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## Ludwig Binswanger: The Transcendence of Love

*Abstract:* Ludwig Binswanger's phenomenological masterpiece, the *Grundformen des menschlichen Daseins* (1942), has long been neglected in the contemporary debates specifically on transcendence and self-transcendence and in contemporary philosophy of religion in general. This article therefore seeks to introduce Binswanger's concept of love as the most basic and even fundamental form of Dasein into current debates on transcendence. It is for this reason that we will compare, at the end of this text, Binswanger's work to that of Levinas and that of Derrida and Caputo.

*Key words:* Ludwig Binswanger, phenomenology, love, Dasein, otherness

*Povzetek:* **Ludwig Binswanger: transcendenca ljubezni**

Fenomenološka mojstrovina Ludwiga Binswangerja *Grundformen des menschlichen Daseins* (1942) je bila dolga leta zanemarjena v sodobnih razpravah, še zlasti tistih o transcendenca in samo-transcendenca ter v sodobni filozofiji religije na splošno. Ta članek zato v sodobne razmisleke o transcendenca uvaja Binswangerjev koncept ljubezni kot najosnovnejšo in najtemeljnejšo obliko tubiti (Dasein). Temu v sklepnem delu besedila služi primerjava Binswangerjevega dela z deli Levinasa, Derridaja in Caputa.

*Ključne besede:* Ludwig Binswanger, fenomenologija, ljubezen, tubit, drugost

### 1. Introduction

Binswanger (1881–1966) was primarily a psychiatrist, who worked in the sanatorium Belle vue in Switzerland. This place was one of the most exciting meeting-points for people who then spearheaded intellectual and artistic life. Freud visited the place very often and Heidegger, too, was familiar with the place and visited the sanatorium at least once. During the early forties of the previous century the psychiatrist Binswanger digressed, so to say, into phenomenological philosophy. At that time, he had already built a name for himself as a preeminent psychologist and psychiatrist, notably with the books *Traum und Existenz* (1930), which triggered the thought of Michel Foucault, and *Über Ideenflucht* (1933).

Already in these works, his fascination with the phenomenology of Edmund Husserl is obvious, but the publication of Heidegger's *Sein und Zeit* (1927) proved to be, for him as for many others, a landmark text which inspired him to write his phenomenology of love. This led him to eventually condense his phenomenology into the *Grundformen*, published in 1942.

However, this digression into phenomenology would not prove to be successful, at least in the eyes of contemporary phenomenologists. Very quickly, the *Grundformen* came under the attention of Heidegger who dismissed it as a »misunderstanding« of *Sein und Zeit*, stating that Binswanger confuses ontic and existential matters with matters of ontological and existential importance (2001, 115; 190–192). For Heidegger, just as the biologist or the theologian were woefully unequipped to pose the question of the meaning of being, one could likewise expect the same from a mere psychiatrist to entertain this question. Importantly, Heidegger's dismissal of the *Grundformen* caused Binswanger to abandon his straying into philosophy and return to questions of psychology.

His *Melancholie und Manie* (1960), for instance, seems to have had a considerable impact within psychology and, what is now called »Daseinsanalyse«, could not be conceived without Binswanger's work. It is, through Binswanger's turn to psychology, we believe, that Binswanger's impact on the philosophical debate has been scarce, although reception of his work has begun in France and in Italy.

Yet these works mostly focus on Binswanger's work in psychiatry and leave the philosophical importance of the *Grundformen* undiscussed. (Gros 2009; Coulomb 2009; Cabestan and Dastur 2011; Basso 2011; 2017) Despite Binswanger's dismissal of his own philosophical work, this does not mean that others did not take notice of it. For example, in Italy, very soon after the publication of the *Grundformen*, Danilo Cargnello published a summary and interpretation of the book already in 1947. It has been translated into French just last year (2016). Cargnello too, however, argued that Binswanger's *Grundformen* revealed only the ontic importance of love and therefore seems to have agreed with Heidegger's later judgment.

Yet the question of love has not thereby been settled and one can argue that the question is still legitimate today: where does the phenomenon of love figure in *Sein und Zeit*? The question actually predates Binswanger, especially in Karl Löwith's *Das Individuum in der Rolle des Mitmenschen* (1928) which Binswanger cites, and it of course carries on after Binswanger and Löwith through the work of Hannah Arendt. Although Heidegger was aware of the phenomenon of love, he diminishes its importance: there's just one mention of the phenomenon in a footnote of *Sein und Zeit* on Augustine, where the latter states that to know God one must love God.

