

Eötvös Loránd University
Faculty of Humanities

**DOCTORAL
THESES**

Zsuzsanna Mariann Lengyel

The Hermeneutics of Finitude

**The Time as a Philosophical Problem in Martin Heidegger's
Path of Thinking**

Philosophy Doctoral School
Dr. János Kelemen CMHAS. Director of the Institute, full professor
Hermeneutics Program
Dr. István M. Fehér, CMHAS. full professor

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1. The aim of my dissertation and defining the theme

The chosen theme of my dissertation is exploring the time as a philosophical problem in Martin Heidegger's thinking from a point of view which can shed light on the connection between time experience and hermeneutic thinking.

In terms of content, I make an attempt to interpret Heidegger's approach of time which I call hermeneutic. For this reason, immediate primary aim of my work is a philosophical-historical reconstruction.¹ Each chapter shows that Heidegger had to face the time problem at every period of his way of thinking. This question was an unavoidable challenge for him, to which he persistently returned over and over again, exploring the different dimensions of time-experience. In this respect, the dissertation is based on the recognition that examining certain stage of the Heideggerian life-work alone is not enough, since the time seems a key moment which covers the Heidegger's whole philosophy with different emphasis, in addition, being so complex and layered, it includes also the determining tensions of this philosophy. This is the reason why we consider not only the Heidegger of *Being and Time* but the whole Heideggerian way of the question of Being. The personal intention of this investigation is to outline the basic tendencies of Heidegger's time conception and gain an insight into its systematic connections, therefore, the chapters of the dissertation show the time problem through the most significant turning points of the Heideggerian philosophy. In doing this, the analysis attempts to open the way for an interpretation according to which the changes of emphasis in the time experience do not exclude or replace each other within philosopher's life-work but they approach the different aspects of a comprehensive phenomenon which can only together describe the tense dynamic of the time experience.

¹ I propose to investigate the following volumes: The **early Heidegger**: *Frühe Schriften*, Hrsg.: F.-W. von Herrmann, Klostermann, Frankfurt am Main, 1978. The **young Heidegger**: *Phänomenologie des religiösen Lebens*, Hrsg.: Matthias Jung, Thomas Regehly und Claudius Strube, Klostermann, Frankfurt am main, 1995.; *Phänomenologische Interpretationen zu Aristoteles. Einführung in die phänomenologische Forschung*, Hrsg.: W. Bröcker, K. Bröcker-Oltmans, Klostermann, Frankfurt am Main, 1985.; *Ontologie. (Hermeneutik der Faktizität)*, Hrsg.: K. Bröcker-Oltmans, Klostermann, Frankfurt am Main, 1988.; *Der Begriff der Zeit*, Hrsg.: F.-W. von Herrmann, Klostermann, Frankfurt am Main, 2004.; *Einführung in die Phänomenologische Forschung*, Hrsg.: F.-W. von Herrmann, Klostermann, Frankfurt am Main, 1994.; *Prolegomena zur Geschichte des Zeitbegriffs*, Hrsg.: P. Jaeger, Klostermann, Frankfurt am Main, 1979.; *Logik. Die Frage nach der Wahrheit*, Hrsg.: W. Biemel, Klostermann, Frankfurt am Main, 1976.; *Phänomenologische Interpretation von Kants Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, Hrsg.: I. Görland, Klostermann, Frankfurt am Main, 1977.; *Seminare*, Hrsg.: Curd Ochswadt, Klostermann, Frankfurt am Main, 1986. **1927-1930**: *Sein und Zeit*, Niemeyer, Tübingen, 1993.; *Die Grundprobleme der Phänomenologie*, Hrsg.: F.-W. von Herrmann, Klostermann, Frankfurt am Main, 1975.; *Kant und das Problem der Metaphysik*, Klostermann, Frankfurt am Main, 1951.; *Metaphysische Anfangsgründe der Logik im Ausgang von Leibniz*, Hrsg.: Klaus Held, Klostermann, Frankfurt am Main, 1978.; *Die Grundbegriffe der Metaphysik. Welt – Endlichkeit – Einsamkeit*, Hrsg.: F.-W. von Herrmann, Klostermann, Frankfurt am Main, 1983. The **later Heidegger**: *Zur Sache des Denkens*, Niemeyer, Tübingen, 1969.; *Beiträge zur Philosophie (Vom Ereignis)*, Hrsg.: F.-W. von Herrmann, Klostermann, Frankfurt am Main, 1989.; *Besinnung*, Hrsg.: F.-W. von Herrmann, Klostermann, Frankfurt am Main, 1997.; *Zollikoner Seminare*, Hrsg.: M. Boss, Klostermann, Frankfurt am Main, 1987.

