

# Binswanger, *Daseinsanalyse* and the Issue of the Unconscious: An Historical Reconstruction as a Preliminary Step for a Rethinking of Daseinsanalytic Psychotherapy

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## Abstract

Drawing on Ludwig Binswanger's work, this paper seeks to reconstruct historically and theoretically his relationship with Freud and Psychoanalysis and to trace his ideas with regard to the Unconscious. Tied to Freud by a friendship lasting thirty years, it started mainly from his encounter with the philosophy of Immanuel Kant, Alexander Pfänder, Franz Brentano, Edmund Husserl, Martin Heidegger and Martin Buber that Binswanger developed an original system of thinking and clinical application. The issue of the unconscious, beginning from this theoretical shift, underwent a radical reformulation. First, Heideggerian thought allowed him to recognize the importance of different World-Projects, intended as existential a priori characterized by a specific internal normativity. Subsequently, the return to Husserl's thinking lead Binswanger to rethink again the unconscious issue in light of the field of Passive Synthesis. In this paper we will examine all these issues and reconsider their importance for psychotherapeutic practice.

## Keywords

unconsciousness – Ludwig Binswanger – psychotherapy – psychoanalysis – daseinsanalyse

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By his doctrine of the unconscious intentionality, Freud has made man closer to the world and the world closer to man.

BINSWANGER, 1994A

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Furthermore, the entire realm of *associations and habits* fits in here. They are relations established between an earlier and later segment of consciousness within one Ego-consciousness. But motivation occurs in the “present” consciousness, namely in the unity of the conscious stream, characterized as time consciousness (primary consciousness) in act. Here it is not a matter of a motivation of position-takings by other position-takings (active theses by active theses) but of lived experiences of any sort whatsoever. These are, specifically, either “sediments” of earlier acts and accomplishments of reason, or ones which emerge, in “analogy” with the former, as apperceptive unities without actually being formed out of acts of reason, or else they are completely a-rational: sensibility, what imposes itself, the pre-given, the driven in the sphere of passivity. What is specific therein is motivated in the obscure background and has its “psychic grounds” *about which it can be asked: how did I get there, what brought me to it?* That questions like these can be raised characterizes all motivation in general. The “motives” are often deeply buried but can be brought to light by “psychoanalysis”. A thought “reminds” me of other thoughts and calls back into memory a past lived experience, etc. In some cases it can be perceived. In most cases, however, the motivation is indeed actually present in consciousness, but it does not stand out; it is unnoticed or unnoticeable (“unconscious”).

HUSSERL 1952, PP. 232–233

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## Introduction

In a postcard dated August 21, 1917, after having read the drafts of the first chapter of the second part of the book entitled *Introduction to the Problem of General Psychology* (1922), Freud writes to the author about having read it “with

great interest” considering the book “very instructive [...] and very creditable”. Nonetheless, he adds:

What are you proposing to do about the unconscious, or rather, how will you manage without the unconscious? Has the philosophical devil finally got you in his clutches? Reassure me.

FREUD – BINSWANGER, 2003, P. 139

The postcard addressee is Ludwig Binswanger, the Swiss psychiatrist, today considered the deviser of *Daseinsanalyse*,<sup>1</sup> whom Freud had known exactly ten years before in Vienna, when Binswanger, as young volunteer physician in the famous Burghölzli clinic in Zurich, at that time directed by Eugen Bleuler, had agreed to accompany Carl Gustav Jung and his wife in their first visit to the father of psychoanalysis. It was the beginning of a long friendship between Freud and Binswanger, which developed over a period of thirty years until Freud's death in 1939.

Younger than Freud by 25 years, Binswanger constantly looked up to him as a master, even when, by virtue of his encounter with Kantian philosophy, but above all, later, with the thought of Alexander Pfänder, Franz Brentano, Edmund Husserl, Martin Heidegger and Martin Buber, he detached himself theoretically from Freud in a decisive manner. If the need for a master, for a *father*, seems to have been relevant to Binswanger, who repeatedly emphasized the affection and esteem for Freud, what is more complex, instead, is to understand the reasons for the latter in maintaining this relationship: They were the years of the first foundation of the psychoanalytic movement and of the first sometimes dramatic breakdowns within it. These were determined by the

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1 The term *Daseinsanalyse* was coined by Ludwig Binswanger. Today, after the publication in 1958 of the book edited by Rollo May, Ernest Angel and Henri F. Ellenberger, named “Existence”, more often in the Anglophone world people tend to use the term “Existential Analysis”. Binswanger refused to institutionalize his approach and to establish a specific psychotherapeutic school. On the contrary, Medard Boss, a former pupil of Binswanger, after 1950 put forward his own new version of “*Daseinsanalyse*”, and in 1970 created a training center in Zurich for “daseinsanalytic psychotherapy and psychosomatics”. In this paper we will refer exclusively to Binswanger's thought and we will try to elaborate some original ideas with regard to *daseinsanalyse*, as psychotherapeutic practice based on his ideas. We prefer to use the German expression “*Daseinsanalyse*” and not “Existential Analysis”, considering the former more appropriate, because of the Binswangerian reference to Heideggerian thought. As far as the reference to Binswangerian texts is concerned, we have maintained the available English translations. Otherwise, we have provided our own translation, indicating, when necessary, the original bibliographical texts and sources.

development of theoretical, and sometimes technical applications of Freud's ideas by his pupils, which often appeared very divergent from their teacher's. In fact, Binswanger is the only one with whom Freud, in spite of their deep theoretical divergences, did not interrupt his contacts, maintaining, as said before, with him a long and continuous relationship (May, 2004a). Without doubt, if we read between the lines—and sometimes not just between the lines—of their correspondence, Freud seemed to view the Swiss psychiatrist, especially at the beginning of their relationship, as a possible link for obtaining that official recognition of psychoanalysis by the academic psychiatry he had long sought. In particular, he thought of Binswanger for his possible role as an intermediary with Eugen Bleuler, the Swiss psychiatrist director of the Burghölzli University Hospital, who was, at that time, very famous for his contributions to the understanding of mental illness and for having coined terms as “schizophrenia”, “schizoid” and “autism”.<sup>2</sup> In any case, it does not seem that such a reason alone can make it clear why there was no break between the two. Indeed, as the Swiss psychiatrist points out in his *Reminiscences of a Friendship* (1957), there was a really warm bond between them. Probably, as pointed out by Pierre Fédida (1970) and more recently by Aurelio Molaro (2016), the happy, but especially the extremely sad vicissitudes they shared, contributed to bringing them closer on an emotional level: just to mention a few, the cancer that first hit Binswanger in 1912 and later Freud in 1923, as well as and the many mourners that constellated their lives.<sup>3</sup>

2 With regard to the relationship between Bleuler, Freud e psychoanalysis, see Jones 1953–1957; Gay 1988; Mistura 2005. The same previously mentioned correspondence between Freud and Binswanger is a precious source for reconstructing the relationship between the famous director of Burghölzli, Freud and other members of the psychoanalytic movement.

3 Both Freud and Binswanger's destinies were actually united by several dramatic events: March 18, 1912 Binswanger is subjected to surgical appendicectomy and removal of a testicular cancer. Just over ten years later, in 1923, Freud was operated for cancer of the jaw. Philipp Freud, the firstborn child of Jacob Freud (1815–1896), who had been born from the first marriage of Jacob with Sally Kanner, and therefore was Sigmund's stepbrother, died in 1911. In 1920 Sophie, who was Freud's second daughter, died. In 1922, his young niece, Cäcilie Graf, daughter of the beloved sister Rosa, who had already lost in war the only male child, committed suicide following the discovery of an unwanted pregnancy. A year later, namely June 19, 1923 sees the death from miliary tuberculosis of Heinz Rudolf Halberstadt, nicknamed “Heinele” or “Heinerle”, the second son of Sophie Freud, Freud's nephew to whom he was more tied by his own admission. In 1926, the fifth son of Binswanger died because of tuberculous meningitis and, three years later, his older son, Robert, committed suicide at the age of 20.

At this point it would be worth going back to the postcard dated August 21, 1917. This is the way Binswanger years later commented on what Freud had written to him:

Unfortunately, I cannot find a copy of my answer to this question. Needless to say, I have never “managed without the Ucs.,” either in psychotherapeutic practice, which is indeed impossible without using Freud’s concept of the unconscious, or in “theory”. But after I turned to phenomenology and existential analysis [Daseinsanalyse], I conceived the unconscious in a different way. The problems it presented became broader and deeper, as it became less and less defined as merely the opposite of the “conscious”, whereas in psychoanalysis it is still seen largely in terms of this simple opposition. Heidegger’s existential analysis [Daseinsanalyse], as contrasted with Sartre’s, takes as its point of departure not consciousness, but existence conceived as being-in-the-world; accordingly, the opposition in question recedes into the background in favor of a description of the various phenomenologically demonstrable modes and structures of being-in-the-world.

1957, P. 64

So, following Binswanger, within his itinerary of thought, he never set aside the issue of the Unconscious but he rather articulated it in a completely new way starting from the (Husserlian) phenomenological horizon and the Heideggerian Fundamental Ontology.