It thus remains all the more remarkable that it is primarily the negative mood of anxiety and the question of finitude which regulate Heidegger's magnum opus. One can therefore, legitimately i.e. philosophically, wonder whether or not the phenomenon of love shows a different ontology than the one Heidegger has conveyed to us. It is our contention in this article that this indeed was Binswanger's

aim and that, in fact, he has, on this score, delivered: the phenomenon of love, ultimately, shows the facticity of the »all with all«, the basic phenomenon of togetherness, rather than the »all against all« which transpires through Heidegger's analysis of anxiety and the »Jemeinigkeit« of one's death.

Binswanger conceded much to Heidegger. In the 1962 preface to the *Grundformen*, he was careful to distinguish between his own phenomenological anthropology and Heidegger's ontological quest for the meaning of being by labeling his own work famously as a »productive misunderstanding« of Heidegger's *Sein und Zeit*. (1993, 5)<sup>1</sup> Yet there is an ambivalence, it seems, in Binswanger's admission. Certainly, he agrees that his own phenomenology is an anthropology and certainly it remains, as Heidegger argues, on an ontic and existential level.

These admissions tilt toward Cargnello's reading of Binswanger, stating that

»Binswanger has always been, before all else, a psychiatrist. It is correct, we believe, to say that, when dictating his phenomenological anthropological lesson, he always had forms of alienation in mind, even when he does not speak of them explicitly or only through some allusions in this work [the *Grundformen*].« (2016, 41)

We will not deny the fact that Binswanger's phenomenology has an anthropological and psychiatric aim, but the very fact that this aim is not made explicit, or only seldom alluded to, seems to imply that the *Grundformen* served another goal. For this, one needs to return to the preface of 1962, to which Cargnello probably did not have access.

There, Binswanger says that

»the core of my divergence with Heidegger does not so much lie in the fact that I understand fundamental ontology anthropologically but rather, conversely, in this that *I seek to understand love /... / ontologically*. And [in this respect] too, the phrase of Szilasi proves to be true: it is on the basis of new modes of experience that we succeed in outlining new possibilities for experience.« (1993, 5)

Everything conceded, we must consequently acknowledge that, within this preface at least, Binswanger never really admitted that his phenomenology of love was without ontological importance: maybe his deference and humility to Heidegger forced him to overstate his supposed misreading of *Sein und Zeit*. It is this importance that we will outline in the remainder of this text. First, we will briefly remind ourselves of the main characteristics of Heidegger's *Sein und Zeit*.

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<sup>1</sup> For a commentary, see Brescia 2015.

## 2. Heidegger's *Sein und Zeit*

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It is quite understandable that Heidegger's book has such an impact on his contemporaries. Here was a philosopher who was able to speak about what is most common and most everyday of our lives: talking to others, reading magazines, hammering, etc. Heidegger was the first to speak about our being-in-the-world.

Heidegger sparked a whole tradition of existentialism with his enquiries into the moods of fear and anxiety. Yet he always maintained that such an existential anthropology had never been his aim. His was a quest for what is most proper to the human being from an ontological viewpoint: what can we learn about »being« from the human being, considering that the only being that knows about being is the human being? Here lies a difference already with Binswanger's phenomenological anthropology which asks: what is it for the human being to be?

In a sense, then, Heidegger's criticism of Binswanger, namely that he confuses ontic and existential experience with ontological questioning, is correct. For Heidegger, what matters is not »this« or »that« ontic experience but, rather, the very fact that we, as human beings, experience. Heidegger's ontology, then, queries for what some have called »the experience of experiencing« or, in phenomenological ontological terms, »the appearing of appearing«. Heidegger's anthropological starting-point only serves this purpose because it is in each case the human being that experiences or is acquainted with appearances.

