

New Ways for Understanding: *Death and History*^{*1} – István KIRÁLY V.: *Death and History*. (Saarbrücken, Lambert Academic Publishing, 2015) 180 p.

Zsuzsanna Mariann LENGYEL
MTA-ELTE Hermeneutics Research Group
Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest

Keywords: history, philosophy, hermeneutics, death, understanding, freedom, past, future, secret, terrorism

E-mail: lengyelzsm@gmail.com

„...For, only because he dwells mortally, therefore does man dwell, and must dwell questioningly, and historically in his freedom – that is, in being, bringing to life history itself as a new dimension of being.”

István Király V. (65. p.)

Soliloquium and prolegomena. The prominent Transylvanian Hungarian philosopher István KIRÁLY V.'s most recently English volume *Death and History* (illustrated by the paintings of Teodora Cosman romanian artist) published in 2015 – in the edition of Lambert Academic Publishing House in Saarbrücken situated next to the French border in the south-west region of Germany –, which is already the eleventh monograph in his book series, occupies an important place in the lifework, in many respects too. The author this time provides an overview bringing his whole philosophical oeuvre in motion, he systematizes long years' researches along some questions that concern the present situation of our historical destiny from the perspectives of both historical ontology and political philosophy. Of course, based on the author's former self-interpretation, to this day it is valid that as an author dealing with the thing of thinking, he writes in fact „one” text,² as well as that by means of continuations, his questioning always „stands in a new light or newly sheds light on something that remained in the shadow so far”.³ Thanks to this that even the shorter or longer trains of thinking, sections already known are not mere reiteration or repetition of the sentences but they fulfill an operative function, so to speak they have an effect as an organizing principle, and thereby tectonic movements or re-alignments proceed in the path of the author's thinking.

* My research and this paper was supported by the János Bolyai Research Scholarship of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (BO/00053/13/2) and by the Research Support Office of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences in the frame of MTA–ELTE Hermeneutics Research Group.

¹ István, Király V. *Death and History* (Saarbrücken: Lambert Academic Publishing, 2015), 180 p. ISBN 978-3-659-80237-9,

² István, Király V., *KÉRDÉS-PONTOK a történelemhez, a halálhoz és a szabadsághoz* (Questioning-points to history, death and freedom) (Cluj: Presa Universitară Clujeană, 2008) 5.

³ István, Király V., *Filozófia és Itt-Lét* (Philosophy and Dasein) (Kolozsvár: Erdélyi Híradó, 1999) 5.

In the present case, it is no longer about recording the current nascent thoughts (in the form of *working paper* or *Forschungsmanuskript*), where the author still writes a *soliloquium* (a thorough hard confrontation of the soul with the very self) but the questions of being open up for the questioning man in the light of profound and carefully reviewed thoughts. Although the genre of his book is not indicated, the whole of that can be understood as a *Prolegomena* in a Kantian sense to an entirely new way of „philosophy of history”, or in author’s words: to the possibility of an ontology of history which integrates Király’s whole lifework into a unified approach. The Greek word *pro-legein*, if we literally translate into English, is equivalent to the „preface”, „introduction” or „preliminary study”, however the book goes far beyond this. Similarly to Kant’s *Prolegomena* in 1783, this is not a completely separated corpus, but a reference to the previous textus of his oeuvre, even if it has been produced (later) as a further thinking on the formers, it is no epilogue that would be the completion or the close of one of his work periods. Rather, as a *Prolegomena*, it opens toward going even more deeply down in thinking about it. Kant wanted his *Prolegomena* in this sense to be a „preparatory exercise” or a „finger-exercise” for approaching an entirely new science and a new dimension of being. To practise ourselves in it means a process what is still before us, at the same time, the primary task is not to give an introduction for beginners, but a scientific enlargement on the subject, an overview or a systematization which – in Kant’s formulation: „are not for the use of apprentices, but of future teachers”,⁴ namely for teachers who are already practised in and very familiar with the preparatory way that have been gone philosophically until now (above all in the first *Critique*). It was Ernst Cassirer (1874–1945) the leader representative of the critical German Kant-edition and the Marburg school of Neo-Kantianism according to whose interpretation – in his handbook on *Kant’s Leben und Lehre* (Kant’s Life and Thought) – Kant could not only once again fully expound for the readers the complex network of his work, but also face his completed lifework in the position of being critic in order to pick out the main threads what held the questions together as a whole.⁵ The *Prolegomena* as a genre – being this very exacting way of thinking at the same time practised by scholars in terms of lowliness – just in this sense means a *post factum* explanation, an embraceable „plan”,⁶ or a sort of first „draft”. However, there is its further characteristic represented by Kant that the *Prolegomena* is marked by an exposition according to the analytic method (desclosing the well-known tematics in a new way) in contrasted to the whole of (life)work whereas the path of thinking had to be composed according to the sythetic method so that all of its articulation might be presented before our eyes, guiding by the innermost structural organization of human faculty of cognition and experience. Cassirer so formulated that through the *Prolegomena*, Kant had inaugurated an authentic, new form of truly philosophical popularity which of course has nothing to do with the vulgar (the ordinary and the undemanding) style. Rather, it is related to ’redressing/ remedying the obscurity’⁷ and ensuring a so kind of clarity and keenness it is unrivaled among the