### The Confrontation with Freud

As he himself recalled in 1957, Binswanger’s confrontation with psychoanalysis developed in five key steps (1994a). The first three were: learning;<sup>4</sup> personal experimentation of the psychoanalytic method; examination of psychoanalysis from a methodological point of view and its evaluation as a theoretical science. This third stage of his path led him to critically reconsider the formulation of the psychic in Freud’s work, the *de-construction* and the *re-construction* of the human person operated by the latter; that is to say, from the one hand, the *splitting* and *de-personalization*/personification of the different instances,

4 It is noteworthy that Binswanger’s psychoanalytic training was not formal. On the other hand, as Gerald N. Izenberg pointed out many years ago, we must consider that neither training analyses nor courses had not yet been institutionalized in his time (Izenberg 1976, p. 109).

functions and “processes” of the psychic apparatus and, on the other, the re-composition of a subject taken up in its “totality”. The definition and articulation of the psychic apparatus proposed by Freud in his *Metapsychology*, the passage from an idea of the Unconscious as a *phenomenon*, as a *constructive experience* (the term *Unconscious* being employed as an adjective), to its reification in the form of system, instance, “province” of the psychic apparatus, seemed to Binswanger to be highly problematic.<sup>5</sup> From here, his passage to the fourth step of his confrontation with Freudian opera. This new beginning is primarily accomplished in two papers, both published in 1936: *Freud und die Verfassung der klinischen Psychiatrie* [*Freud and the Magna Charta of Clinical Psychiatry*] (1968a), and *Freuds Auffassung des Menschen im Lichte der Anthropologie* [*Freud's Conception of Man in the Light of Anthropology*] (1968b). The latter constituted the text that Binswanger read on occasion of Freud's 80th birthday celebration, held at the *Akademische Verein für Medizinische Psychologie* in Vienna on May 7, 1936. It is above all within this latter work that the theoretical detachment from Freud appears in all its clarity. Binswangerian criticism is primarily directed at the biological reductionism, determinism and “naturalism” that, in his opinion, is possible to find in the work of Freud.<sup>6</sup> In

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5 As is widely known, Freud struggled throughout his life to justify and articulate the real meanings and implications of his “discovery”, the “Unconscious”. In such a sense, even as late as 1933, in his *New Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis*, he was “forced” to admit that “the best meaning of the word ‘unconscious’ is the descriptive one” (Freud 2001, p. 70), essentially that which “we are obliged to assume [...] but of which we know nothing” (*ibid.*). Nonetheless, within the same text just a little further on he adds: “[...] the work of psychoanalysis has found itself compelled to use the word ‘unconscious’ in yet another [...] sense, [...] Under the new and powerful impression of there being an extensive and important field of mental life which is normally withdrawn from the ego's knowledge so that the processes occurring in it have to be regarded as unconscious in the truly dynamic sense, we have come to understand the term ‘unconscious’ in a topographical or systematic sense as well; we have come to speak of a ‘system’ of the preconscious and a ‘system’ of the unconscious, of a conflict between the ego and the system Ucs., and have used the word more and more to denote a mental province rather than a quality of what is mental”. (*ibid.*, p. 71). It is exactly this passage from “a quality of the mind” to “a mental province” that Binswanger contrasted, glimpsing in it a reification of what it rather had to be considered as a dynamic process.

6 In effect, Freud in several passages of his works clearly referred his ideas to the biological sciences: for example, in his *Entwurf einer Psychologie* [*Project for a Psychology*] (Freud, 1895), posthumously published in 1950, or in his *Jenseits des Lustprinzips* [*Beyond the Principle of Pleasure*] (1920). With regard to this issue, see Izenberg 1976; Sulloway, 1992.

particular, the drives' pseudo-physiological bases and their *morphotic principle* are highly criticized.<sup>7</sup>

Therefore it is the idea of *Homo Natura*, seen in the Freudian work, that he challenges, an idea that “clamps man in between instinct and illusion” (Binswanger 1968b, p. 155).

To the idea of *Homo Natura* which, with its intrinsic mechanical determinism “usurps the place of freedom, mechanicalness, the place of reflection and decision” (*ibid.*, p. 165), Binswanger opposes the idea of *Homo Existentialis*, i.e. an anthropological stance based on the idea of human subject as a historical existence. “[...] Man is not only—he says—mechanical necessity and organization, not merely world or in-the-world. His existence is understandable only as being-in-the-world, as the projection and disclosure of world—as Heidegger has so powerfully demonstrated. To this extent, his existence already embodies the principle of the possibility of separating necessity and freedom, “closed” form and “open” change, the unity of the formal structure [*Gestalt*] and its abandonment and change into new formal structure”. (*ibid.*, p. 169)<sup>8</sup>

7 “Freud [...] sees in all human metamorphosis or change always the same basic form of the instinct itself persisting as an indestructible, ever-present *operational* factor. [...] In Freudian “doctrine”, the main stress is placed not upon existence as change, but upon that which persists and remains amid change, the instinct. But anthropology must attend to both the unitary primal form within change *and* the multiplicity of change as genuine meta-morphosis. For change, after all, essentially requires the *metà* of *morphose*, the *trans* of *transformatio*, the passing over from one shore of being to the shore of a *new* being” (Binswanger 1968b, pp. 168–69).

8 As previously said, Binswanger identifies in his *Mein Weg zu Freud* [*My path toward Freud*] (1994a), text of the conference held on occasion of the centenary anniversary of Freud's birth at several German universities, a final moment of his relationship with Freudian work, the fifth: after having studied it, experimented, critically evaluated, and therefore departed from, this fifth step would have been characterized by a new return to Freud. In fact, the latter's naturalism would be reconsidered in a different light: “We must then ask ourselves again: what does Freud mean by nature? Certainly not what the Greeks intended as *Physis*, or only in an approximately way, but with equal certainty, not only what positivism intend to mean by this concept. Shared points with naturalism, positivism and materialism do not give Freud's thinking in its entirety!” (p. 28). And again: “In Freud's sense of ‘respect’, in his veneration towards nature we can find something like the fear and reverence manifested by Greeks, the *aidôs*, as well as the enthusiastic admiration of nature we can find in the Renaissance Age, and the poetic characterization of nature in Romantic Era, or in the first *Faust*” (*ibid.*, p. 30). Philippe Cabestan (2011) pointed out some years ago that this last passage, in Binswanger's *path toward Freud*, seems “somewhat artificial” (p. 169). Nonetheless it is noteworthy that an opinion similar to that given by Binswanger was later formulated by Paul Ricoeur in his fundamental essay on Freud (1965).

Returning to the issue of the Unconscious in the Binswanger Daseinsanalyse, it is first of all by means of the conceptual device of *world-project* that it has been reconsidered, because it may be traced back to “*the several phenomenologically demonstrable modes and structures of being-in-the-world*” (1957 p. 64), to the “*constitutive, a priori structural moments that build up and define the specificity of the world as a wholeness within one’s own being-in-the-world*” (Binswanger 1994b, p. 174):

### **The World-Project: The First Reformulation of the Unconscious from a Daseinsanalytic Point of View**

*World-Project* is a wording clearly borrowed from Heidegger, especially from his *Vom Wesen des Grundes* [*On the Essence of Ground*] (1998), whereas the term “world” “is referring not to a geographical space but to a hermeneutic space in which a person dwells, a space in which everything is set out for him in a particular way” (Holzhey-Kunz 2006, p. 278). As Heidegger already had to say in 1927 in his *Being and Time*:

“Da-sein is always its possibility. It does not “have” that possibility only as a mere attribute of something objectively present. And because Da-sein is always essentially its possibility, it *can* “choose” itself in its being, it can win itself, it can lose itself, or it can never and only “apparently” win itself.” (1996, p. 40); and again, “As an existential, possibility does not refer to a free-floating potentiality of being in the sense of the “liberty of indifference” (*libertas indifferentiae*). As essentially attuned, Da-sein has always already got itself into definite possibilities. As a potentiality for being which it *is*, it has let some go by; it constantly adopts the possibility of its being, grasps them, and goes astray. But this means that Da-sein is a being-possible entrusted to itself, *thrown possibility* throughout. Da-sein is the possibility of being free *for* its own most potentiality of being. Being-possible is transparent for it in various possible ways and degrees”.

HEIDEGGER 1996, P. 135

What will characterize, then, the being of Dasein is *existence*: Dasein is not so much, and this is true for Heidegger as for Binswanger, its mere *presence*, but rather its being essentially a temporal determination, i.e., its *possibilities*, its *pro-jection*, its *being a thrown-projection* (*Dasein ist geworfener Entwurf*). In a certain sense, by letting encounter Heidegger with Freud, Binswanger places the Unconscious, therefore, as an “internal” limit to the subject, as a further



expression of its *finiteness*, as an internal conditioning property without, however, falling back into a relentless causal determinism.<sup>9</sup> Just because there can be no facts that exist independently of people perceiving them as such, the Unconscious may be understood as what determine their idiosyncratic way to do it.

In his famous “*The Case of Ellen West*” (2004a), clearly referring to Heidegger, Binswanger states:

[...] Freud himself subordinates phenomena to the “hypothetically postulated strivings”, investigates the verbal content not with respect to the world-design which emerges in it, but with respect to those strivings or “natural” instincts, and which thus projects the being of man upon the conceptual level of the being of “nature”. In this way the extrapersonal, nameless Id (alien to I and We)—involving man’s surrender without escape to a *vis major* which he confronts without the possibility of any real counteraction—achieves such paramount importance. To be sure, existential analysis too, as has been repeatedly emphasized, starts from the assumption that the existence did not lay its own ground itself; but it does know of a freedom in relation to its ground - a freedom in the sense of self-responsibility (Plato to Nietzsche), in the sense of man’s being free in his attitude toward his own “character” (La Senne), and it knows of the grace of the free meeting of the I and the Thou in love. In whatever way one wishes to understand this freedom metaphysically or religiously, existential analysis holds to the fact that being-human is not only a having-to-be but also a being-able-to-be and a being-allowed-to-be, a being secure in being as a whole.

P. 327

In any case, even if all this is true, as Binswanger himself emphasizes in 1946: “In our finiteness of human beings, we are able to grasp the how of a “thing” only from the perspective of the *world-project* [*Weltentwurf*] that guides us in its understanding” [*“denn über das Wie-Sein einer ‘Sache’ erhalten wir endlichen*

9 “While Psychoanalysis, as we know, interprets the unconscious from the perspective of consciousness, it is clear that a doctrine that does not proceed from the intentionality of consciousness, but that, rather, shows how this intentionality is grounded in the temporality of human existence, must interpret the distinction between consciousness and unconsciousness temporally and existentially. The point of departure for this interpretation cannot, therefore, be consciousness. *It can, instead, only be the ‘unconscious,’ the thrownness and determinateness of the Dasein*” (my italics). (Binswanger 1968c, p. 219).