In addition, a *methodological point of view* is added to the textual analysis. On this second level the main task of the analysis is the hermeneutic approach of the time experience. In this sense, the present dissertation is not limited to reconstruct the content of Heidegger's understanding or to interpret his philosophical conception but is important for itself to see the time problem in the light of Heidegger's hermeneutic position, deduces the guiding principle from this.

Finally, on a third and even more fundamental level, the analysis serves the purpose to examine the essential connection between time experience and hermeneutic thinking through the outline of the history of development – always parallel with and inseparable from it. In this respect, the dissertation endeavours to explore the *hermeneutics of finitude*. In this context, the hermeneutics of finitude expresses that in terms of the Heideggerian conception the hermeneutic experience of being does not exist without understanding the limits of human existence, being aware of our own finitude, appropriating our temporality.

Considering the reception, Heidegger's approach of time, this for a long time neglected topic is getting into the centre of research recently, while phenomenology and its latest receptions devote detailed analyses to the time problem. Up to now, mainly such monographies have appeared which did not discuss Heidegger's time conception in itself but indirectly, in comparison with other thinkers (Husserl, Kirkegaard, Kant, Bultmann, Barth). Prior to these, it is remarkable that the contemporary phenomenological and hermeneutical interpretations provided also critique of Heidegger's time analysis. The in this way elaborated corrections are entirely reliable and necessary as well, yet at the same time they are limited in terms of interpretation because they do not (and cannot) take Heidegger's whole enterprise into consideration. In most cases (for instance for Lévinas, Sartre, Gadamer, Ricoeur or Bultmann) the Heideggerian time concept was not the topic of analysis but rather its starting point, which offering the possibility of approach and move-away, helped to realise their own point of view, presented the necessary contrast. Finally, it served as a reference point in the field of which the plausibility and expected performance of a new interpretation was measurable. As a result of this, the possibility of an absorbed and comprehensive interpretation of Heidegger's time concept was neglected by contemporary thinkers as well. Certain details of his time concept are well-known due to these precedents, however, my aim in the present dissertation is to exhibit the field of research in the background, which was left unexplored in detail.

2. The structure of my dissertation and outline of the applied method

In the frame of the above-mentioned connection I wish to elaborate the time question *in four steps*.

First, the actual explication of the Heideggerian world of thinking is preceded by a **preliminary overview (1)** which outlines the fundamental viewpoints providing suitable background for the Heideggerian approach of the time question. The methodological and textual analyses in this introduction is based on Heidegger's understanding. The **methodological part** of the first chapter shows that Heidegger does not only propose to answer the content of time question but it becomes also important for him to working out a philosophical attitude which gives access to time. Based on the Heideggerian starting point, the dissertation points out three fundamental moments. First of all, it becomes visible that in the investigation of the time experience, despite the differences, the hermeneutical and phenomenological processes imply complementary moments with together in an unified philosophical approach. In a second step, my study discusses, that our way of thinking about time cannot fellow the same way as how we create consciousness about objects. There is a method for thematising time in which it does not become „thing-like“, just understood as experience. This is the interpretation of time as a phenomenon to which, contrary to the modern reflection-philosophy, hermeneutic understanding gives in a third step access. The **content part** of the first chapter shows that in terms of the connection between time and death what significant turning points there were in the history of time-philosophy *from Heidegger's viewpoint*. In the course of the analysis, the metaphysical, existence-philosophical, hermeneutical and phenomenological approaches of time separate from each other, above all with an introductory and summarisig character.