⁴ Immanuel Kant, *Prolegomena To Any Future Metaphysics Which Can Come Forth As Science*, ed. and trans. Gary Hatfield (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997) 5.

⁵ Cf. Ernst Cassirer, *Kant’s Life and Thought*, trans. James Haden (New Haven and London: Yale University press, 1981) 221.

⁶ Kant, *Prolegomena To Any Future Metaphysics*, 12 f.

⁷ Kant, *Prolegomena To Any Future Metaphysics*, 11.; See also Cassirer, *Kant’s Life and Thought*, 221.

writings. It is not unimportant that other thinkers in the 20th century have also written *prolegomena*, (just to mention a few examples) Husserl with the title *Prolegomena to Pure Logic* (Prolegomena zur reinen Logik) or Heidegger with *History of the Concept of Time: Prolegomena* (Prolegomena zur Geschichte des Zeitbegriffs),⁸ who attributed to high importance to that. While this way of understanding discourse has a little relevance for real sciences, in philosophy it is not only of external-propedeutic significance, but it belongs to the matter in question and it is the crucial way of approach to the „thing”.⁹ KIRÁLY’s volume – although he has only used this term within his book chapter, but there twice as well – can be named in this above outlined respect *prolegomena*, description or translation of which hardly offers itself any further equivalent word in other languages.

*

*Flowing into the happening*¹⁰: *Death and history*. From a philological perspective, this volume consisting of four major chapters and one supplementary *Appendix* has recently published selected papers (in all 12) from the achievements of research work of the latest 15 years. The majority of them have already been appeared in Hungarian or international forums (of some Rumanian, Slovakian and English journals and essay collections), at the same time, the volume was first published in the here composed and revised form (with supplementary annotations and abbreviations), accompanied by updated bibliographical documentation. These studies are organically connected with three previous monumental volumes – among his ten already published monographies, which form a part of the prominent philosophical literature in Central Europe – : namely with his 1999 *Philosophy and Dasein*, as well as his 2007 *Mortally dwells man in his freedom* and his 2008 *Questioning-points to history, death and freedom*. His major themes may be regarded: the historicity, history, life, death, temporality (i. e. the not-passing past and the future), freedom, secret and terrorism which, if going in concentric circles, there are more deepening interconnected with together by the ground motif of the title. Volume as a whole is no other than asking for our being-situation changed in the age of globalization, in other words: turning towards something what is happening to us, then getting into this occurrence, and really thinking about the horizon which remains unthinkable in everyday use of the words, however, not by statements or responses (*assertion*), but by placed in the modality of questioning, enquiry, call for thinking and inspiring us to think (*interrogation*). Real understanding and openness related to the truth have a question-nature in these texts, namely they are present in a way that we are getting ever closer to unsettling questions and philosophically yet unexplored fields of

⁸ See Edmund Husserl, *Logische Untersuchungen. Erster Band. Prolegomena zur reinen Logik*, Husserliana Bd. 18. 7. Aufl. (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1993). Martin Heidegger, *Prolegomena zur Geschichte des Zeitbegriffs*, Gesamtausgabe Bd. 20. Hrsg. Petra Jaeger (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1979).

⁹ It is important that all prolegomena also have a critical side, the *Prolegomena* by Kant can be read as a response to the contemporary reviews devoted to the examination of *The Critique of Pure Reason*, then the *Prolegomena* includes a critique on psychologism in Husserl’s case, and a profound critical analysis of the Husserlian phenomenology in Heidegger’s case. However, it is not worth to overemphasize this aspect of *Prolegomena*, because by its nature, it is not a pamphlet.