*Menschen ja nur Auskunft je nach dem Weltentwurf, der unser Sachverständnis leitet*"] (1994b, p. 233). Therefore, what is claimed is the existence of singular constitutive categories or fundamental conceptual forms, named '*themes*', that Binswanger, approaching Kant, means as *Categories*, i.e., as functional organizers of the different materials of experience (Needleman 1963; Paracchini 2004). The *theme* or, rather the *themes* in the plural, upon which all of us are founded as human subjects, in their always *being on-going* within the biographical event that each of us 'is', or, to put it better, "has to be", in fact, allow to grasp the reality just following their rules. Within the "*normal*", non pathological experience, what is achieved is the possibility of an accordance with the intersubjective world, the possibility of their "adaptability" to the different contexts, as a free opening to the unexpected, as well as their articulation precisely around a variable, singular 'plurality' and hierarchical organization.<sup>10</sup> As Binswanger himself had to say in his *The case of Ilse* (2004b): "The key theme serves us the *constant* which provides the key to our understanding of Ilse's life as a *history*. History is always thematic. The kind of themes which a person (or a People) is assigned by destiny or which he selects for "elaboration", and the manner in which he varies them, are not only decisive for his history but *are* his history" (p. 223). So, *themes* are determined by the vicissitudes of one's own personal history. But what are the *themes* if not something derived from Language? So it is the latter that, by preceding and founding the subject, determines it, or rather contributes to determining its *destiny*. As Roger Frie (1997) rightly stated, Binswanger, referring to Heidegger, recognizes the importance of prelinguistic world disclosure, as our initial relation to the world, through mood, affect and feeling (*Befindlichkeit—Stimmungen*) as well as through its *Understanding* (*Verstehen*), i.e., its prelinguistic active engagement with facts, tools and their possibilities (ready-to-hand equipment) of employment, but, at the same

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- 10 The delusional experience for Binswanger has to be referred, in this sense, to a progressive narrowing of inner experience around one or a few topics, with an ever greater coarctation of subjects' freedom. For example, in his *The case Suzanne Urban* (1994c), Binswanger states that the fundamental structural feature of the delusional experience has to be referred to the changeover from *activity* to *receptivity*, in which delusional theme, once it is disjointed from actual experience and absolutized, determines an extremely rigid way to consider reality; a reality in which what may be found is always the *sameness*, i.e., what the "theme" imposes to be seized. As Binswanger states in his *The Case of Ilse*, what finally happens is "the extreme 'self-disempowering', the yielding to the "theme" that now assumes unlimited power. The theme, of course, is not just a theme but an argument between "I and the world", sharpened by a definite existential situation. This theme now no longer worries about limitations but sweeps the whole existence along with it, perceiving only itself and living only for itself" (Binswanger 2004b., pp. 223–224).

time, he “admittedly describes the process of world disclosure prior to language as rudimentary and not yet fully human” (Frie 1997, p. 133). *Befindlichkeit* and *Verstehen* both denote our initial relation to the world and therefore precede the propositional articulation of this relation, but “[...] if the individuality is what its world is (in the sense of its own world) and if its world is only affirmed in language, in other words, needs language to be world at all, then we cannot speak of individuality where the language is not yet language, that is, communication and meaningful expression” (2004a, p. 326). At the same time, some years before, in his *Dream and Existence*, Binswanger, himself stated “[...] language is every man's spiritual root. For it is language that “envisions and thinks” for all of us before any one individual brings it to the service of his own creative and intellectual powers” (1968d p. 222). The *world-projects* therefore come to be *existential a priori* (Needleman, 1963) characterized by their own, binding, internal legality, as a-priori structures that are not always and never completely freely determined by the subject, not because they are determined by some unfathomable biological function nor simply because they are determined by the personal history, but above all because it is the Language that “envisions and thinks” for all of us before any one individual begins to speak and think on his own. Indeed, the sedimentation of inner-life history (Binswanger 1928a) is only made possible by the medium of Language, i.e., by that *horizon of meanings* that precedes and founds human subjectivity in its proper essence. In fact, in the author's thinking, Language does not refer simply to the ability of man to communicate by means of a complex code, namely to the spoken language, but, on the contrary, to the whole cultural and historical context (Binswanger 1928b; 1994d). As it may appear clear, this theoretical stance is radically different from the one originally taken by Freud, not only because Binswanger considered the Unconscious as an *on-going, dynamic* process and not as a “system” or a “mental province”, but also because, as is widely known, for Freud the unconscious includes what is actively repressed from conscious thought or what a person does not want to know consciously; a container for personally and socially unacceptable ideas, wishes or desires, traumatic memories, and painful emotions put out of the conscious mind by means of the defensive mechanism of repression, but which, nonetheless, (in)directly influence the subject's thought and behaviors (e.g., her symptoms, dreams, slips of tongue, etc.). Unlike Freud, for Binswanger the *world-project unconsciously* functions as an existential a-priori. Exactly as for Kant the “a-priori” designates the subjective possibility of experiences, where the subject in a restricted sense means the “knowing existent” and “subjective conditions” refer to the special capabilities of the existent to frame its experience prior to any empirical experience (Szilasi, 1970), in a similar way Binswanger considered the *World-Project* as

a general “schema”. These *General Schemas*, which are based on one or more *themes*, and therefore are influenced by Language, appear from early infancy, accompany the subject for all her/his life, and in so doing determine every singular lived experience: e.g., her behaviors, thoughts, ideals, values, dreams, etc.

To recap, it is therefore in the idea of a *world-project* that Binswanger first rethought the idea of the Unconscious (Izenberg, 1976; Frie, 2004) or, to put it better, a modality of functioning of the mind that stands beyond the same subdivision between conscious and unconscious.

Things do not end here, though. A new confrontation with Husserl’s thinking determines, in fact, in the sixties, a new insight into Binswangerian ideas.

### (Ostensible) Steps: From Heidegger to Husserl

As is well known, the most common reconstruction of the Binswangerian thought itinerary identifies three main stages: the first clearly influenced by Husserl, which dates back to the twenties and early thirties of the past century; a second, which comprises most of the writings we have considered up until now, influenced by the reading of the first Heidegger, which reaches until the late 1950s; finally a third stage, that of the so-called “return to Husserl” (Ricci Sindoni, 2002; Holzhey-Kunz, 2014).

Now, taking for granted that it is impossible to trace a clear cut between the second and third stages of the Binswangerian theorizations, as the author himself clearly states in his paper, dated 1960, *Melancholie und Manie: phänomenologische Studien* [*Melancholy and Mania: Phenomenological Investigations*] (1994e), but even more clearly in his last work *Wahn* [*Delirium*], dated 1965 (1994f), and as we ourselves will try to show later, it is true that the analyses conducted by Binswanger during the last years of his theoretical research were again first influenced by Husserlian thought. To put it better, during these years Binswanger’s effort was aimed at deepening, through Husserl, the ideas he had previously developed around the *world-project’s* issue. With no doubt Husserl’s ideas were certainly mediated by Wilhelm Szilasi, the Hungarian philosopher with whom Binswanger had established a fruitful friendship and scientific collaboration (Binswanger, 1960a).<sup>11</sup> Leaving aside the possible reasons

11 Originally a chemist, Wilhelm Szilasi was an important Hungarian philosopher, who, between 1945 and 1962, filled the chair at Freiburg University that Husserl and then Heidegger had occupied earlier than him. As recalled a few years ago by Stefano Besoli (2006), the influence of Szilasi on Binswanger actually has to be traced back to the second half of the 1940s. Of particular importance for the development of Binswangerian

for Binswanger's "departure" from Heidegger, more often referred to the criticisms that the latter had advanced to his work *Grundformen*,<sup>12</sup> it is much more

thought was, on the one hand, the effort made by the philosopher to bring together the fundamental Heideggerian ontology and the Husserlian doctrine of the transcendental constitution, on the other, his re-reading of Greek thought, especially the Platonic and Aristotelian positions. As we will see later, both aspects of Szilasi's work appear to be clearly at work in the last Binswangerian thought. Szilasi also dealt with the relationship between philosophy and natural sciences and, as may be inferred from Binswanger's *Die Philosophie Wilhelm Szilasi und die psychiatrische Forschung* [*The Philosophy of Wilhelm Szilasi and the Psychiatric Research*] (1960), this aspect may have contributed to their mutual interest. To reconstruct their friendship, as well as the path to the so-called Binswanger's *return to Husserl*, it is extremely important to also recall, beyond the Szilasi's *Einführung in die Phänomenologie Edmund Husserls* [*Introduction to the Phenomenology of Edmund Husserl*] (1959) which deeply influenced Binswanger during those years, the paper entitled *Die Erfahrungsgrundlage der Daseinsanalyse Binswangers* [*Experiential Foundations of Binswanger's Daseinsanalyse*] that Szilasi published in 1951 in the *Festschrift* of the *Schweizer Archiv für Neurologie und Psychiatrie*, on the occasion of Binswanger's 70th birthday celebration. In this paper, which was later republished as a longer version, within his *Philosophie und Naturwissenschaft* [*Philosophy and Natural Science*] (1961), the Hungarian philosopher clearly manifested his sympathy for Binswanger's Daseinsanalyse, but, at the same time, he underscored a methodological deficiency in Binswanger's approach. In this regard, he suggested a new direction for the latter's research, finally based on the genetically "empirical phenomenology" he advocated and which was based, precisely, not only on Husserlian ideas, but on Heidegger ontology as well. This paper, which unfortunately has never been translated in English, represents without doubt an important document to correctly understand the last Binswangerian research works.

