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Phenomenology and Anthropology in Foucault's *Introduction to Binswanger's 'Dream and Existence'*: a Mirror Image to *The Order of Things*?

ABSTRACT: In this paper, I examine the relation between phenomenology and anthropology by placing Foucault's first published piece, *Introduction to Binswanger's 'Dream and Existence'* (1954, henceforth IB) in dialectical tension with *The Order of Things* (1966, henceforth OT). I argue that the early work, which so far hasn't received much critical attention, is of particular interest because while OT is notoriously critical of anthropological confusions in general, and of 'Man' as an empirico-transcendental double in particular, IB views 'existential anthropology' as a unique opportunity to establish a new and fruitful relation between transcendental forms and empirical contents. This is because IB focuses on a specific object, '*Menschsein*' (the 'being of man'), which is neither the transcendental subject nor an empirical being (a member of the class *Homo sapiens*). Thus for the young Foucault existential anthropology occupies a fertile methodological middle ground between transcendental approaches (exemplified in IB by Heideggerian phenomenology) and empirical forms of analysis (exemplified by Freudian psycho-analysis). I first interpret anthropology in the light of phenomenology and defend the view that *Menschsein* is neither a transcendental structure nor a concrete particular, but as the instantiation of the first in the second. I argue that for anthropology to yield the full theoretical benefits Foucault claims for it, the particular cases of *Menschsein* examined in existential analysis have to be regarded as exemplary. I then read phenomenology back in the light of anthropology and examine how, for

Foucault, the analysis of *Menschsein* in dreams benefits fundamental ontology by affording us a clearer view of some of the main *existential* than the focus on everyday waking experience in *Being and Time*. Finally, I turn to the limits and difficulties of this early position and my reading of it, and to their consequences for Foucault's later view.

KEY WORDS: Foucault; Binswanger; phenomenology; anthropology; archaeology; '*Menschsein*'; 'Man'.

In the *Order of Things* (henceforth OT), Foucault is notoriously critical both of phenomenology and anthropology. He understands the first as an inheritor of the Kantian enquiry into the transcendental conditions of possibility of experience which was subsequently corrupted by the second.¹ In a (very compact and somewhat tough) nutshell, he identifies the source of such corruption by means of a new term of art: 'Man'.² A 'strange empirico-transcendental double', Man is both given within experience (as a living, working and speaking being) and outside of experience as its condition of possibility (since experience is only possible through the mediation of the body, social forms and norms, and language). The consequence for Foucault is that it becomes impossible to distinguish appropriately between empirical contents and their transcendental conditions of possibility; worse, empirical contents acquire what he calls a 'quasi-transcendental' function. Thus 'each of the positive forms in which man can learn that he is finite is only given to him on the background of his own finitude' (OT: 325, my translation).

Correlatively, anthropology is not characterised narrowly, as a discipline or a set of contents, but in relation to 'Man': it is the *form* typical of contemporary thought. Anthropology is 'a mixed level reflection (...) which characterises modern philosophy: (...) it is an empirico-critical doubling whereby one tries to make the man of nature, of exchange or of discourse stand as the foundation of his own finitude' (OT: 352, my translation). Because of this anthropological doubling (or 'Fold', as Foucault calls it) of the empirical on the transcendental, phenomenology is bound to fail: it

¹ As I have argued elsewhere, Foucault identifies this anthropological corruption within Kant's own oeuvre. Thus according to chapter 7 of OT, Kant's major discovery in the *First Critique* was the possibility to answer Humean scepticism about human knowledge by distinguishing between experience and its transcendental conditions of possibility. The movement from the post hoc to the a priori, whereby (for example) causality was shown to be a pure category of understanding rather than a regularity observable a posteriori in nature, allowed the recourse to such transcendental conditions to warrant universality and necessity for empirical knowledge. By contrast, for Foucault this clear separation between empirical contents and their transcendental foundations was blurred by the binding of the three critical questions in the *Jascher Logik* to a fourth, 'was ist der Mensch?': 'les trois questions critiques (que puis-je savoir? Que dois-je faire? Que m'est-il permis d'espérer? se trouvent alors rapportées à une quatrième, et mises en quelque sorte 'à son compte': *was ist der Mensch?*' (OT: 352).