¹⁰ In other words, we may say: “*Thrown in the event*” or “*Getting into the occurrence*”.

experience. In doing so, we ourselves are clearly at stake, that is, whether we will once understand or lose our own humanity.

One of the great merits of the volume, what cannot be underestimated, lies in the fact that it is not moving within the horizon of the traditional philosophy of history, but is asking for those basis. The author tries to make it thematic what the historiographical researches rather only presuppose or represent by themselves, but they never formulate thematically. It is about the thing that by its nature all historical researches deal with the death insofar as the events of the past and the dead people become the matter of history, therefore the death counts as a „constant” of the history, but the ontological significance of this basic context usually remains hidden. Essentially, the interconnectedness between death and history has been started to thematize primarily famous French historians such as for example Philippe Aries, Luis Vovelle, Vincent-Luis Thomas or Pierre Chaunu during the 1960s – 1970s. However, the word conjunction and interference of *Death and History* here do not simply mean that it would be about any kind of „problematization” of the death by historiology whereas something like death can be historically accessed or death also has its history. Rather the main reason of this primacy of death and that of the privileged understanding and research of death may actually be that without death it cannot be conceived of how history and historicity belong to us in existential-ontological respect. It is the fundamental question or the most important *interrogation* (basis for question) of the author why and whereby has man history at all? Why do we all exist as historical beings? Generally, what does it mean for us to get back to the roots and genesis of history?

Investigated the *Leviathan* of Thomas Hobbes and Heidegger’s early works (among others the *Natorp-essay* of 1922 and *Being and Time* as well), and discovered the possibility of new intercrossing the two kind of traditions which seem to be far from together, in the first chapter (*Human Finitude and History – Prolegomena to the Possibility of a „Philosophy of History” and Ontology of History*, 3–66.) it happens after all nothing else than the thinking of the history from „its beginning” and „its end”. For Hobbes it is the fear of death inseparably connected to self-reservation that proves itself to be a dynamizing factor of human history (war and peace) in the fields of state, law and morals, while for Heidegger it is the authentic human being-toward-death (our temporal finitude) that utterly lays the hidden foundations of our historical being and thus human history itself. The guiding idea, which is articulated in the shadows of these two mentioned thinkers, can be summarised so that without our mortality and its awareness „probably there would be no society, nor history, nor future or hope” (*Rotar Marius*). (7.) Why not? Because in life of „immortal being”, nothing can be happened, in this way inevitable that such a life cannot have a history (past or future), nor have a destiny. Philosophy first of all can give an insight into that we still know nothing about transcendence and dignity of death so far. A metaphysics of immortality in fact does not ask for the real stake of our human being. This stake lies in the fact that by its nature man will only become a „mortal” and a really historical being through his being-toward-death (some awareness of death). If we, however, do not exist as a historical, then naturally, we can well create and imaginary a wide variety of metaphysics of immortality, turned the question towards the direction of epistemology... But this is not solution. In fact, we must face that there is here not a problem to be solved, but a

problem to be sublimed.¹¹ Heidegger also rather gives a high priority to that: how are we historical? How are we to be authentically or non-authentically as a historical being? Kant has already made it clear, about concepts such as „God”, „immortality” and „freedom”, which extend over all our occurrent experiences and are not objects of our *sensuous intuition*, we can have not more than abstract ideas that are useful as „regulative principles”, that is to say, they give a guidance to our will and molarity. If anybody wants to empirically verify those validity through experience – in the manner of historical knowledge – we may say that he has not really understood, what is about. Instead of these ways of escape, it rather becomes a decisive question whether we have clearly understood our mortality what means that it makes us historical? It raises the question whether we should not first become mortal if we would like to live in „faith of immortality”.