- 12 It is noteworthy that Heidegger's first reactions to the publication of 1942 Binswanger's work, *Grundformen und Erkenntnis menschlichen Daseins* (*Basic Forms and Knowledge of Human Existence*), had not been so much negative, indeed! Particularly significant in this sense is the letter dated February 24, 1947, which he addressed to Binswanger: "Your most important work (*Grundformen*) has been thought so deeply and richly on the phenomenological level that all those who have eyes to see will have no doubts in recognizing in what profound way you have been able to influence the whole field of psychopathology [...] Although you have clearly delineated your intellectual journey around what once I called 'fundamental ontology' [...] you have gone into this field also beyond *Being and Time*, in a higher territory of the human [...] through names, titles and guidelines, you have transferred into psychopathology the modified conceptual lexicon of *Being and Time*, threatening sciences through philosophy". [Ihr Hauptwerk (die "*Grundformen*") ist so weit gedacht und so reich an Phänomenen, dass man denken sollte, jeder der Augen hat, müsse sehen, wohin Sie das Ganze der Psychopathologie stellen. [...] Trotzdem Sie Ihren Weg klar abgrenzen gegen den Versuch, der einmal Fundamentalontologie hiess, trotzdem Sie innerhalb dieser Abgrenzung über *Sein und Zeit* hinaus in einen höheren Bereich des Menschlichen vordringen, wird man bei der üblichen Art, die mit Namen,

probable that, as pointed out by Aaron L. Mishara (2012) a few years ago, in reality they were quite eminently clinical issues to bring Binswanger back again to deal with Husserlian thought.

In fact, it is noteworthy to bear in mind that in 1952 and 1958, two very important scientific papers were published: one by Paul Matussek, *Untersuchungen über die Wahrnehmung. 1. Mitteilung* [Studies on Delirious Perception. 1. Communication], the other, certainly more famous, by Klaus Konrad, *Die beginnende Schizophrenie. Versuch einer Gestaltanalyse des Wahns*—[Incipient Schizophrenia. A Gestalt Analysis of Delusions].<sup>13</sup> In both cases, the authors of these contributions had tried to investigate the prodromic stages, the “phases of entry” into delusional experience.

The critical point of attack for both of them was the idea of delusion that Gruhle (1951) had formulated as “self-reference without reason” (*Beziehungssetzung ohne Anlass*), i.e., the idea that the schizophrenic patient’s experiences are centered around him in a peculiar, unusual and incomprehensible manner, where an abnormal meaning is attached to an otherwise intact perception, without any understandable reason or cause (*ohne Anlass*).<sup>14</sup> Now, in their works, both Matussek and Konrad come to consider the delusional perception, which is a true cornerstone for the phenomenological psychopathological speculations around delusion, not so much as an adequate perception to which the subject would then, at a later moment, give an abnormal

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Titeln und Richtungen rechnet, zunächst an der törichten Vorstellung hängen bleiben, dass Sie die abgewandelte Begriffssprache von *Sein und Zeit* in die Psychopathologie übertragen und durch Philosophie die Wissenschaft gefährden]. (Binswanger 1994g, pp. 339–40). It will be, conversely, above all on occasion of the Zollikon Seminars (1959–1969) that Heidegger will distance himself from Binswanger (Heidegger, 1987). With regard to this issue, see Caputo 2007; Mazzarella, 1991; 1995; 2006.

- 13 These papers had a wide echo at that time, and still today are often regarded as particularly relevant within the phenomenological psychopathological research (for example, see Blankenburg 1971; Hambrecht and Hafner, 1993; Uhlaas and Mishara 2007; Handest, et al. 2015; Parnas & Henriksen 2016).
- 14 A similar position had also been adopted by Karl Jaspers (1913), who had characterized primary delusion as based on two main elements: a radical change in subjectivity as a transformation of experience as a whole, and a radical transformation of the consciousness of meaning, of subject’s meaning bestowing act. As Owen, et al. (2004), stated some years ago, in Jaspers conceptualization, “such a new world is more than the presence of a false belief, it is a transformation of experience as a whole. Second, there is the element of meaning: “All primary experience of delusion is an experience of meaning” (Jaspers 1963, p. 103). “The experiences of primary delusion are analogous to this seeing of meaning, but the awareness of meaning undergoes a radical transformation” (Jaspers 1963, p. 99)” (Owen, et al. 2004, p. 77).



meaning, but rather as an act of consciousness that from the beginning would not follow a normal outflow.

Now, returning to Binswanger, according to the theoretical formulas that he produced from the early thirties to the late 1950s in relation to schizophrenic conditions, the preparation for entering into madness, and in particular the manifestation of delusional experience, could be derived from the primary *positioning* of the subject with regard to a given question/issue that, so to speak, “destiny” had asked him “to solve”; from the locking of the subject in what was called, in his *Von anthropologischen Sinn der Verstiegtheit* [*The Anthropological Meaning of Extravagance*] (1949), the *Extravagance* (*Verstiegtheit*),<sup>15</sup> the *disproportion* between the *height* of the ideal and the *amplitude of the base*. Moreover, in this earlier Binswangerian phase of thinking, it was possible to say that mental illness found its starting-point in an act of arbitrariness of the subject, in an obstinate opposition to the constraints imposed, so to speak, by the *very nature of things*. (Paracchini 2004)<sup>16</sup>

More precisely, the sequence of passages identified by Binswanger was the following. After an original arbitrary decision, it would follow the imposition of a *fixed ideal*, which would in turn be contrasted to the suppressed and intolerable alternative represented by the *theme*. Then a phase of impasse would come, and finally the capitulation into the delirium would fully manifest itself. Even this last stage, within the introduction to the volume of 1957 - *Schizophrenie*—which brought together some of his most famous clinical cases, is attributed by Binswanger to a sort of *subjective choice*, to a *choice of renunciation*:

[...] we made use of a further concept: that of the existence's *being worn away* (as though by friction), the culmination of the antinomic tensions involved in *no longer being able to find a way out or in*, a culmination that is a *resignation* or a *renunciation* of the whole antinomic problem as such, and that takes the form of an existential *retreat* [*Rückzug*] [...] We come now to the retreat from existence in the *completely* unfree mode

15 Here we maintain the English translation. With regard to the difficulty in translating the German word “*Verstiegtheit*”, see Jacob Needleman's note to the translation of the first chapter of *Drei Formen Missglückten Daseins* (L. Binswanger, 1968f, p. 342).

16 If, on the one hand, Heidegger, recalled by Binswanger himself, stated: “[...] freedom places Dasein, as potentiality for being, in possibilities that gape open before its finite choice, i.e., within its destiny” (1998, p. 134), on the other, for Binswanger in psychotic disorders “the freedom of letting world “happening” [*Freiheit des Geschehenlassens von Welt*] steps into the unfreedom of being dominated by a particular *world-project* [*Unfreiheit des Überwältigtseins von einem bestimmten Weltentwurf*]” (Binswanger, 1994b, pp. 235–36).

of *insanity*, a mode in which the Dasein of its own free will renounces neither life nor social life. What, rather, is renounced is life as independent, autonomous selfhood. The Dasein thus *surrenders itself over* to existential powers alien to itself. What we have here is a particularly radical capitulation of the Dasein.

1968E, PP. 258–259

This is, of course, a key issue, but in some ways it represents a definitely problematic question: can schizophrenic conditions actually be really attributed to *an original arbitrary choice* which in some ways appears to be posed beyond the conscious/unconscious opposition itself, to an “act” that would then lead to an ever greater coarctation of the subject’s freedom possibilities?

Obviously an in-depth inquiry appeared definitely necessary, and this time the support for the investigation could not be found in Heideggerian Fundamental Ontology, but (again) in Husserlian genetic phenomenology. As Binswanger himself had to say: “it is necessary to *examine the peculiar way these worlds are constituted*, in other words, it is necessary to *study their constituent structural moments and to clarify their constitutive differences*”. (1994e, p. 353). This shift, in fact, allows Binswanger to reconsider critically the active and conscious participation of the subject in the fulfillment of his destiny. So, if you want, this is another way of rethinking the question of the unconscious.

### Husserlian “Passive Synthesis”: The Second Binswangerian Reformulation of the Unconscious

Already in *Melancholy and Mania*, mentioned earlier, the author’s attempt was to derive the judgments the melancholic subject formulates about himself and others (guilt, pathological remorse) from an inadequate flow of experience and, in particular, from a defective articulation of the constitutive phenomena of *inner time-consciousness* (*retentio*, *presentatio* and *protentio*) that Husserl had described on occasion of his lectures *On the Phenomenology of the Consciousness of Internal Time* (1893–1917) (1991). From here, therefore, Binswanger derived the impossibility, for these subjects, to get access to the indeterminacy of their *possibility-to-be*; i.e., that dimension we previously mentioned, of *free* opening to the *unexpected*, of genuine *historical mobility of existence*.

Now, Binswanger follows a similar path in his 1965 book, *Wahn* (*Delirium*). Even in this case, the delirium, that a long tradition had considered since that moment as an expression of mere “error of judgment”, is investigated in its



primary, constitutive moments at the level of what Edmund Husserl (1918–1926) had named *Passive Synthesis of Consciousness* (Husserl, 2001).

More precisely, what Binswanger does is to investigate the most primitive layers of *unreflective consciousness*, as Husserl had described before him, in order to show the defective aspects of a patient's experience when entering psychosis. Referring to Husserlian ideas, once again read through Szilasi's eyes, the author thus proceeds to identify the different degrees of synthesis of the perceptual experience, distinguishing two phases: That of the *Intuitions*, or of the *primary perception of the object* which is placed beyond the consciousness plan, and that of the *Conscious Perception* (*Wahrnehmung*).

- 1) Intuitions, as synthetically configured units of impressions, as the first presentation, apprehension of the object (*Primary Perception—Perzeptionen*), would be made possible by the proper functioning of what Binswanger defines *Phantasm*, i.e., the correct “organization” of three different components: *Aisthesis* (*Presentative Moment*), *Mnème* (the retention or the reminiscence as binding prescriptions of the perceptual course, based on previous perceptual experiences of the object); and *Phantasy* (Aristotelically understood as the faculty of forming images, as a “rule of expectation” based on *Mnème*<sup>17</sup>).
- 2) Conscious perception (*Wahrnehmung*), or *Apperception*, vice versa, would arise from the synthesis of conscious insights of the object, where the latter would be taken, in a conscious manner, and referred to the Ego. Only at this level an object would also be understood as *real* (*Wirklichkeit*) along the lines of an intersubjectively constituted apprehension, and referred to the internal time-consciousness.