Therefore, even Heidegger needed a sort of passage-way between ontic experience and ontological matters. This passage-way, as we will see, is the experience of anxiety, which serves as the bridge between our everyday being-in-the-world and what lies »beneath«, »beyond«, or »within« it: the question of being and of ontology. It is precisely on this point that Heidegger will be criticized by many of his famous followers. One might think here of Levinas' statement that »in Heidegger Dasein is never hungry« (2002, 134), implying that by disregarding certain ontic experiences, such as hunger and the need of a home, Heidegger might have missed certain ontological issues about the human being and being in general as well. It might very well be that Binswanger was the first to pose such questions to Heidegger: what if some ontic experiences other than anxiety show us a different way of being, particularly if they open modes of existence that teach us a different lesson about what and how being is and specifically what it is for us to be and exist? »In Heidegger«, Binswanger worries, »Dasein never loves«.

Yet a second point in Heidegger's existential analytic deserves our attention. His quest for what is most proper to the human being has a peculiar aspect to it: could it be, argues Heidegger, that what is »most proper« to the human being is usually avoided, or, in other terms, could it be that the human being most often is not him- or herself (1967, 150–151)?

Heidegger, in effect, distinguishes between two modes of being for the human being: the one inauthentic, the other authentic. In the first mode Dasein is immersed in and absorbed by its preoccupations in everyday existence. Its existence

is covered, covered over rather, by its care and concern for what comes next; like when we are thinking of making dinner later while writing this article. Heidegger has no intent of moralizing here: it is not that this »inauthentic« or »improper« mode is bad, it is rather that »something goes missing« in this mode of existence.

For here, in everydayness, Dasein identifies with what he or she does in the world to such an extent that it forgets precisely about (the fact of) its being as a being-in-the-world. In short, for Heidegger, following Aristotle's famous dictum that »potentiality is higher than actuality«, what is forgotten is the fact that I am, that we are, and what we can be. What I am – writer, coworker, handyman – absorbs the question what I also could be completely; what we are – Belgians, Europeans – gets in the way about what »Europe«, for instance, could also, potentially, be. It is to retrieve such possibilities and potentialities that Heidegger turns to anxiety and the question of finitude.

Anxiety, and in particular angst over our deaths, operates somewhat as a phenomenological reduction for Heidegger: it makes our everyday being-in-the-world disappear in order for our worldliness as such to appear. Angst, in effect, is not a revelation of anything grand or divine for that matter.

It merely makes for the fact that the world and our preoccupations in it for a while no longer make any sense. Yet, on the other hand, angst does reveal that there is no escape from the world either: even if the world »as such« does not make sense, it becomes evident to the person in anguish that there is but this world and my being as this being-in-the-world. In this regard, anxiety shows, first, that there is world and, secondly, that I will have to be »my« being-in-the-world since no one can »be« in my place and, thirdly, that I can do this in my »ownmost« way.

For Heidegger, the latter is where a liberation of sorts lies: anxiety over my being-in-the-world in this sense functions as a sort of retrieval of new potentialities for this Dasein that in each case I have to be.

### 3. Binswanger's relation to Heidegger

Binswanger shares this primacy of being-in-the-world for philosophical reflection. It is indeed important to realize that Binswanger does not reject Heidegger's analysis. He simply states that »this truth lacks love« – »diese Wahrheit mangelt die Liebe« (1993, 218). Heidegger's authentic and heroic Dasein might be powerful and courageous but it knows next to nothing, Binswanger argues, of the phenomenon of love and its hints of our original being-together. It is this ontic experience of love, of my love for this very ontic you and your love for me, that puts Binswanger on track of a different ontology than Heidegger had in mind.

Even though Binswanger was one of the first thinkers to pose the question of love to Heidegger, his philosophy of our being-together has certainly had its predecessors. One need not think only of Löwith. Martin Buber's philosophy of dialogue

was also influential on Binswanger's phenomenology, although Binswanger is mindful particularly of what happens to those others not immediately drawn into the »I-Thou«-relation. Levinas' thought, too, can be aligned to where Binswanger's was heading: in *Totality and Infinity's* conclusion, Levinas articulates that there is in being an »intersubjective curvature of space« (2002, 291) and one finds in Binswanger's phenomenology an important clarification of such a curvature.

This intersubjective curvature, our being bound to the other, has recently also been explored by Jean-Luc Nancy, who has convincingly shown that the truth of Descartes' *ego cogito*, the I who is certain only of its own existence, can only be true if it is communicated to the other, to »each of Descartes' readers« (2000, 31). The point is, of course, that the solipsism involved in Descartes' phrase immediately undoes itself, is rendered inoperative at the least, as soon as it is published, read, and disseminated.

