

Historicist existentialism & Daseinsanalyse of Binswanger

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Ludwig Binswanger's works are a rich resource for both clinicians and scholars seeking to gain a deeper understanding of schizophrenia. The main theses developed by Binswanger – based on Edmund Husserl's phenomenology and Martin Heidegger's existentialist philosophy – concern the possibility of a 'world' of the schizophrenic based on the assumption of intersubjectivity. This radical thesis has been contested on several occasions, including in the anthropological community and, in particular, by the most important Italian anthropologist, Ernesto de Martino.

Starting from more than ten years of fieldwork with mentally ill offenders in Italian institutions, the aim of my presentation will be to highlight some problematic elements in Binswanger's interpretation, also about the criticisms put forward by de Martino, but showing how the acceptance of the fundamental thesis of Daseinanalyse can help us shed light on the social worlds in which we live, also providing a valuable tool for clinicians and therapists.