² To distinguish 'Man' as a term of art from the everyday use of the word 'man', I shall capitalise the first.

cannot justify its modal claims to universality or necessity, which makes fulfilling the Kantian project impossible.

Thus in OT anthropology is the bane of phenomenology. Yet twelve years earlier, in his long *Introduction* to Binswanger's 'Dream and Existence' (henceforth IB), the younger Foucault conceived of a particular brand of anthropology, existential analysis,³ in rather different terms: he saw it as a unique opportunity to establish a new and fruitful relation between transcendental forms and empirical contents – an exciting avenue for thought rather than the shape of the problem plaguing Modernity. According to the early Foucault, the warrant for these claims is the idea that 'existential anthropology', as he calls it,⁴ has uncovered a specific object, namely '*Menschsein*' – 'being human', or 'the being of man' (IB: 31). Understanding this object appropriately will allow anthropology as a method to occupy a fertile middle ground between transcendental approaches (exemplified in IB by Heideggerian phenomenology) and empirical forms of analysis (exemplified by Freudian psycho-analysis). But this raises a number of questions: how should we understand the stark contrast between, on the one hand, the perspective of OT, which sees the question '*was ist der Mensch?*' as the start of the end for the transcendental/phenomenological project and, on the other hand, the early view for which the focus on *Menschsein*⁵ is a promising development for the very same project? Further, how do we understand *Menschsein*? In particular, why not talk of 'man', as anthropologists do, or of 'Dasein', as Heidegger does? How does existential anthropology differ from fundamental ontology? And

³ Binswanger himself saw existential psychoanalysis as a form of anthropology: see for example the title of perhaps his most famous study, 'The Case of Ellen West: an Anthropological Clinical Study'. See also his 1942 book, *Grundformen und Erkenntnis menschlichen Daseins*, in which he details the ways in which existential analysis involves an anthropological outlook.

⁴ I am well aware that neither Binswanger nor Foucault have a monopoly on the notion of 'existential anthropology' – it is often referred to the work of the New Zealand anthropologist Michael D. Jackson, who sought to combine the methods of traditional anthropology with those of phenomenology. But in this paper I shall follow Binswanger's and Foucault's own lead and take 'existential anthropology' to be synonymous with 'existential analysis'. *In the context of IB* Foucault himself often uses 'anthropology' and 'existential anthropology' interchangeably, and I shall do so as well occasionally (in relation to the same context of course).

⁵ To avoid italics fatigue I have only italicised '*Menschsein*' or 'Dasein' when this was done in the original text by Foucault or Heidegger themselves.

how will bringing the early view into focus affect (if at all) our understanding of the later Foucault's position?

A preliminary word on method: in seeking answers to these questions, I will not enter the game of trying to identify biographical reasons, nor attempt to give external reasons meant to justify (or denounce) the changes in Foucault's assessment of the potential of anthropology.⁶ I shall instead read the two texts immanently, and place them in dialectic tension with each other: I shall read IB in the light of OT, and OT, in the light of IB. More specifically, I shall take OT's focus on 'Man' as an *a contrario* background to bring into view the more positive relation between the empirical and the transcendental that IB seeks to establish; conversely, I shall re-contextualise the perspective of OT in the light of the anthropological project as described in IB. I shall thus read the two sources as *mirror images* of each other at least in one respect: while the later text sees the relation between the empirical and the transcendental in modernity as a vicious circle, the early text can be read as trying to establish a virtuous form of circularity between the two.⁷

In the first part of this paper, I shall interpret anthropology in the light of phenomenology and attend to the key notion of 'Menschsein'. I shall suggest that Foucault's claims make the most sense if Menschsein is understood, neither as a transcendental structure nor as a concrete particular, but as the *instantiation* of the first in the second. I shall further defend the view that for anthropology to yield the full theoretical benefits Foucault claims for it, the particular cases of Menschsein examined in existential analysis have to be regarded as *exemplary*. I shall then read phenomenology back in the light of anthropology and examine how, for Foucault, the analysis of

⁶ One may object that the meaning of the word 'anthropology' is too different in IB and OT for a dialogue between the two texts to be even possible. Yet recall that in OT 'anthropology' does not name a discipline but a particular, circular way of relating the empirical and the transcendental which is at work (for Foucault) in contemporary thought. And as I shall develop, the possibility of establishing a specific relation between the empirical and the transcendental is precisely what is picked out by (existential) anthropology in IB. The congruence between the two perspectives is thus much stronger than it may appear at first sight.