„So in order to understand hope, first we must [...] understand death”.¹² (Cf. 141.) KIRÁLY also points out that no matter how strange it may sound, biological birth does not make us a „mortal” human being, and thereby it makes us no historical either. It is a mistake to think that we would be in advance „mortal” or „immortal”. It is neither one, nor the other case with any one of us. Such a view would be a passive understanding – without freedom – of the human existence. My mortal human existence itself (*Selbst*), I am looking for, is not from the beginning, in the beginning I am not really myself but its potentiality to be my own Self-being, only if the voice of conscience gives me to understand in calling and I listen to its voice, by following it, then I will find myself as a mortal. This direction of question may be regarded as a sign of the protest against the practice of therapeutic philosophizing (consolation). KIRÁLY’s intention is to finally get out of that insufficient schematism prevailing until now of conception of history, which – according to the theologian Karl Löwith – is characteristic of an inevitable impossibility to free oneself from the theological “scheme” (32.). He calls attention to the fact that during “the age of terror” in the very centre of discourse of globalization, the notions of immortality are no longer *pharmakon* (medicine), rather poison. In fact, death does not mean a pure loss of perspective, a mere passage or a simple termination of life, which would be an existential failure or unretrievable medical malpractice, but it is what “can directly give vision to life” (15.).¹³ It is the awareness of our mortality that allows us to live a more humane life, while its denying gives birth to illusions and utopias, it can lead world wars – as we have already seen so often in history.

*

History and Memory - Historia vitae magistra. The second chapter („*Had-been-ness*” and *Past – History and Memory* 67–108.) – in the frame of applicated philosophical-

¹¹ Cf. István Fehér M. “Sorsesemény és narratív identitás”, *Magyar Filozófiai Szemle* 59, no. 4 (2015): 11–46., here: 21 f: At this place, I applied Fehér’s argumentation. He points out in an other context that for Heidegger, Self-identity (Dilthey, Ricoeur) is a problem to be sublimed (as well as the justification of the existence of an external world) rather than a problem to be solved.

¹² István Király V., *Halandóan lakozik szabadságában az ember* (Mortally dwells man in his freedom) (Pozsony: Kalligram, 2007) 307.

¹³ Cf. Martin Heidegger, “Phenomenological Interpretations with Respect to Aristotle: Indication of the Hermeneutical Situation”, *The New Yearbook for Phenomenology and Phenomenological Philosophy* ed. by Theodore Kisiel and Thomas Sheehan. No. 9 (2009): 144–182, here: 158.

hermeneutical dialogue with Heidegger – explores the questions of history and memory about our (problematic) relations to the past. The author's thesis is that the psychological and literary techniques, the methods in historical sciences, even more, based on time-analysis in Saint Augustine's *Confessions*, in the 20th century the philosophical approaches of Husserl, Heidegger and Sartre miss the understanding of the past. These points of view will no longer provide us with sufficient grounds for answering the most serious issues of the recent past. Today – after the world wars of the 20th century, after the events at Auschwitz and the experience of inhumanity – in the „age of terrorism” and that of contingency we have need of the renewal of our questioning and the reinterpreting of our modes of perception about the past. The past hides rather than reveals itself for us. There is something essential we do not know about it and about the way how we should relate to it. In the heart of the problem, however, it is hidden primarily not epistemological but existential-ontological thematics. For the author, the main problem lies in the fact that we failed to get rid of it that, with the help of memory, we attempt to „represent” the past and overcome the temporal distance, but in this way we never ask for the being in the depths of the past but only for the issue of the time, namely within the frame of an approach that Derrida justly called the *metaphysics of presence* (*metaphisique de la présence*).

We cannot completely understand the past, without being involved in special problems of no-longer-existence, „no-longer-now” and the „never” connected to it, in sum: without thinking about Nothing. From the direction of Nothing, it becomes visible what it means that even power of God cannot alter the past and consider it cancelled or do it something what is “had-not-happened”. The second chapter opens the horizon – through Heidegger's exposition of the “phenomenon of guilt (*Schuld*)” in § 58 of *Being and Time* – for two ways of the recent understanding of the past: this is the *Had-been-ness* and the *Past*. According to the warning of the author: in order to become really past what was once in the past, it is not enough to merely remember to the past, or to regularly speak of it, to know about it and to represent it what passed, but rather the “had been” must be made to pass, we must make it past – in an ontological view, all other alternatives lead us astray. On the other hand, the Past is not given to us immediately and it is impossible to simply contemplate that what had been, because the “Had-been-ness” does not become automatically the “Past” and it does not of itself pass. Saving the past is something what only happens by really passing of the past and making it past, this is an enormous taste before which we must see the possibility of making it past at all, without this it remains an un-passing past what comes to dominate the present as well, but not simply so that our past is still lasting, but it is in something special way that the past haunts, it does not pass, on the contrary: it does deeper. It is one of the foundations of the critical revisions of psychoanalysis that the un-passing past, which the author named a mere “Had-been-ness”, is still domineering over us as a macabre or dangerous „past”. “To make something that Had-Been pass, is an existential human task and philosophy must open horizons for it.” (90.) The historical knowledge of the past is of course required, but not enough, because this seems to be only a necessary precondition of the understanding of the past.