Binswanger might therefore be called a forerunner of many contemporary philosophical trends. If, in effect, one of the critiques leveled against Levinas was that his priority of the Other was ultimately grounded in God and religion and if it was this critique that made Jacques Derrida (who first leveled the critique) and later Jean-Luc Nancy speak of an address and a greeting in being, a *salut*, without salvation, then this *salut sans salvation*, too, seems predicted by and present in Binswanger's phenomenology. (Derrida 2005) Binswanger in effect does not speak of religion, even if his thinking might be helpful for a contemporary theology and many of his ideas stem from the Christian tradition in the first place (Schrijvers 2016). His account for instance of the fact that there is no love for self was developed by Augustine centuries ago: for Augustine all love of self is sinful; contrariwise for Binswanger (secularized thinker as he is), the love of self is a deformed expression of the true love that plays itself out between the two lovers and ultimately between us all.

Let us then listen to Binswanger and turn to the phenomenology of love. If Derrida, Levinas and Nancy would all say that »there is no meaning for one alone«, Binswanger would contribute that »there is no love for one alone« either since it is love that dwells between the two of us and in the end all of us. Here is Binswanger's version of the »intersubjective curvature« and the greeting in being.

»But is certain that all the going and the seeking and encountering somehow belong to the secrecies of eros. It is certain that, on our wounded ways, we do not advance and push forward simply because of our deeds but are always drawn to and enticed by something [*gelockt von etwas*] that seemingly always awaits us somewhere yet is always veiled. There is something like a longing of and for love [*Liebesgier*], a curiosity of love in our striding forward even when we seek the solitude of the forest. /... / All lonely encounters are intermixed with something very sweet, may it only be the encounter with a huge tree standing alone or the encounter with an animal of the forest which stops inaudibly and eyes us through the dark. As for me, it is not the embrace but the encounter that is properly decisive of the erotic pantomime. No moment when the sensual is more spiritual or

the spiritual more sensual than in the encounter. /... / Here one finds a mutual aiming-for-the-other yet without lust [*Zueinandertrachten noch ohne Begierde*]. A greeting is something borderless. Dante dates his »new life« back from a greeting that was imparted on him. Wonderful is the cry of a great bird, the peculiar, lonely sound, prior to the world, loud at dawn from the highest evergreen, heard somewhere by a rooster. This somewhere, this indeterminacy which is already a passionate longing, this crying out of the stranger to the stranger [*dies Schreien des Fremden nach der Fremden*] is what is awesome. The encounter promises more than the embrace can hold on to.« (1993, 73)

It is this phenomenon of »Lockung«, our being drawn to others and otherness, which conveys Binswanger's ontology, for if the experience of love is an ontic instance of my being drawn to this particular ontic you (and his being drawn to me), this ontic experience is only possible because of this »Lockung« and borderless greeting that is part of a »higher order of things« (73): it is, for Binswanger, part of the ontological »makeup« of being.

Binswanger's agreement with Heidegger is however not to be underestimated. The experience of love is therefore played out nowhere else than our being-in-the-world, which grafts itself onto Heidegger's existential analytic. Binswanger, on the other hand, argues that in the experience of love another *finale* insinuates itself than the experience of finitude which, for Heidegger, was the sole eschatology that could be imagined in secular times. Let us listen to Binswanger one more time:

»The problem of the human being now needs a new solution. If we can no longer look for it in »the transcendent« or the eternal realm, then we will need to seek in the temporal and finite realm, in Being and Time, in being-in-the-world therefore. Yet in these realms alone not all accounts are settled. There remains a residue that does not befit finitude, the yearning [*Sehnsucht*] beyond the worldly finitude of Dasein for unification with infinite and eternal being.« (368)

By enclosing the human being in its world, and the concomitant finitude, not all accounts are settled and there remains a yearning that makes us look elsewhere and for something other. Rather, this yearning is and shows itself as our enticement to others: being-in-the-world is for Binswanger, from the first, a being-with-others and an *inter-esse* (literally: being between) in the other. It is this interest, this desire and this yearning that makes for Binswanger's most fundamental take on human existence.

This yearning is most clear in the experience of love, where the one obviously longs for the other and the other desires me. Here already, we need to make clear that the experience of love does not answer this yearning: love, for Binswanger, is not what »settles the account« of our finite being and, similarly, love does not »befit finitude«. This is a first indication that there is no »metaphysics of presence« in Binswanger.