Once having identified, in Husserl's wake, these two different levels of synthesis, Binswanger thus comes to identify, in the case of primary delusions, three developmental stages:

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17 Up until now, scientific literature has paid poor attention to the importance of Aristotelian philosophy within the last Binswangerian works. In particular, the concept of *Phantasy*, probably one of the Stagirite's most controversial, and the role played by this in the organization of cognitive-perceptual experience, seems to us particularly interesting and probably deserving of a deepening which, unfortunately, it is not possible to conduct here. In any case, with regard to this interesting Aristotelian concept, see: Frede, 1992; Sheppard, 2014.

- 1) The first level of synthesis would already be involved. Indeed, at this stage the compact and well-founded object-schema would come to be replaced by a loose, but obstinately blocked scheme, conditioned by the personal lived history, which is to say that the conformity to the “thing in itself” would be replaced by what Binswanger calls “a relationship without object”, i.e., a perceptual experience which is determined by the usual or personal references dictated by the personal lived history.
- 2) At the next level of the synthesis, we have the real delusional perception (*Wahnwahrnehmung*);
- 3) Finally, with a further synthesis, one would come to the *Real Delirious Experience*, understood as an extremely defective transcendence, almost to the extinction of any spontaneity, such as a decay of transcendence to the condition of mere passive reception.

Now, the Binswangerian passages appear quite complex. It is worthwhile, then, to dwell a little on them. First of all, let's look more closely at what the author says about the first level of synthesis in perceptual experience, as previously said the one based on the articulation of the *aisthesis*, the *mnéme* and the *phantasy*. Binswanger asks “on the basis of what or according to what rule or prescription, the joint action or combination (synthesis) of these three moments gives rise to a unity in the sense of a continuation of development of immediate experience?” (Binswanger 1994f, p. 443). The answer that he immediately gives to this question appeals, curiously, not so much to Husserl, but rather to what Heidegger (1927) had discussed in paragraphs 15 and 18 of the third chapter of *Being and Time*, the one devoted to the analysis of “the Worldliness of the World”, where by the term “world” he means “that “in which” a factual Dasein “lives”, “the “public” world of the we or one's “own” and nearest (domestic) surrounding world” (Heidegger 1996, p. 61) As well known, for Heidegger there can be no self and no separate distinct world. Rather, Dasein exists as *being-in-the-world*, where the term world “refers to the matrix of relations, or involvement whole (*Bewandtnisganzheit*) in which Dasein exists and discovers meaning. Being involved with the world, as being-in, thus is definitive Dasein”. (Frie 1997, p. 23) The strangeness of the Binswangerian reference lies in the fact that, as Roger Frie rightly pointed out some years ago,

Heidegger ostensibly manages to avoid the philosophy of self-consciousness; indeed, the terms subjectivity and self-consciousness are virtually absent from *Being and Time*. However, this is accomplished at the price of leaving aside the central issue on which the problem of self-consciousness hinges: namely, the fact that self-consciousness must

initially be prereflective and forms the conditions of reflection. As such, Heidegger's attempt to derive consciousness from an existential structure, which is not itself conscious, must be questioned once the difference between reflective and prereflective consciousness is introduced.

FRIE 1997, P. 48

Well, this is exactly what Binswanger tries to do, through the encounter of Heidegger and Husserl, discussing the basic structure of perceptive phenomena. But, probably, the most interesting thing is the role played here by Language.

On the one hand, entering into the delusional experience appears to be determined by a fundamental crumbling of experience, of the first pre-predicative dimensions of consciousness, where instead the delirium would only come to be organized later in the delusional *fabula* once the subject has found here again, in the Language, a "support" and a "refuge". On the other hand, it must be considered that the perceptual experience, as we have previously said, from the earliest moments, within the prereflective consciousness, does not come to conform itself to the objective, intersubjectively constituted data, but rather to the usual or personal reference to the personal life history, and therefore to the vicissitudes of the *theme(s)*. This latter position was nothing but a more complex articulation of ideas he had actually previously developed since 1922, as it precluded the notion of perception data independent of a consciousness that bestowed meaning on them through specific orientations or organizing concepts.

To understand Binswanger's ideas with regard to the loosening of correct functioning of the *Phantasm*, i.e., of the three different components: *Aisthesis*, *Mnème* and *Phantasy*, it is worth quoting at length two examples he gives, one referred to the "normal" experience, and the other to a "pathological" one. Indeed, it seems to us that it allows us to better understand the intimate articulation of the ante-predicative dimensions of experience with those predicative, and in particular with the issue of the *theme*.

[...] We can find a deviation from the mnémetic scheme not only, as we shall see later, in the delusional perceptions, but also in the fantasy of the healthy (meaning this genre of fantasy in the usual sense) and in an even clearer way in dream. Let's give an example from the field of normal fantasizing: if I notice a ship that is approaching I could 'fantasize': "Here's a dolphin"; here I have deviated from the mnémetic scheme related to "ship", though not entirely. Indeed, as we know from the dream experience and how we will also find to be attested in delusional perceptions,

even in such a fantastic representation, there is always something derived from the mnématic scheme, in this case the imaginative prescriptions of letting oneself be cradled or swimming (more or less as opposed to diving).

Now let's consider the case of the synthesis of delusional intuitions or perceptions and its deviation from the synthetic unit of normal intuition of object. Two examples:

We get *the first* from the excellent essay by Roland Kuhn *Daseinsanalyse und Psychiatrie* which can be found in his book *Psychiatrie der Gegenwart*. Here Kuhn reports the case of a schizophrenic nurse who one day expressed the desire to have *her head in plaster*. This desire originates primarily for reasons that can be related to the woman's lived history (her brother committed suicide with a shotgun to the head; in connection with this, "loosening and moving of his cranial bones" during an electroshock, a sense of asymmetry of her "Frontal bossing" and feeling the ability to think better by pressing the imaginatively protruding part with her hand). Further motivation since she ripped off her friend's love letters, also her own thoughts have been "ripped" ("guilt"). All this has to be remedied with plaster around her head. Since this has not been done to her, she does it by herself by means of an aluminum foil wrapped around her teeth. Now, the patient's desire is not simply viewed as an "extravagant and pathological idea", but it is first and foremost strictly understood, from a daseinsanalytical point of view, considering her own *world-project*. In Kuhn's words: "The *world-project*, rather than lived experience [*Erlebnisse*] or merely related to her life history events, is a matter of one's own categorical relationship scheme; it is a specific personal way of linking together sensitive data, experiences and meanings, of one's own modality of meaning bestowal that is not at all random but obeys an idiosyncratic consequentiality". Only a moment ago we were discussing how the patient derives her own desire to have her head in plaster from very different experiences (as it is the case for healthy people) and how "*she (unlike them) included sensitive data, belonging to these, into her experience*". We are grateful to Roland Kuhn, for his great merit of having emphasized the "insertion" of sensitive data into the experience. Here, we are exactly dealing with this issue, but performing a structural research by way of a rigorous method. We just look for the deviation in the "insertion" of sensitive data in the experience (and before that, in conscious perception), the deviation, as we said before, from their "natural", inconspicuous insertion. Therefore, here we do not speak at all of a categorical scheme, but for the moment only of a mnématic scheme. This

mnémétic scheme is strongly “disturbed” right at this level, i.e., it is no longer strictly fixed or strictly bound, but rather loose, unconnected. The strict constraint between the prescriptions of the imagination (*Mnème and Phantasy*) and the corresponding *accuracy of the presentative moment* [*Präsentation*] are replaced by ways of presenting things in a very compromised manner: the plaster around her head, and even more the bandaging around her teeth as a means to think better. Kuhn speaks very clearly of sensitive data that are part of the “plastering” semantic field and, in connection with this, of the medical experiences that *we ourselves* associate with this object, for example those of the fracture of a bone joint or spine; experiences that, of course, the patient herself, being a nurse, associates on her own.

But we also note here that the mnémétic moment does not “surprise” us at all, since it even reveals the reminiscence of the brother’s shotgun and the tearing of her friend’s letters. The rupture of the phantasy prescriptions does not consist in the complete error of the *mnème*, but in the lack of rigor of its schemes, that is, in the non-continuation of the natural prescriptions of the references. It is therefore again evident here that, in the delirium, as we will again see on several occasions, receptivity is largely more preponderant than spontaneity<sup>18</sup> or, to put it simpler, it is not the case that a certain subject has some impressions but that impressions have the subject in their hands. In other words, as in dreams, man is “at the mercy” of impressions.

BINSWANGER 1994F, PP. 445–446

Now, beyond the complex internal articulations that may be found within the whole Binswangerian book and that we cannot further develop here, returning to the subject of our paper, it seems clear to us that it is here that we can find the second, fundamental, new and original way of rethinking the Unconscious proposed by Binswanger.<sup>19</sup> A proposal that, on the one hand, once again comes from his personal re-reading of Heideggerian analytic of Dasein, and on the other by the “merging” of this with the Husserlian ideas. As can be clearly derived from the above mentioned examples drawn by Binswanger himself, what can be observed is the inextricable link between the field of *Language*, the *theme*, the *inner life history*, the *affective situation* (*Befindlichkeit*), the body

18 With regard to the issue of “spontaneity” and “receptivity”, see what we have previously said at note 10 with reference to *The case of Suzan Urban*.