The Future, Or, To Dwell Questioningly. In the chapter three (*The Future, or, Questioning Dwells the Mortal Man*, 109–132.) also outlined in dialogue with Heidegger, essential aspects of our relations to the time and the future come to the fore

such as for example the escaping future (that is nothing else than escaping death), the waiting, the Self-anticipation, the running forth towards the possibility, the planning, the hope, the prediction etc. The author briefly outlines, by making some references, the three directions of current researches: these are 1) a new scholarly discipline, the study of the future (futurology) in the social sciences; 2) the philosophical meaning and significance of desire (wishes, *desideratum* and *conatus* as an aspiration of life), which the French phenomenology started rediscovering and discussing along the psychological and moral functions of that; and moreover 3) the salvation historical-eschatological horizon related to the future of religion, which tries to think of the human being from a point of view of immortality. In the meanwhile, an own perspective of the author is also outlined, which is not satisfied with the result of the mentioned researches. The future becomes a hermeneutical and historical basic concept in the way that it does not refer to the facts, the modes of givenness or evidence and the surenesses, but it opens up as a possibility of our being, what is more, directly as a “task” to be performed, and therefore it cannot be understood without the dimensions of the possibility of death, questioning and freedom. It is the ground thesis appeared by the author that the meaning is first of all always interconnected to the future, even the meaning originating from tradition gains its pregnancy and its meaningfulness with regard to the future as well. Therefore “the loss of meaning is always coupled with the loss of future, and the loss of future is always coupled with the loss of meaning. And together with this, or rather precisely because of this, there are always *possibilities of existence being lost*.” (136. f. in note 4.) The essence of the future as an primacy and ultimate possibility of our being (summarised: the ends and the limits at the edges) “– for us people – is actually only opened up and exhibited by philosophy alone”, (137.) not by science (which at most can determine and assess these), not by technology (which fills these up and prolongs them), not by politics (which settles or uses them), not by art (which tunes and re-tunes the world) and not by religion (which consoles us).

Thanatological Sensitivity: Philosophy, Theology and “A-theism”. Through further thinking of these consequences, chapter four (*The Foundation of Philosophy and Atheism in Heidegger’s Early Works*, 143–158.) attempts to sketch and explore the direction in what way the interrelation of “death and history” is concerned with the “foundations” of philosophy itself and the problem of its “Self-actualization” which Leibniz formulated as the principle of the sufficient reason (*principium rationis sufficientis*). As a starting point of these considerations appears ‘Aristotle Introduction’ of 1922 (the so-called ‘Natorp essay’) written by the young Heidegger – simultaneously submitted as a candidature for two posts of extraordinary professor, rejected by the University of Göttingen, however accepted at the University of Marburg due to the positive reviews about this manuscript by Paul Natorp and Nicolai Hartmann –, what Gadamer named “Heidegger’s theological early work (Heidegger »theologische« Jugendschrift)”.¹⁴ Furthermore, the essay entitled *On the Essence of the Ground* in 1929 can be read as the continuation of this early meditation in which is revealed more originally and more extensively the issue of the world, of the transcendence and of freedom, by means of the problem of ground. Even the young Heidegger has not

¹⁴ Hans-Georg Gadamer, “Heidegger »theologische« Jugendschrift”, in *Dilthey-Jahrbuch* no. 6 (1989): 228–234.