In the second chapter, in which the genesis of Heidegger's time concept comes into light, I intend to point out that in terms of the time problem Heidegger already takes the crucial step before *Being and Time*. The **first part** of the second chapter (2.1.) examines in the earliest Heidegger's writings (1910-1916) the special aspects which made the time problem emphatic for him. In the beginning, Heidegger's original thoughts unfold from rethinking the contemporary problem situations, first along the lessons of debate on psychologism, then the rediscovery of the scholastic language philosophy. The dissertation starts from the fact that the first references to time indicate first of all that Heidegger regards philosophy as experience analysis. In doing so, however, he distances himself from the beginning from the empirical experience-concept of psychologism, which does not

accept the existence of any apriori. Heidegger takes the extended experience-concept of anti-psychologism as a basis, which shows that there is a difference between temporal and apriori, psychical and logical, sensuous and categorial, and in the spite of connection between the two spheres they must be clearly separated from each other. Heidegger begins to expound this wider experience-concept at the time with the help of the Catholic theology which tried to connect the old ontological tradition and the transcendental philosophy of the German idealism through actualising the Scholastic language philosophy. At first, Heidegger tries also to unite the Platonic tradition with Hegel's historical viewpoint and Rickert's theory of the logical validity of supra-temporal value, yet he gives up this idea around 1919, because he does not see anything else but metaphysical dualism in the union of the two different position. For Heidegger the turn from logic to grammatism meant the starting point to his critique of metaphysics and the extension of the notion of „thinking“. Through grammatism, which includes not only the logical aspects of the language but it sheds also light on its ontological dimension, it becomes clear that the one-sided epistemological-logical disposition does not make the formulating of the ultimate philosophical questions possible.

The **second part** of chapter two (2.2.) discusses that in the following period (1919-1923) Heidegger is starting to turn his attention to the experience of factual life. At this time, Aristotle has great significance for him, since according to Heidegger, in contrast to Husserl, his philosophy is not restricted to the field of theoretising but through the phronesis interpretation in Book 6. of the *Nicomachean Ethics* (1139a-1145a) he elaborated the truth of praxis determined by the situation. The transformation of pure logical perspective into hermeneutics happens in his 1925/26 lecture entitled *Logik. Die Frage nach der Wahrheit* (GA 21.) through Aristotle's reinterpreted logos concept. Heidegger realises that for the ontological knowledge the apophantic logos is not enough, in which the truth is described through formal-logical statements and it is the sphere of the meaning of judgements: the sense of the content is not clarified. The temporal ontic-existent meaning of the timeless logical sense must be turned into a problem as well. This goes through in the hermeneutic logos, where the truth becomes direct experience. In the young Heidegger's lectures besides Aristotle, the hermeneutics of factual life, which mainly appears in the early Christian communities, becomes even more radical through the experience of khairos (moment) known from Christian eschatology.

The **third part** of chapter two (2.3.) points out that Heidegger does not go on his way in this direction. In contrast with the hermeneutics of facticity, which focused on the

question of existence, in the Marburg lectures (1923-1928) the ontological problem comes into light. While at the level of existence (*quaestio facti*) the key of time-analysis is discovering our authentic self instead of losing the self, of the ontological question (*quaestio iuris*) is searching for the solution of the transcendence-problem. It is remarkable and determining that studying and reinterpreting Husserl's three fundamental findings, especially the *categorial intuition* and the *a priori* had a crucial influence on Heidegger. As a result, from the year of 1925/26 Aristotle is abandoned and Kant's theory of schematisation of concepts including time-references appears. Husserl's categorial intuition was important to Heidegger because it made the statement of the connection between temporal and apriori possible. This positive motif of Husserl's phenomenology shows the way to a new, phenomenological interpretation of Kant's understanding. The main point of the Heideggerian investigation is that he approves Kant's transcendental starting point, which asks about the apriori conditions of experience, however, he distances from the programme of his transcendental logic, where Kant sees a solution in contrasting the two spheres of phenomena and noumena.