19 With regard to the importance of later thought of L. Binswanger for a reformulation of Unconsciousness, see also Mishara 1990; 2009.

understood as *living body* (*Leib*) and as an existential expressive possibility (Binswanger, 1994h), and *imaginative and perceptual intentional modes of consciousness*.<sup>20</sup>

Referring to the Husserlian analyses on the passive synthesis (Husserl, 2001), i.e., to the primordial dimensions of experience, to the functioning modalities of consciousness that are simultaneously accomplished by the individual and enacted beyond his awareness and his active consent, Binswanger shows how a streaming egoic life of consciousness can be constituted, how different parts of experience are gathered together in a meaningful, personal way and in an animating teleological orientation. As we have said before, for Heidegger Dasein is always a *being-in-the-world*, our being is inextricably bound up with the world: from the beginning, we do not meet mere physical entities, meaningless entities, but worldly things that manifest themselves as *signs*. However, if that happens, Binswanger seems to say, it is because the conscience “passively”, “unconsciously”, immediately inserts these signs within semantic chains all at once. If, on the one hand, we must always consider the horizon of meanings by which we always orient ourselves in the world, automatically referring semantically every single word to each other, associating different words (in the example he gives, “ships”, “dolphins”, “swimming”, etc.) on the other, they are our *themes* that unconsciously frame all our experience. In the example of the patient he discusses, because the perceptive act no longer follows a normal outflow, it becomes “filled” (at the level of the earlier moments of the perceptive act, i.e., at the level of *Intuitions*, of the *Primary Perception of the Object* which are placed beyond the consciousness plan) with her *themes*, as these deeply and *passively* “intrude” in the patient’s perceptive experience.

This is the crucial passage that allows us to trace the second Binswangerian theoretical formulation of the Unconscious. Indeed, the role played by *themes* may be referred to the more general functioning of consciousness, within the *normal* experience, at the level of what Binswanger named *Phantasm*: as categorical schemes, *themes* direct and orient the way we feel and make sense of the world in which we live, the way we “move” ourselves within the intersubjective arena, in brief our whole *being-in-the-world*, our *being-with-others*. Our *themes* are nothing but our “specific personal ways of linking together sensitive

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20 Although this issue here cannot be further developed, it seems interesting to note that the Binswangerian reflections follow the steps of an interesting encounter between Aristotle and Heidegger. We refer, in particular, to the deepening of the idea of a predicative dimension of the perceptual experience by some authors glimpsed in the works of the Stagirite. On the sense we can attribute to such predicative dimensions of sensitive perception in Aristotelian work, see Sorabji 1992.

data, experiences and meanings”, “one’s own modality of meaning bestowal that is not at all random but obeys an idiosyncratic consequentiality”. Such a consequentiality is primarily determined by our personally lived history and by Language, the latter being intended both as the different semantic fields that are typical of a certain society and of a certain historical period, and as societal structures that operate within and upon us.

### Rethinking Daseinsanalytical Psychotherapy

The idea of a Psychotherapy based on phenomenological-daseinsanalytic-existential thought is becoming today more and more accepted and is articulated in different theoretical and applicative directions.<sup>21</sup>

Drawing on what we have already said so far with regard to the Binswangerian ideas, we would now like to sketch some personal considerations with regard to this psychotherapeutic technique and the direction to pursue within it.<sup>22</sup>

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21 Just to mention a few, in addition to the important books, respectively edited by Roger Frie (2003), Wolf-Fédida (2006) and Laura Barnett and Greg Madison (2012), see: Yalom, 1980; Cohn, 1997; Frie 1997; Holzhey-Kunz 2014; Spinelli, 2007; Owen 2015; Stanghellini 2007; 2016.

22 We are deeply aware that psychotherapy, in particular in its technical aspects, should always be thought in consideration of the specific clinic domains of application: Psychotic, Personality Disorders, Neurotic. In what follows we will mainly refer to the last group, although many of the considerations put forward could have some validity also when considering disorders referred to the first two areas. As correctly Jacob Needleman pointed out many years ago: “The major Dasein-analytic criterion of mental illness is the degree in which the freedom of the Dasein is surrendered over to the power of another. In the neurotic, this surrender is only partial; although his being-in-the-world is overpowered and ruled by one or a few categories, he is constantly struggling to hold on to his own power of self-determination. This struggle takes the form of the Dasein renouncing certain of its potentials in order to ward off the threat of dissolution of that world that has been so restrictedly constituted under the aegis of one dominant meaning-context, and, hence, dissolution of the self. But since it is just this renouncing of potentials of existence that represents the beginning of the dissolution (flattening, narrowing, emptying) of the self, all such efforts lead to their own negation, and the neurotic finds himself caught in a bind. The attempted solution of his problems results in their reinforcement. The psychotic goes one step further and surrenders himself completely over the power of another. The price he pays for the lessening of the experience of anxiety is the loss of his own self-determination. In psychosis the Dasein is completely surrendered over to one definite world-design” (Needleman 1968, p. 115). Moreover, what follows should be considered only a “sketch” for a rethinking of the Daseinsanalytic psychotherapeutic approach.



We believe that Daseinsanalyse's coordinates may be traced starting from the relationship between subject's own *thrownness*, i.e., its past and *contingency*, its "*facticity*", and its *transcendence*, i.e., its openness to *Possibles*; between *subjection* and *subjectivation* processes; between *predicative* and *ante-predicative* dimensions of experience. On the same line, this clinical approach cannot be thought, from our point of view, except as a deepening of the *implicit* and *opaque* dimensions of consciousness, i.e., of a subject's Unconsciousness. It should have, as its own *telos*, the historical-hermeneutical deconstruction of what the *Other* did about the subject, but mainly what clients will have to find are those "*a priori structural constitutive moments*" (Binswanger, 1992, p. 174) that constitute the architecture of what is always and everywhere the whole-ness of their world, of their *being-in-the-world*, of their *being-with-others* and that determine them in their proper way of being. It should be thought as a work aimed to help patients to *re-open* themselves to their own *existential possibilities*, that is to say, to give subjects back an *authentic historical mobility of existence*. As Binswanger himself had to say, the aim of daseinsanalytic psychotherapy is to enable the patient "to find the way back out of his neurotically or psychotically extravagant [*verstiegenen*], deranged [*verrannnten*], hole-filled [*verlochten*] or distorted/cranky [*verschrobenen*] etc. way of Dasein [*Daseinsweise*] and world, into the freedom of being able to choose one's own possibilities of existence [in die Freiheit des Verfügenkönnens über seine eigenen Existenzmöglichkeiten]" (Binswanger 1994i, pp. 262–263).

From a "technical point of view", if on the one hand, when compared to psychoanalysis, Freud's rules of *free association* and *listening with free-floating attention* seem to be useful, on the other, the third fundamental one, *abstinence*, which is the subject of intense controversies within psychoanalytic literature, especially when referred to the analyst's abstinent position to be taken, at least from our point of view, appears decisively more problematic.<sup>23</sup> In any case, the work to be carried out within the clinical encounter can never be considered

23 We agree with Rollo May when he writes that "existential technique should have flexibility and versatility, varying from patient to patient and from one phase to another in treatment with the same patient" (May 2004b, p. 78). With regard to the *abstinence* issue, a different stance has been taken by Alice Holzhey-Kunz (2014). If on the one hand she correctly says that "abstinence" does not mean merely taking a passive, mirror-like role within the clinical setting, on the other hand the same author states that within the clinical setting what must be avoided is "the kind of symmetrical and reciprocally open conversation that is usual between friends" (p. 213). This stance is openly divergent from Binswangerian recommendations and ideas (1994i) as well as from ours. "Ironically" our stance is much closer to the ideas shared within the Relational and Intersubjective models of Psychoanalysis.



a mere interpretative restitution from the therapist of the subtext operating in the patient's discourse, as his *unconscious carrier/desire*, and specifically as a restitution formulated on the basis of a pre-given theory, that is to say from preordained interpretative grids. On the contrary, from our point of view, as previously said, it can be imagined as a co-construction work aimed at discovering the *structural* plot that founds the specific patient's *world-project*. More precisely, it should be considered a specific methodology aimed at enabling clients to discover by themselves their idiosyncratic frames of reference or significance, i.e., their unrecognized presuppositions underlying their specific modality of organizing the experience in a meaningful way. It is not an easy task to pursue: in a certain sense, it could seem a "jumping out from the picture". Needleman had this to say:

The Existential A Priori [...] in the patient is lived and is therefore, like the horizonlike contour of the eye, not in the focus of attention. What the category of [...] 'brackets-in' is at the focus of attention, while the category itself is so near to her as knower that precisely as long as her being-in-the-world is defined by this category as her conceptual focus, her focus of attention, always requiring a certain sense of otherness in order to be the object of focal attention, must bypass—shoot beyond—this category as the possible beholding of her thought. Only by establishing of a new, larger horizon can this meaning become conscious, a therapeutic goal that departs from the classic psychoanalytic emphasis on bringing the unconscious to consciousness as itself the effective "cure".<sup>24</sup>

NEEDLEMAN 1968, PP. 91–92

Indeed, what seems necessary is to help clients take a different intentional stance, a self-reflexive attitude and reflect on their habitual modalities of

24 Although from a different perspective, Jean Paul Sartre in his first important philosophical work, *The Transcendence of the Ego* (1937), had something similar to say: "The me, as such, remains unknown to us. And that is easy to understand: it is given as an object. So the only method for getting to know it is observation, approximation, waiting, experience. But these procedures, which are perfectly suitable for the entire domain of the non-intimate transcendent, are not suitable here, by virtue of the very intimacy of the me. It is too present for one to look at it from a really external point of view. [...] Finally, what radically prevents one from acquiring any real knowledge of the Ego is the quite special way in which it is given to reflective consciousness. In fact, the Ego never appears except when we are not looking at it. The reflective gaze has to fix itself on the *Erlebnis*, insofar as it emanates from the state. Then, behind the state, on the horizon, the Ego appears. So it is never seen except "out of the corner of one's eye" (Sartre 2004, pp. 22–23).

framing experience. Client's self-reflexive attitude is in such sense absolutely necessary, but it doesn't suffice. It is mainly on the part of the psychotherapist that a revisited Husserlian *Imaginative Variation* (Husserl, 1970) may represent a very important tool to getting access to client's Existential A Priori.