Although love does not answer the longing of finitude, it does give this longing a sense of direction. In a nice German wordplay, Binswanger contends that love turns our wandering into a »walking« in the world: the *Wanderung* becomes a *Wandel*, a striding forwards together (95). This experience in finitude of something that does not befit finitude, however, gives way to a quite particular experience of infinity: it is an experience of infinity from within finitude – in-finitude where the infinite »shows itself«. Or rather attests to itself phenomenologically, i.e the »how« of the experience of love cannot be described without taking its infinite and eternal aspect into account.

Before jumping to the ontology of love, however, we need to pay mind to the ontic experience of love. This experience is first of all an experience of my belonging to this very ontic you whom I love and your belonging to me. This reciprocal phenomenon, in which I give myself to you and you give yourself to me, in turn gives way to a belonging to being: our co-longing turns out to be a belonging to one another and being. It is, in Binswanger's terms, an experience of a *Heimat*, a being-at-home in the world, which he carefully crafts against Heidegger's *Unzu-hause*.

In this way, the experience of love creates a mode of existence that Binswanger calls a »in die Welt über die Welt hinaus sein« – a being »beyond« the world whilst being-in-the-world. Here too, it is important to note that our finite being in love is accompanied by an intuition of infinity.

In this regard, one must show how the experience of love overrides the temporal structure of Heidegger's analytic of Dasein. Binswanger does so by overruling both the spatial as well as the temporal aspect of the existential analytic. Hence, the experience of love conveys an intuition of infinity beyond the established borders of the word. As for the temporal aspects, the temporality of the experience of love is such that none of the lovers is »ahead of oneself«, as when Dasein is concerned and preoccupied by entities within-the-world and so opened to the future. We lovers, on the contrary, are not ahead of »oneself« but we are, as lovers, always and already ahead of ourselves: whatever happens, will happen to the two of us.

The spatial structure of Dasein is affected as well by the experience of love. This overturning of spatiality occurs in both a negative and in a positive manner. Negatively, in that the »space« of love shows itself in and through a »bad infinite« as it were, of borderlessness. One can sort of see this in the lyrics »my home is nowhere without you« of Herman Dune, or, for an older generation, Elvis' »since my baby left me, I found no place to dwell«. But the space of love just as well turns into a positivity in that no place is ever uncanny if you are there: the experience of love is thus positive as well because it is »without borders«.

This spatial and temporal aspect of the overturning of love of Dasein's world makes for the fact that love effects its own horizon, much like we today would say of Jean-Luc Marion's saturated phenomenon or Claude Romano's event. Peculiar to this experience of love, however, is first of all that the intuition of infinity takes



place nowhere else than in the world. Yet, secondly, and even more remarkable, is that this paradisiacal state of a pure love never really seems to happen.

It is here that Binswanger is a predecessor of a great many trends in contemporary philosophy, not in the least Derrida's deconstruction and his critique of a metaphysics of presence. Binswanger's dialectic of love and world, as we will see, states clearly that this pure love, if it happens – *s'il y en a*, if you will – only happens in and through the impurities and adversities of the world. Its condition of possibility is therefore at the same time its condition of impossibility. Binswanger's phenomenology of love is, then, far removed from a romantic theory of love which »hovers over the waters«.

#### 4. The dialectic between love and life/world

What we find in Binswanger is thus a sort of Derrida *avant la lettre*: the pure love only happens in and through living in the world or, to state it in Derrida's terms: the »beyond« of love is only experienced »in« the world. We should recall that with such an *au-delà dans*, as a formal structure of transcendence, Derrida »subscribes to everything Levinas says about peace and messianic hospitality, about the beyond of the political in the political« (1999, 117).

One might then safely conclude that Binswanger not only prefigures Derrida but also Levinas' transcendence of the other. We will come back to this in the conclusion, but now we must venture the idea of a »pure« love that does not entirely coincide with itself, that shows a »beyond« of the world »in« the world. It is through such a discrepancy and discontinuity as well that Binswanger will evade a metaphysics of presence in his phenomenology of love: the experience of love is not, and can never be, an experience that would hold the truth of all other experiences. It will always be kept in check by the experience of world, even if the latter should be conceived as a lack of love.

Of this dialectic between life and love or between love and world, one can detect two accounts in Binswanger's *Grundformen*. The first is the life of love and the second, if you will, speaks of the »love of my life«; the first treats how love always and already has to relate to the world, whereas the second shows how love infuses and injects the world with the spirit of love.