conceived of the task of the “foundation” of philosophy by presenting it as a kind of original or primordial science (*Urwissenschaft*), but as a return into its factual, historical-existential origin and meaning of philosophizing, as being inside and between (*inter esse* in Latin). Philosophy as founding – in this sense – is questioning about it: why is philosophy at all? And what can be the sense of this human activity? KIRÁLY renders full radicality being in Heidegger’s response visible: also our *mortal* being means the foundation and origin of philosophy as well as ethics, deontology, legal systems or any kind of scientific research. These activities make alone sense for us *mortals*, therefore it is painful omission that the Greek Christian Tradition seeks for the possibilities of own self-interpretation from the direction of metaphysics of immortality, in this way it can never be faced with the certainty about death, that is, this tradition conceives of the death without dying. By means of precluding the specifically Christian denominational contents, Heidegger’s purpose is not at all to make philosophy unreligious-irreligious or to deprive piety of one, but a deeper hermeneutics of the ground structures of life. I think worth highlighting that both in his 1920/21 lecture course series published with the title *Phänomenologie des religiösen Lebens* (The Phenomenology of Religious Life) and in his ‘Aristotle Introduction’ of 1922, Heidegger regarded as a model the eschatological conception of time of the primal Christian life experience described by the Apostle Paul, i.e. the kairological experience of time (see Paul’s letter to the Galatians and his first and second letters to the Thessalonians), and starting from this, he picked out the most radical form of confronting with death as well. After taking up Adolf von Harnack’s “theme of the calamitous Hellenization of Christian theology”,¹⁵ contrary to the Christianity, Heidegger criticizes the theology (first of all the system of Catholicism), since he considers it as a counter-point of the primal Christian life experience in which has been pushed the innermost core of believing life into the background. In the light of this critique of theology, philosophy can reach the headwaters region of his own questions only if it becomes free from pressure by theology, in other words: only if it is “essentially atheistic” (*grundsätzlich atheistisch ist*).¹⁶ (quoted: 155.) This atheism is however not related to the content, but of “principle-based”, methodological character where it can be abstracted from all usually meanings of this expression. The *a-theism* is similar to the word combination of *a-létheia* (α-λήθεια as an unconcealment, *Unverborgenheit*) which does not mean the negation of truth, but with the help of an alpha privative (“α”) the opening up of a more original experience of truth so that this notion of truth goes far beyond the truth understood in the sense of *adaequatio rei* (as a *Satzwahrheit* or a statement corresponding to the thing or objective reality) and it can grasp the happening of truth as the truth of the being.

On the model of this, the term *a-theos* (ἀθεός) means neither godlessness, nor unbelief, it has nor anything to do with irreligiosity, but it is a constructive momentum within the religiosity, a thinking comportment by which the human existence remains

¹⁵ Hans-Georg Gadamer, “Heideggers Wege”, in *Gesammelte Werke 3*. (Tübingen: J. C. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1987) 313. On this issue, see also István Fehér M., “Létmegértés és filozófia – hit és teológia” (Understanding of Being and Philosophy – Faith and Theology) in Bakos Gergely (szerk.) *Teória és praxis között, avagy a filozófia gyakorlati arcáról* (Between Theory and Practice, or On the Practical Side of Philosophy) (Budapest: L’Harmattan – Sapiientia Szerzetesi Hittudományi Főiskola, 2011), 71–118. essentially: 99–116.

¹⁶ Heidegger, “Phenomenological Interpretations with Respect to Aristotle: Indication of the Hermeneutical Situation”, 161.

open and one can avoid visions and ideological closing to any kind of movement or worldview. The “*a-theism*” of philosophy only means “raising its hand against God” in a way that: it reminds us of the thought *Deus absconditus* (Isaiah 45, 15) missing God or living in privation of God. To tune ourselves to absence of God however is no more and no less than to be open and thereby it allows us no longer to want to speak about Him as a subject what is transcendent or to do anthropology, but we allow us to be transcendence of God: as His drawing back from the world, concealing Himself and His basic uncommunicableness. Consequently, philosopher is the man who similarly to Socrates does not repress the most important questions and the search derivating from the mortal human being, because from the beginning he is aware of his ignorance (in the manner of *docta ignorantia*). The awareness of our mortality gives the weight back to the things and can give vision to the present and the past, while the ideas of immortality intensify the falling tendencies of life, those result is a metaphysical reassurance that is dangerous: leading to mere dreamy enthusiasm (*Schwärmerei*) or *wishful thinking* against which the young Kant has already struggled as well, and just it is the critique of reason that he has regarded as the most effective antiserum.¹⁷