As Jean Paul Sartre pointed out in his *Being and Nothingness*: "It is [...] by a comparison of the various empirical drives of a subject that we try to discover and disengage the fundamental project which is common to the all—and not by a simple summation or reconstruction of these tendencies; each drive or tendency is the entire person" (Sartre, 1956, p. 564).<sup>25</sup>

In any case, the path to be followed is that of a diachronically established relationship based on circularity and reciprocity. In such a context a special attention will be paid to the Language.

In his *Über die daseinsanalytische Forschungsrichtung in der Psychiatrie* [*On the Daseinsanalytic research direction in psychiatry*] Binswanger said:

The phenomena of which Daseinsanalyse tries to interpret the content, in their essence, are fundamentally linguistic phenomena, because it is within and by force of language that our world- projects authentically become set and articulate themselves.

BINSWANGER 1994B, P. 242

Later on, he adds:

With regard to linguistic phenomena [...] the essence of language and speech is that they express and notify *a certain content of meaning*. As we know, this content of meaning is infinitely varied. What matters is, therefore, to specify from which meaning content we investigate our patients' utterances. [Was den zweiten Vorteil betrifft, die Möglichkeit der Untersuchung sprachlicher Phänomene, so besteht ja das Wesen der Sprache und des Sprechens darin, daß hier ein bestimmter Bedeutungsgehalt ausgedrückt und kundgegeben wird. Dieser Bedeutungsgehalt ist, wie Sie wissen, unendlich mannigfaltiger Art. Es kommt daher alles darauf an, genau anzugeben, auf welchen

25 Although, as we have previously seen, Binswanger did not consider Jean Paul Sartre an important mentor, many researchers have outlined a remarkable confluence in their thought. In particular, it seems evident the similarity between Sartre's *original* choice as a person's *Fundamental* (or *Original*) *Project*, and Binswanger's ideas with regard to the *world-project*. With regard to this issue, see Needleman, 1968; Galimberti, 1979; Frie, 1997; Fulton, 1999.

Bedeutungsgehalt hin wir sprachlichen Äußerungen unserer Kranken untersuchen]. We do not limit ourselves to taking into account, as the psychoanalyst systematically does, the biographical content, the references to actually lived or supposed connections to inner life, and above all, we do not take into account possible referrals to the actual facts of *vital functions*, as the psychopathologist does when he confronts himself with neurologic disorders of language and thought. Rather what we must mostly take into account in *Daseinsanalyse* is the content of linguistic expressions and notifications that reveal the world-project or world-projects in which, those who speak, live or have lived their life; in a word their “world content” [*Weltgehalt*].

IBID. P. 243

So, the whole subject becomes a *textual* material to be read for its coloring, its spatial qualities, its texture, its temporality, and so on. As Binswanger himself recognizes, *Daseinsanalyse* and Psychoanalysis,<sup>26</sup> in a certain sense, if on the one hand may be considered complementary, on the other they “perform” a “reading” of such a *text* in different ways. As is evident in Binswanger’s words, *Daseinsanalyse*, as well as psychoanalysis, are based upon autobiographical and biographical documents and testimonies (Binswanger 2004a). At the same

26 The interaction between Psychoanalysis and Phenomenology has been and is still today widespread and productive all around the world. In German-speaking countries we can refer to the important works of G. Bally (1961), V. E. von Gebattel (1946; 1959), and obviously to Medard Boss (1963) and Ludwig Binswanger. In France we can consider the important works of Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1964), Paul Ricoeur (1970), Sartre’s last books (1968; 1971) or the activities of the Laboratory for Fundamental Psychopathology and Psychoanalysis, founded in 1979 by Pierre Fédida at the University of Paris VII Denis Diderot. Within the Anglophone psychoanalytical movement, after the seminal works of Erich Fromm (1965), Rollo May (1958a; 1958b), Ronald D. Laing (1960; 1961), Eugene Gendlin (1970), just to mention a few, in recent years many authors have referred to the phenomenological and existential thought (e.g., Atwood & Stolorow 1984; Handley 1995; Orange 2010; Stolorow, Atwood, & Orange 2002; Kirsner, 2011). Moreover, all around the world, contemporary psychoanalysis, especially post-Bionian thinkers like Antonino Ferro, Giuseppe Civitaresse, Dominique Scarfone, César & Sara Botella, Marion Oliner, Roosevelt Cassorla and others offer perspectives on contemporary psychoanalytic treatment that compliment rather than contradict a *Daseinsanalytic* approach.

Although it is not complete because it considers only the earlier development of the Phenomenological Approach in Psychiatry and Psychotherapy, a reconstruction of this subject can be found in Spiegelberg, 1972. Without doubt, it is extremely hard to think of psychoanalysis today as a unique and homogenous field. At any rate, in what follows, we will refer primarily to classical Freudian psychoanalysis.

time, within the clinical encounter, every little detail, everything which happens to the client or which he himself undertakes, all his/her behavior, his/her mimic, gestures and obviously utterances with their specific illocutionary force and significance's context, are considered significative. However according to Daseinsanalyse, all these elements posit themselves as a main route to get access to subjects' *world-projects*. Furthermore, probably the most evident difference between the two approaches may be found in the modality of "interpretation' of patients" symptoms and dreams as *signs*. If we consider the specific way of interpreting the oneiric material, one of the most crucial aspect of a Daseinsanalytic psychotherapy (Binswanger, 1994i), and we refer to Peirce's Sign Theory (Pierce, 1982), Psychoanalysis tends to consider the several features that appear in dreams as referable to what Pierce named *symbols*. By contrast, Daseinsanalyse considers the same elements *Icons*. In fact, the former utilizes a general and conventional pre-given theory (drive theory, Oedipus complex, and so on) to interpret dream-features, whereas Daseinsanalyse considers the dream-features signs that *resemble* what they "stand for", their *likeness*, their *having a mere community in some quality* and *referring to the world-project*.<sup>27</sup> Moreover, for Freud, dreams convey images (manifest content) which stand for something else (latent content): the unconscious childish wishes which are transformed by the oneiric work (condensation and displacement; conversion to images), to bypass the censorship of the unconscious, expressing and partially fulfilling the unconscious wishes themselves. On the contrary, Daseinsanalyse consider dreams as a specific modality of intentional, *private* life which, in a certain sense, "directly" expresses, through images, the specific *world-projects*, or, to put it better, the *themes* that ground them. Each character of the dream (including people, objects, places, etc) is assumed to point to the dreamer's *world-project*; the signification is intrinsic to the elements of the dream.

In his *The Case of Ellen West* (2004a), which is about a case of a patient who we today would probably say suffered from Anorexia Nervosa, Binswanger

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27 We are perfectly aware that the reference to Pierce's semiotic would probably deserve much more space than we can devote to here. At the same time, it is true that the analyses conducted by the American Philosopher are extremely complex and have undergone several subsequent revisions. For this reason, our proposal to refer to his semiotic must be considered a general and approximate reference. In any case, we believe that our referral to Pierce' Sign Theory allows to complete and better understand the otherwise insightful Jacob Needleman's theoretical reflections with regard to the different stances taken by Daseinsanalyse and Psychoanalysis on patients' verbal, imaginative, symptomatic and oneiric subjective expressions as symbols/signs (Needleman 1968, pp. 59–83).

dwells on the differences between the two specific interpreting approaches of psychoanalysis and Daseinsanalyse. This is what he had to say:

As the two psychoanalytic equations, slender = higher spiritual (soft, blond, Aryan) type, fat = bourgeois Jewish type, they must not be understood in terms of a direct reference of the two sides to each other, but only of the community of the worlds to which both sides of each equation belong. This means specifically in terms of their belonging to the ethereal world in the first and to the tomb-world in the second equation. Hence, we must not say that slender “means” the higher, fat, the Jewish, type. Existential analysis shows that in this case no one-sided meaning or symbolic relationship of one side of the equation to the other is before us, but that both sides, on the basis of belonging to the same significance in respect to the world, have a common meaning, the meaning of light-ethereal in the first equation, that of the heavy-oppressive in the second.

P. 316

It is evident, in Binswanger’s words, that the kind of “hermeneutic” to apply to the subject’s recounting of his/her life, as well to recounting his/her dreams, has to be aimed to uncovering his/her underlying *life-project* and the *themes* that ground it,<sup>28</sup> i.e., his/her existential a priori “as the meaning-matrix within

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28 If we consider the importance that in Daseinsanalyse have *Life-Projects* and even more *Themes* as *General-Meaning-Schemes*, one could also consider possible contact points with Post-Rationalist Cognitive Psychotherapy, because of the importance accorded by the latter to the *Principal Organizations of Personal Meanings* (P. M.Orgs) (Guidano 1991). Taking a constructivist stand-point, Michael J. Mahoney stated: “[...] we humans are active participants in organizing our experiences of ourselves and our worlds. Dynamic and continuous ordering processes construct, maintain, and revise activity patterns. These active ordering processes are primarily tacit (not conscious) and unique to each individual” (Mahoney 2004, p. 7); and again: “Human beings are active participants in shaping their own experiences. We are agents of choice. Our actions and activities reflect our choices, and our choices influence who and how we are. We are unaware of most of our choices. Much of our activity is anticipatory. With important exceptions, we tend to anticipate what we remember (i.e., we expect our future to resemble our past). [...] The network or matrix of our personal meanings make up our personal realities. Although we share much with each other, we each live in and form uniquely personal realities. [...] Self-organization is fundamentally shaped by social bonds and symbolic processes (e.g., imagery, language). We live in and form relationships (past, present, and potential). Symbols and symbolic processes connect us and help us to organize our experiencing. Words and symbols reflect powerful processes of organization and communication. The quest for order and meaning is often expressed in narrative form, that is, in the form of

which events are experienced and which, in that sense, is the condition of possibility of experience" (Needleman 1968, p. 66). In fact, as we have seen, personal purposes, life directions, feelings, emotions, meanings, beliefs, modes of activity, as well as dreams, are all different instantiations of the basic *theme(s)* as *abstract meaning category(ies)*.