As for the »life of love« in the world, Binswanger argues that the lovers are, dialectically, both in the world and without world at the same time – it is not a temporal succession that is at issue here.

In the world, the lovers have to balance between, on the one hand, a *Sorge um die Liebe* (a »concern for love«) and being-in-love on the other. In the world, love is always and already dealing with entities-within-the-world, as when one for instance is preoccupied by who is going to pick up the children from school. As such, this »fall of love« is not to be avoided, but Binswanger makes clear that, in time, these preoccupations might substitute themselves for a proper experience of love:

the things in the world veil and conceal the »us«, you and me, who are born from love. The other fall of love describes the opposite tendency: the lovers are so much involved with one another that they are unable to relate their love to the world. This happens, for instance, when the lovers lose friends over their relationship. The experience of love here becomes what Levinas has called a *solitude à deux*.

Love is about the proper balance between world and love itself. Here is Binswanger again:

»The ›true‹ relation between ›love and world‹ shows itself neither in you and me retreating from the world nor in us dissolving in the world. Yet [the relation] is not a simple switch between both ›movements‹ as in some sort of succession between ›sufficing to one another‹ and ›having enough of each other‹. It is not these ›reak‹ possibilities that are intended but the fact of the possibility of the permeation of the world of concern and solitude with the spirit of love on the one hand, and the transparency of the world of concern through this spirit on the other. Herein lies the dialectic of love and world.« (1993, 85)

Here again we see that, for Binswanger, love cannot be without the world. Its existence is such that it is as this »back and forth« between world and love. The experience of love therefore is not an experience like a religious experience of sorts which supposedly conveys the »beyond« of the world in such a way that once and for all the truth of this world would be revealed. On the contrary, love's very movement, its dynamic, is to go out to the world, reveal itself there and fuse the »lack of love« so clear in the world with the »spirit of love«.

This is even more clear if we examine Binswanger's account of »the love of my life«; his take on this very ontic you whom I love. Binswanger insists on the difference between this ontic you (*Du*) and togetherness (*Duhaftigkeit überhaupt*). Even though it is through my love for this empirical you over here that I am finally to imagine the fact that love extends to all and that I am put on track on this enticement, this *geloct werden von etwas* that rages through being, there never is any final identification between this lover here and love überhaupt: even though I transcend myself in my love for him and he transcends likewise, we both discover that love, similarly, transcends the both of us.

Even though we experience the truth of who we are and who we can be in our love for one another, our experience of love is not the truth of love altogether. In our belonging to one another, what we experience is that love cannot be contained and limited to us and that it is of the essence of love that, in principle, anyone can (and should) be loved and that it therefore extends to all beings. It is this difference between »my« love and »love überhaupt«, between the ontic embrace and the ontological encounter that reveals the infinity proper to love to me, to us. Yet here too, for Binswanger, it is the »back and forth« between the empirical and the ontological that is most important: without our being drawn to one another, we would have not had the idea of such an ontological communion.

Likewise, without this communion raging through being it would not be possible for me, for us, to love in the first place.

There are several examples of this dialectic between »love« and world in Binswanger's work, not the least of which is his wariness of religious love. This love, Binswanger states, is defective because it loves someone or something »up on high« but is unbalanced by an »ontic you« down here in the world. Such a fusion with a divine source misses the fact that love is and exists only by attending to world and asserting itself there: it never exits the world if you like. Yet, similarly a love that sticks with the »ontic you« misses the point and dismisses the fact that love cannot be contained and that »thing between us« desires to be stretched out the world over. This is most obvious by one of the more intriguing examples Binswanger gives of the discrepancy between my ontic love and the ontological idea of love in general. The »compulsive question of many young brides«, for instance, »why this one and no one else, why now and not some other time, why at all and not never?« makes »the ontical fact« clear that »loving primal encounter and this encounter here have not (yet) coincided [*nicht zur Deckung gelangt sind*]« (75).

Binswanger argues for several reasons for such a non-coincidence: some pertain to the particular »you« – it might not be the right one, the bride may have some stress disorder that keeps her from affirming the »we«. Others pertain to the primal togetherness – the loving Dasein as »We« cannot »pronounce« itself at all here, it does not »speak« to the lovers.