Based on this, the **main part of the dissertation** thematizes (3.) whether there is a way for Heidegger which leads from the temporality of Dasein, human being to the sense of being. In *Being and Time* (1927) and in *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology* (1927) Heidegger endeavours to entirely elaborate the temporal interpretation of Being, the interpretation of which forms the main part in my study. The most important characteristic of this conception is that Heidegger does not analyse the temporality of Dasein in the frame of a philosophical anthropology but as the key and preparation for a fundamental-ontological ground-laying. In the concept of time, Heidegger constitutes the central motifs of his own fundamental-ontological programme, the analysis of which gains paradigmatic significance in terms of the whole planned philosophical structure of the main work. The dissertation considers how the different time levels integrate into Heidegger's whole fundamental-ontological programme. What role the different meanings play in *Being and Time* as a whole? The highest-level problem is how the different meaning-layers of time, their hierarchical deduced layers connect with each other and how we can interpret the intimately connection between them and their compatibility. This is exactly what makes the coherence and realisation of his programme so doubtful for Heidegger.

First of all, Heidegger tried to outline and explicate in the most complete form the hermeneutic interpretation of time in the mentioned two work, in *Being and Time* and *The*

Basic Problems of Phenomenology. As it is known, these texts belong together in a specific sense.

The main work approaches the original temporality of human being (**Zeitlichkeit**) from the authentic being-toward-death unfolding in anxiety disposition, and then discovers its fundamental structures. It is at this individuality-sensitive level, where self-identity and our own being qua can-be are at stake, that Heidegger elaborates his well-known thanatological time concept. Next, my study makes it clear that his historicity chapter (**Geschichtlichkeit**) is not an unnecessary addition either, which finally concretises the temporality of human existence in its own completeness. This is where the whole interpretation of the finitude of temporality is confirmed. In connection with the temporality of Being (**Temporalität**), however, his main work includes only a few references and we cannot find an elaborated conception. Heidegger would have liked to elaborate the continuation of the schematism theory in the third part of *Being and Time*, however, he did not complete this part. Yet, we can partially discuss the temporality-problem because in his 1927 course of lectures, Heidegger tried to reconsider the unpublished chapter of *Being and Time* entitled „Time and Being“. While the elaboration of time-structure of human being needed a thematisation emphasising the authentic selfness, Heidegger tried to extract the problem of temporality from the supremacy of the question of authenticity and selfness. The temporality-chapter of the dissertation points out that through temporality, Heidegger no longer investigates the self-constitution of time as subjectivity but the possibility-condition of understanding of being and contacting world, which goes beyond subjectivity. In fact, the thematisation of the temporality concept leads to the roots of the transcendence-problem, with which Heidegger tries to contribute to the solution of the schematism-problem.

The incompleteness of the early main work, however, is related to the fact that later Heidegger gave up on the task of the ultimate philosophical ground-laying. It is exactly the *apories* appearing around the time-problem that make it clear that executing the task is impossible, the starting point of the work is not quite radical. After 1929 Heidegger finally accepts that the sense of being cannot be comprehended and elaborated based on the scheme of time.

Finally, **Chapter four (4.)** focuses on the question whether the hermeneutic experience of time disappears entirely from Heidegger's philosophy after the turn or it „repeats itself“ in a different form and deepens in Heidegger's thinking the history of being. The most essential aspect of my investigation is directed to the question whether