As Jean Paul Sartre said in his *Question de méthode* (1960) [*Search for a Method*]:

[...] We must remember that we live our childhood as our *future*. Our childhood determines gestures and roles in the perspective of what is to come. This is not a matter of the mechanical reappearance of montages. Since the gestures and roles are inseparable from the project which transforms them, they are relations independent of the terms which they unite and which we must find at every moment of the human enterprise.

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an unfolding story" (*ibid.*, pp. 10–12). Nonetheless, Cognitive Psychotherapies sometimes seem to be paradoxically closer to Psychoanalysis than Daseinsanalyse when we consider the origins of such *Schemas* or *Choices*. In fact, more often they get closer to psychoanalytic determinism when they refer, for example, to the very importance of earliest Attachment relationships as *causal determinants* (e.g., Guidano, 2010). Daseinsanalyse views adult difficulties and/or psychological symptoms as "manifestations" of General Schema that *appeared also* during infancy (maybe in different behaviors) and not strictly derived from the events that characterized the relationship between the child or the infant and her/his Attachment Figures. Obviously this does not mean that Daseinsanalyse does not accord importance to the exploration of subjects' past history and, in particular, of their more or less dysfunctional relationships with Attachment Figures. What is at issue here is the real meaning of such an exploration: it is not aimed at establishing the "real" causes of the difficulties, but mainly to establish the a-priori schema relevant to all experience. As we will see in a moment, in our model, the development of an individual is after all derived from the dialectic between past - historical, cultural, biographical, biological- determinants and "personalization" processes. Moreover, as Rollo May, referring to Alfred Adler, stated many years ago: "... the whole "form" of memory is [...] a mirror of the individual's style of life. What an individual seeks to *become* determines what he remembers of his *has been*. In this sense the future determines the past" (May 2004b, p. 69). Again, "It has often been said that one's past determines one's present and future. Let it be underlined that one's present and future—how he commits himself to existence at the moment—also determines his past. That is, it determines what he can recall of his past, what portions of his past he selects (consciously or unconsciously) to influence him now, and therefore the particular gestalt his past will assume" (*ibid.*, p. 88). In any case, it is worth recalling that in recent years some authors have attempted to merge Phenomenological and Cognitive approaches: with regard to this last issue, for example see Edwards, 1990; Corrie & Milton 2000, Prasko, et al., 2012.

Surpassed and maintained, they constitute what I shall call the internal coloration of the project. [...] *a life develops in spirals; it passes again and again by the same points but at different levels of integration and complexity.*<sup>29</sup>

ENG. TRANS., 1965, PP. 105–106; my italics

At the same time, in his *The Transcendence of the Ego* (Sartre 2004), the French Philosopher distinguished an unreflective, impersonal, conscious experience of the intentional objects of those experiences, a consciousness which is ordinarily fully absorbed in the world, coping with the objects around it-self, with neither *I* nor *Me*, and a “second-degree consciousness” (Sartre 2004, p. 58) which grasps the *I* in its thinking. Only an action of reflection, for the French philosopher, would bring an *I* “as the unity of actions” (Sartre 2004, p. 60) and as a self (*Me*) as a transcendent object. In other words, for Sartre selfhood is only discovered or posited in reflection. More specifically, he distinguished between two categories of reflected experiences. One of them is that of actions (reflected conscious states in which the self appears as the agent of the action, where the transcendent unity of simple actions is the *I*, the self as subject), the other one is that of states and qualities, where the self appears as passive. States are, for example, emotional or affective states (for example, hatred which appears in the reflection of the personal conscious experiences of disgust, revulsion and anger). Qualities are in turn that which transcend states, as qualities or dispositions some may say they possess: “failings, virtues, tastes, talents, tendencies, instincts, etc.” (Sartre 2004, p. 16). With regard to this, he stated that if “The *Me (Moi)* appears through the reflective act and as a noematic correlative of a reflexive intention” (p. 12), then “the influence of preconceived ideas and social factors [...] becomes preponderant” (p. 16) in determining its “qualities”. As such, we have always to consider all loyalties, traditions, ways of being provided in advance within Language. Indeed, as previously said, Binswanger himself stated “[...] language is every man’s spiritual root. For it is language that “envisions and thinks” for all of us before any one individual brings it to the service of his own creative and intellectual powers” (1968d p. 222). Thus, without any uncertainty Daseinsanalyse may be referred today to the *progressive-regressive method* developed by Sartre in the late 1950s: following such a methodology, we investigate the historical and cultural, as well as the biographical features as primary conditions for subject’s life-development (“*regressive*” moment of analysis) and, subsequently

29 If you want, this is a different way of considering the Freudian *untemporality* of the unconscious, but, as we will see, without any rigid determinism.



we try to understand the process of “personalization”, i.e., the dialectically personal confrontation with such elements (“*progressive*” moment).<sup>30</sup> After all Daseinsanalytic psychotherapy cannot be aimed but at helping clients to take a different perspective on both past and future, as a “radical redirection of one’s “project [or project, throwing oneself forward out of the past toward the future] of being” (Cannon 2012, p. 100). Our lives are always determined by the Other of Language, by “nature”, birth, origins and environment, but as Jean Paul Sartre had to say: “We are not lumps of clay, and what is important is not what people make of us but what we ourselves make of what they have made of us” (2012, p. 49) Paraphrasing again the same philosopher, if “the gaze of the adults”, our past experiences, have had a constituent power which has transformed all of us “into a constituted nature”, we now have to live: “In the pillory, with our neck in an iron collar, we still have to live” (*ibid.*).

This is, from our point of view, the real goal to pursue in psychotherapy: to help patients live their lives, to do so in their best possible, “authentic” way. There is just one problem: we can help them but, after all is said and done, it depends only on they themselves “to take the last decisive step toward self-mastery” (Binswanger 1968a, p. 183), to live their lives to the full.

### Conclusions

Let us now briefly summarize what we have already said so far. We have started from the confrontation between Binswanger and Freud, from the Binswangerian recognition of the indisputable importance of the unconscious for clinical practice. In the absence of a systematic discussion of this issue in his works, we have tried to trace two fundamental points for an understanding of his idea with regard to this issue. Initially, we have addressed the conceptual device, which Binswanger derived from Heidegger, of *world-projects* as an

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30 In a previous paper of ours (Vitelli, 2015) we have shown how male-to-female transsexuals pre-verbal inner experiences regarding gender identity are signified within that horizon of meaning opened up by medical discourses and behind them, by the *signifier of sexual difference*, which is a culturally and therefore historically determined horizon. What is more commonly at issue in such cases, is a *model* of femininity borrowed from *the On*, from the *Anonymous*, from a general type of *femininity* that is already crystallized in public life. At the same time, it must be considered how ‘transphobic’ instances, widespread in Western countries (as well as in many other parts of the world) are ‘introjected’ by subjects. Thus, psychotherapeutic practice in such cases is aimed at exploring with clients their life-history, their specific *world-projects* and the specific way they have confronted themselves with such elements.



*existential a priori*, and the *themes* upon which they are grounded. Then, we have outlined the importance of Language as the primary horizon, whereby the subject would imagine himself speaking but without actually realizing it had already been said beyond his conscious awareness. Finally, we have turned our attention to the last stage of Binswangerian thought itinerary, the one most commonly known as that of his “return to Husserl”. In particular, we have tried to emphasize the author’s thought continuity with his previous ideas. At the same time, we have shown that, both in *Melancholy and Mania* but especially in *Delirium*, what he had previously considered a consequence of an “arbitrary act” from the subject, comes to be played on the level of *passive synthesis*. Subsequently we have seen how this level of functioning of consciousness, in the author’s thought, appears to be inextricably linked with the *inner life history*, i.e., with the *themes* that ground and put in frame one’s own life experience as its intrinsic rule.

Finally we have tried to rethink Daseinsanalytic Psychotherapy in the light of Binswangerian ideas.

An historical reconstruction may have sense only, at least from our point of view and referring to this specific case, if it helps to cast new light on our actual practice.

The human being’s hiddenness from itself, what we casually call the unconscious, is perhaps the central, even universal feature of a vast portion of the varieties of psychological misery. Yet the topic is rarely extensively considered by many contemporary existential therapists and daseinsanalysts. Even the founder of daseinsanalytic psychotherapy, Medard Boss, essentially dissolved the idea of an unconscious by folding it into Heidegger’s understanding of the concealment of being.<sup>31</sup> On the contrary, Binswanger admits that it was impossible for him to “manage without the unconscious” in either theory or practice. Binswanger’s understanding of the unconscious is, therefore, probably the only one available for scholars and practitioners of Daseinsanalysis. Although he never systematically explained his ideas with regard to this issue, having being guided by the conviction that Binswanger’s thought has more in itself than he does say (Foucault 1954), we have tried to find, within his extensive work, some cues for rethinking this fundamental aspect of human functioning. At the same time, we have considered the relevance of Ludwig Binswanger’s and Jean Paul Sartre’s ideas for a rethinking of psychotherapeutic practice.

31 We are deeply grateful to Reviewer #1 for having helped us to reconsider the differences between Medard Boss and Ludwig Binswanger with regard to the issue of the Unconscious, as well as for having helped us to be more and more convinced of the relevance of this topic for a rethinking of Daseinsanalytical Psychotherapy.

In any case, as it was the case of Freud, we probably still have to struggle to find a precise understanding of and an appropriate language for recognizing the enigma of the ways in which the human being remains a mystery to him/herself. If on the one hand, psychoanalysis still remains an important point of reference, a confrontation with other approaches, as the more recent cognitivist ones, probably may also be considered.

Without doubt, a number of important theoretical and technical questions still remain open. What we have tried to do is give some initial and partial responses. We really hope the readers are encouraged to do the same, namely find their own responses.

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