What to make of such an example? First of all, it goes without saying that these questions pretty much pertain to everyone, women and men alike. Even apart from the context of marriage, it would be simply awkward if such questions would never pose themselves and ever stop being posed. Philosophically one might argue that such non-coincidence is the rule rather than the exception. One might legitimately wonder whether such a coincidence ever actually occurs.

Moreover one might wonder whether or not, a dogmatic certainty in this regard (I love you for this and this reason) would not end love altogether. The indications of temporality seem in effect to indicate that, in the spirit of Derrida and a certain phenomenology, it takes a life-time to coincide. This would simultaneously entail that, in love, this coincidence never »coincides« properly; meaning that it is never attained once and for all. This is what the dialectic of love and world shows: true love needs time – it takes the world to get to know your lover and you need time to learn to love.

Love, then, for Binswanger has a history (129): it shows itself only »in« the world and in history, but shows itself there as not entirely »of« the world. This also makes for Binswanger's rather progressive standpoint that love is not dependent on the tradition: what is »of« this world will be lived differently throughout the various ages. In this way, different forms of love, as for instance same-sex marriages, add to the idea of love rather than diminish this idea.

»The spirit of human love does not hover over the waters, it does not merely offer us heaven, but also expands onto and into the world which it conquers.« (85)

It is this back and forth between love and history that Cargnello misses by insisting solely on »the suprahistorical level« of love and by relegating all of love's march to and in the world, to that which is not love and displays a lack of love, to the domain of care (2016, 79–80; 89).

Yet the overcoming and overturning of any rigid distinction between love and care, letting the latter be fused and injected with the spirit of love, is exactly Binswanger's point and why he occupies an exceptional position in contemporary philosophy, let alone theology – who else has described the incarnation of love in the world, its march towards that which lacks love, in such a compelling manner?

However, after Derrida and a new phenomenology, philosophers have been waiting for an account of the passage-way between the ontic and ontological; between the empirical and transcendental, between historical »meaning« and metaphysical »signification« (à la Nancy). Yet this passage-way was already there, written by Binswanger in 1942. Therefore it is urgent to compare Binswanger's breakthrough to other developments in contemporary philosophy.

## 5. The transcendence of love, the transcendence of the Other and the transcendence of the *tout-Autre*

We would like to conclude by comparing Binswanger's account of love to more contemporary versions of thinking transcendence in contemporary philosophy. Love is an experience of infinity within the limits of the world. In love, the lovers embrace and kiss one another, but this embrace only ever serves as the starting-point of an imagining an encounter and a love of all, for all. The transcendence of love so conserves but does not contain the encounter with infinity. This encounter therefore still exceeds the ontic embrace of the lovers and transcends their reciprocal transcendence to the entirety of beings, to »the animal eyeing us through the dark in the forest«, for instance. In turn, there is not one experience of love that holds the truth of love »in general«: many forms of love need to be included and make for the essence of love.

This differs from, for example, Levinas' account of the transcendence of the Other, where finitude and immanence conserve and contain transcendence. Levinas' ethical transcendence keeps transcendence in check within the face, within, that is, the borders of a certain humanism. If we turn to Derrida and Caputo's account, who exploit a possibility already present in Levinas, then we need to state that here finitude and immanence neither conserve nor contain the experience of transcendence. Here, in effect, *tout Autre est tout Autre* and, since »every other is every bit as other«, my responsibility towards this immanent and ontic other is always and already an injustice towards the transcendent other over there; at least toward the »other next to this other« here, the third party. In this way, Derrida and Caputo seem to erect a free-floating transcendence of sorts, that is, one that that never actually seems to happen and that forgets that is from within immanence that one moves »beyond«, to transcendence.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> In our own work, we have tried to correct this form of transcendence in Caputo by insisting on a more empirical reading of Derrida's *s'il y en a* (if there is any) (Schrijvers 2016, 134–136).

Of these three accounts of transcendence, the transcendence of love, of the Other and of the *tout Autre*, we might safely say that Binswanger's account is to be preferred: it not only shows us the passage-way from the ontic to the ontological, or from the empirical to the transcendental, while taking both the ontic and the ontological serious (something which cannot be said of Heidegger), it also gives us a sense of the today much sought for »incarnation of meaning«, of the intertwining of meaning and materiality, so outwitting and overruling, we would say, the »trace of an absence«, dominant in deconstruction.

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