [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/273131207\\_Euthanasia\\_Or\\_Death\\_Assisted\\_to\\_Its\\_Dignity](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/273131207_Euthanasia_Or_Death_Assisted_to_Its_Dignity) )

<sup>2</sup> On the principle of foundation and “sufficient motivation”, see *Foundation of Philosophy and Atheism in Heidegger’s Early Works – Prolegomena to an Existential-Ontological Perspective* c. tanulmányunkat [*Journal for the Study of Religions and Ideologies*, 8, 22 (Spring 2009): 115-128] (**Downloadable:** [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/49614268\\_The\\_Foundation\\_of\\_Philosophy\\_and\\_Atheism\\_in\\_Heidegger%27s\\_Early\\_Works\\_-\\_Prolegomena\\_to\\_an\\_Existential-Ontological\\_Perspective](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/49614268_The_Foundation_of_Philosophy_and_Atheism_in_Heidegger%27s_Early_Works_-_Prolegomena_to_an_Existential-Ontological_Perspective) )

**Because it is revealed that the *human!* meaning-question of Existence, and the also human, meaning-searching and meaning-giving, mode-of-being-like question of “What is man?” actually coincides with respect to their horizon, as well as their amplitude and radicality (depths and roots). For there is being and meaning of being only as long as there is a being (of any kind) who conducts their questioning life in a mode-of-being-like way. In our case: man.**

This also proves that the implicit or explicit question of “What is man?” is not any kind of disciplinary or “external” question for us, but an original, particular and foundational being-like and mode-of-being-like human-ontological aspect. Together with mortality understood explicitly in the sense of dying, and historicity deriving from it,<sup>1</sup> and freedom that articulates historicity. That is, mutually originally. *Recte*: in a co-original way.

One that – we humans – can only face through *philosophy*, while “cultivating” philosophy and understanding its meaning.<sup>2</sup>

As the Motto says with a poetical, dialogical precision: “*Rebirth is easy: my shadow also turns into ashes at times.*”

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<sup>1</sup> See the chapters of volume *Death and History* (Lambert Academic Publishing, Saarbrücken, 2015, 180p.)

<sup>2</sup> This does not mean of course that that question of “What is man?” would be a kind of question only asked at feasts, as a ceremony... or only at times when we have nothing else to do. On the contrary, ever since we have been humans, we have always stood within the – often suppressed, misunderstood – horizons of this question! So that, on the other hand, this question does not refer to any kind of “professional” field of philosophy which the “system” offers as a job for living, but to the existential-ontological origins, roots, foundations – that is, the “Why-s” – of philosophy.

So now we know more – that is, understand more authentically – about the question, this time written without quotation marks, of *What is man?* and the weight of its questioning, its stakes and the being-possibilities opened by it. Failures and/or successes...

**Translated by Emese Czintos**



## Illustrations

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#### Education

2013 – Doctor in Fine Arts at the University of Art and Design, Cluj

2010 – MA at the University of Arts and Design, Dept of Photography, Cluj, Romania

2009 – Study grant at the Academy of Art and Architecture, Prague, Czech Republic

2006 – Stipend at Summer Academy – Salzburg, class of professor Qiu Zhijie

2006 – Study grant at “Moholy- Nagy” Art University, Budapest, Hungary  
Residencies

2016 – artist in residence at Frans Masereel Centrum, Kasterlee, Belgium  
Selected group exhibitions

2016 – “Hard Candy”, Atelier Irina M, The Paintbrush Factory, Cluj, Romania

– “Almost object”, Vajda Museum, Art Capital 2016, Szentendre, Hungary

– “Emotion in motion”, Kube Musette, Bucharest, Romania

2015 – International Biennial of Minatorial Photography, With&Without, Timișoara

– “Unfinished projects”, Hungarian Cultural Center, Bucharest, Romania

2014 – International Biennial of art, Casablanca, Marocco

– “Imago Mundi – L’Arte dell’Umanità”, Treviso, Italy

– “Soul elements, elements of soul”, Latarka Gallery, Budapest  
2013 – XV International Biennial of Portrait, Tuzla, Bosnia and  
Herzegovina



*Untitled, 2014, C-print*

2010 – Art Rotterdam, “Tales of the Unexpected”, Rotterdam, NL  
2007 – “Movie in photography”, Museum of Art, Cluj

### **Selected solo exhibitions**

2016 – “Flashbacks”, Academie Royale de Beaux Arts, Bruxelles,  
Belgium  
2015 – “Intimacy”, Fabrica de Pensule, Cluj  
2012 – “Retratos de Natureza Rumena em Lisboa”, Museum of Water,  
Lisbon

## **Publications**

2016 – Barbed Magazine, no. 4/ 2016

2014 – Some Magazine, no. 8/2014

2013 – Snapshot Romania, Luciano Benetton Collection

2011 – Philobiblon, Vol. XVI, no. 2/ 2011, Cluj, Romania

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