Heidegger's time-concept changes significantly in his later works. Can we talk about the emerge of a new conception at all, which brings new elements of crucial importance in the later works? The dissertation points to the fact that Heidegger's point of view does not fundamentally change, does not become radically contradictory compared to the earlier ones, yet his later writings give quite another shades at meaningful points or put his hermeneutic time-concept into a different light. From the 1930s Heidegger studies not really the relation of time to human being but the more original relation of being and man, their connection in the event of Being. In accordance with this, the tones of the time problem also shift. The time-structures which earlier belonged to the human being are now related to Being. While for the young Heidegger the time involved the being-structure of human existence (*Zeitlichkeit*), factual self-identity (*Geschichtlichkeit*) and the horizon of his understanding of being (*Temporalität*), for the later Heidegger the time belongs to the historical Being, the event of Being. Thus, time is no longer the way leading to the sense of being but it expresses the connection with the truth of Being. As a consequence of the turn, the thanatological time-concept of *Being and Time*, which discussed the question of time and self-identity, disappears. Instead, Heidegger talks about the connection between Being and man, which at a point he calls *singulare tantum*, that is, giving property and myself properizing event. Similarly, the temporality-concept of *Being and Time* is also pushed into the background. The time-concept regarded as the horizon of understanding of being is replaced in the 1930s with the characteristic of Being regarded as an event which Heidegger called play of time-space (**Zeit-Spiel-Raum**) and in the 1960s the lighted clearing of Being (**Lichtung**) and the space of openness. The so called play of time-space is nothing else than the field of the truth-happening (discoveredness and concealedness) of Being, which the dissertation attempts to consider more differentiatedly.

In the analysis, the play of time-space appears as a united ontological happening, in which time and space forms the debate field of the truth of Being. They form the field of the discussion of the debate, in which the truth of Being happens. This way, in Heidegger's being-historical thinking the attempt of *Being and Time* to trace spatiality back to temporality becomes unmaintainable. Heidegger tries to elaborate the original unity of time-play-space which is nothing else than its moment-place (**Augenblicks-Stätte**). While in the temporality of human being in terms of the unity of the three time dimensions the future has priority, in the time of the event of Being this unity comes about in the present. While *Being and Time* points out that the future is the place of self-identity and self-realization, Heidegger's later writings point out that the connection between Being and

man comes about in the present. Transcendence as the favoured place of connecting to the event of Being is not the past or the future but the present moment. These two time-structures in Heidegger's time-concept however, do not exclude each other, since they refer to totally different dimensions. With all this, the later Heidegger points to the fact that the operating of the truth of Being as an ontological happening is in the most intimate relation with the existing that we are ourselves.

Finally, the dissertation finishes with an **epilogue**, which points to the fact that the time problem was the focal point in the fruitful, both professional and personal cooperation between Heidegger and Medard Boss (Swiss doctor, lecturer and psychotherapist). From the moment they met, we cannot avoid the reflection to the relation between the hermeneutical-phenomenological thinking and the psychoanalytic approach. The dissertation states that naturally Heidegger did not explain his views on psychotherapy or psychoanalysis but over and over again he returned to his early main work, the questions of *Being and Time*, which was well-known even outside the philosophical circles in the 1960s. Yet, he managed to create a transection, since he tried to shed light on the psychical phenomena with the basic concepts of the human being-analysis of *Being and Time*. Heidegger's criticism (especially the Freud's psychoanalysis and Binswangerian misunderstanding of human being-analysis) appears as the debate of the psychodynamic and being-analytical approach. Heidegger offers an access to experience which does not treat human existence as an object but he sheds light on him or her in regard to the existence. He exhibits that including the ontological dimension, that is, interpreting man as being-in-the-world, which places time-experience in the centre, can open a new perspective in the questions related to man, illness and therapy. The dissertation focuses on the question that one of the most essential elements of human being-analysis in Zollikon Seminars is that it included the dimensions of time-experience relevant to psychotherapy into the discussion. The dissertation investigates how Heidegger did this. Can we interpret the time-analysis of human being as a „therapy“ in the form Heidegger explicated it during the Zollikon Seminars?

3. Results

1. In the frame of methodological analysis, the dissertation has shown that time is fundamental for the phenomenological-hermeneutical thinking even where it is not in

the light of investigation, it is not made „thing-like“ but the relation to time becomes examinable as the „how“ of experience.