*

The Age of Terrorism. In conclusion, a supplementary discussion is linked with the previous subjects (*Appendix. Life – Death – Secret – Terrorism*, 159–172.), which specifies one of the most topical problems concerning the future of Europe and the life today: the question of terrorism. According to the author, in an interview made by Giovanna Borradori, after September 11, 2001 hardly accidentally, both Jürgen Habermas and Jacques Derrida reminds us that the war on terrorism “is waged against an actually unknown enemy”, that is to say, we do not really know what we are up against (160.).¹⁸ All of this – based on the train-of-thought of the author – illustrates even how incapable and unready the contemporary philosophy is also to really face the mentioned problems of our present and future, while it continuously offers the so-called social and political criticism. It becomes questionable whether it is really enough to analyse religion, nationalistic or political fanaticism in order to sketsch and “understand” the terrorism operating in secret and by means of the secret. This well indicates among others that the terrorism appears as a special form of dominion over death and life which can only exist by means of the instrumentalizing denial of death. Furthermore, the essence of terror or terrifying is that it organizes itself by nature in the atmosphere and horizon of the secret (against the possibility of identificableness). KIRÁLY points out that “people would at least more seldom blow – and generally kill – one another and themselves up if they understood that their single life is finite, in other words: uncontinuable and unrepeatable as well; if they did not deny death, their death”. (171.) It is worth to meditate with the aim of the further thinking upon that in fact, “the war on

¹⁷ Kant, *Prolegomena*, 134.: “Fanaticism, which cannot make headway in an enlightened age except by hiding behind a school metaphysics, under the protection of which it can venture, as it were, to rave rationally, will be driven by critical philosophy from this its final hiding place” See in detail István Fehér M., „Metafizika és észkritika” (Metaphysics and Critique of Reason), *Világosság* No. 10–11–12. (2004): 51.

¹⁸ On this question, see in more detail: Giovanna Borradori, ed., *Philosophy in the Time of Terror. Dialogues with Jürgen Habermas and Jacques Derrida* (Chicago: University Of Chicago Press, 2004).

terrorism (too) should / must widened into a ‘fight’ against the denial of death. A fight which should / must be fought (after all) not only and not exclusively [...] on the secret fields, but, on the contrary, in the depth and womb of history”, by means of the transformation of the present day thinking on human. (171.) However, the denial of death is not recent, what is more, this is surely the place of origin of the known from long ago and never surpassed *contemptus mundi*: the contempt of the world, or the hatred of the “world”. It is something that we mortals could never permit for ourselves. (138.) From both writer and life historical perspectives, it is important that in this chapter at the same time, the essential relationship must be created between two fundamental topics of KIRÁLY, namely between the secret and the death which surfaced in the very first his works of the early 1980s¹⁹ and then in his 1986 article.²⁰ Because of the censorship in that time, the majority of his works concerning the research of secret was published only in the 1996 Hungarian essay volume *Határ – Hallgatás – Titok* [Limit – Silence – Secret],²¹ and monographically in his 2001 Romanian doctoral dissertation *Fenomenologia existențială a secretului Încercare de filosofie aplicată*. (The Existential Phenomenology of the Secret. Applied Philosophical Essay).²² In these complex works, various aspects become visible: 1) the phenomenological approaches of the secret related to the concealment and unconcealment of being; 2) the analysis of the categorial structure of secret in the direction that one is inability to die in metaphysical and religious tradition; finally 3) the analysis of the secret as one of the possible key-concepts of social philosophy and history, whereby it may be disclosed that the secret is present not only in extreme cases, but one of the basic organizing principles of the operational mechanisms of societies. The writings will be a crucial significance for the most recent researches.

In summary, based on the above mentioned topics, I heartily recommend KIRÁLY’s profound new book *Death and History*, which sheds light on the basic problems of current philosophical thought of history, for both the research professionals and the wider reading public interesting in history and philosophy.

¹⁹ See e. g. István Király V., “A titokról” (On the Secret), in *A Bábel tornyán* (București: Editura „Kriterion”, 1983) 181–190.

²⁰ István Király V., “A titok és kategóriális szerkezete” (The Secret and Its Categorial Structure), *Magyar Filozófiai Szemle* (= *Hungarian Philosophical Review*) (1986/ 1-2): 76–85.

²¹ István Király V., *Határ – Hallgatás – Titok* (Limit – Silence – Secret) (Kolozsvar: „Komp-Press” – Korunk Baráti Társaság, 1996).

²² István Király V., *Fenomenologia existențială a secretului Încercare de filosofie aplicată*. (The Existential Phenomenology of the Secret. Applied Philosophical Essay) (Pitești: Paralela ’45 Könyvkiadó, 2001).