2. The dissertation has shown what the remarkable tradition of time-philosophy looks like from Heidegger's point of view. It has considered how Heidegger reflected on the beginning of this tradition and the way he had taken.
3. Based on the earliest writings of the young Heidegger (1910-1916) the dissertation made it clear that from the beginning, Heidegger saw a fundamental connection between temporality and apriority (or the sensuous and categorial, psychical and logical moments).
4. The dissertation has pointed out that although the period between 1919 and 1923 missed the explicit interpretation of time, the horizon of Heidegger's approach was already determined by the implicit understanding of time-experience.
 - 4.1. It became clear from the hermeneutic turn of phenomenology that Husserl's phenomenology did not make it possible for us to form an original relationship with historical-temporal being.
 - 4.2. The analysis of the dissertation has revealed that it was Aristotle and Paul Apostle's meditations on time that made it possible for Heidegger to appear the factual life in a typical, specific time-structure.
 - 4.3. My study has made it clear that the time-problem was important to the young Heidegger in terms of finding an answer to the question of existence, to the question how the relation of human existence to itself and its actual self-identity is formed in the different modification of factual life.
5. The following section in the dissertation has shown that from 1925 at the Marburg lectures, the ontological problem comes into the light for Heidegger, and as a consequence, the tone of the time-question changes. In this period, the fundamental connection between temporality and apriority becomes important again, and Heidegger's attention is directed towards the reconsideration of Husserl and Kant's transcendental-philosophical approach.
6. On the basis of the time-analyses of *Being and Time* we have been confirmed that Heidegger does not elaborate a philosophical anthropology but carries out the time-

analysis of human being as a key and preparation of a fundamental-ontological ground-laying.

- 6.1. In connection with the temporality-problem, the dissertation has worked out an alternative interpretation, the main point of which is that in Heidegger's Kant-interpretation, transcendental imagination is only an interim notion for the unity and completeness of subjectivity, which is after all based on time as self-affection.
- 6.2. It has become invisible that the temporal schemes as phenomena elaborated by Heidegger are extremely problematic. It remains unanswered for Heidegger how the schemes of time, which determine our experience, can become a part of an experience-analysis.
7. The final Chapter of the dissertation has shown that the later Heidegger's time-analyses put at significant points his hermeneutic time-concept into a different light.

Publications relating to the topic of the dissertation

Articles

1. *Megjegyzések a phronészis-gondolatról. Heidegger, Gadamer, Caputo*, in: *Hermeneutika, esztétika, irodalomelmélet*, (ed.) Fehér M. István és Kulcsár Szabó Ernő, Osiris Kiadó, Budapest, 2004, 333-358.
2. „Az időtapasztalatról – hermeneutikai megközelítésben” in: *Vigilia*, 74: (2009/2) 143-152.
3. „Changed Experience of Time – Metaphysics versus Hermeneutics” in: Lehoczky László (ed.) *MicroCAD 2009.*, a Miskolci Egyetem szakkiadványa, Miskolc, 2009, 45-52.

Translation

1. Holger Helting: *Bevezetés a pszichoterápiás ittlétanalízis filozófiai dimenzióiba*, 1-3. and 7. Chapters (ed.) Lubinszki Mária és Schwendtner Tibor, L'Harmattan Kiadó, Budapest, 2007, 9-159., 257-278.

Conference presentations

1. 28 May, 2005 presentation of my research entitled „Zeitauffassung Kants in der *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*” under Dr. Doris Gerber's leadership, Eberhard Karls University, Tübingen.

2. 2-3 October, 2008 presentation entitled „Idő, szubjektivitás, hermeneutika. Az idő-probléma radikalizálása a késői Heideggernél” on the conference *Nyelv, megismerés, tudat*, organised by the Eötvös Loránd University, Faculty of Humanities, Philosophy Institute and by the Philosophy of Language Research Group of the Hungarian Academy of Science and Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest.
3. 19-20 March, 2009 presentation entitled „Changed Experience of Time – Metaphysics versus Hermeneutics” on the XXIII. microCAD International Scientific Conference, Humanities Section, organised by the University of Miskolc, Miskolc.
4. 29 May, 2009 presentation entitled „Heidegger és az apriori”, PhD conference, organised by the Eötvös Loránd University, Faculty of Humanities, Doctoral School of Philosophy Institute, Budapest.