⁷ I am well aware of the hermeneutic dangers of such an enterprise – in particular the risk of reading each text into the other. But such awareness can by itself contribute to ward off the exegetical danger, and hopefully the heuristic pay-off will prove worth the risk.

Menschsein in dreams benefits fundamental ontology by affording us a clearer view of some of the main *existentiale* than the focus on everyday waking experience in *Being and Time*. Finally, I shall turn to the limits and difficulties of this early position, and their consequences for Foucault's later view.

Interpreting anthropology in the light of phenomenology: Was ist Menschsein?

Existential anthropology is not introduced in IB as an empirical science but as a methodological middle ground between 'philosophy' on the one hand – in particular Heideggerian phenomenology – and 'all concrete, objective and experimental knowledge' on the other (IB: 31).

Foucault defines 'Menschsein' as the specific object of anthropology thus conceived:

'[anthropology is] a form of analysis, finally, whose principle and method are determined from the start solely by the absolute privilege of the object: man, or rather the being of man, *Menschsein* (IB: 31, Foucault's italics). Note the correction: the appropriate object of anthropology is not 'man' (as a member of the species 'homo sapiens') but the 'being of man'. Menschsein is not a natural entity whose behaviour could be causally explained through the laws of nature (and their biological or psychological variants): throughout the text, Foucault reads Freud as a foil presenting precisely this kind of naturalistic interpretation of psychic life and opposes anthropology to 'any type of psychological positivism claiming to exhaust the significant content of man by the reductive concept of *homo natura*' (IB: 31).⁸ By contrast, to understand Menschsein adequately one needs to draw explicitly (as Binswanger himself did) on the resources of fundamental

⁸ Whether it is fair to understand Freud naturalistically is a much debated question which I shall leave aside here as my internalist perspective does not require an assessment of the validity of Foucault's views on Freud. Note that Foucault's reading is in line with Binswanger's: according to the latter, Freud saw 'the deepest essence of man [as] instinctual impulse, whose elemental nature is the same in all men and which directs him to the satisfaction of certain primal needs. (...) The most important and most obscure element of psychological research is the organism's instinct' ('Freud's Conception of Man in the Light of Anthropology', in *Selected Papers*, 156).

ontology: ‘the working dimensions of anthropology can therefore be circumscribed: it relocates anthropology within the context of an ontological reflection whose major theme is being-in-the-world, existence (*Existenz*), Dasein’ (IB: 31, translation modified). Such ontological context is crucial because it allows the anthropologist to consider her object in a non-reductive manner, using ‘existence’ as a starting point. In its technical sense, existence is defined by Heidegger as ‘the kind of being towards which Dasein can comport itself in one way or another, and always does comport itself somehow’ (BT: 33). Existence is not human life empirically understood, let alone an empirical fact about an entity (as when one talks about ‘the existence of the moon’) but the self-interpreting activity which is both presupposed by and expressed in all forms of Dasein’s comportment: to exist, in Heidegger’s sense, is to pre-reflectively, and practically, understand oneself as being in the world. The ontological structures of such self-understanding are what Heidegger calls the *existentiale*. Correlatively, the appropriate method to explore such structures is the analytic of existence: thus ‘the question about that structure [the ontological structure of existence] aims at the analysis of what constitutes existence. The context of such structures we call “existentiality”’ (BT: 33).

So the reason why anthropology is ‘a form of analysis which is *fundamental* in relation to all concrete, objective and experimental knowledge’ (IB: 31, my italics) is precisely that rather than starting from man as an empirical being, it takes Menschsein as its point of departure and understands the latter from the perspective of fundamental ontology. Conversely, ‘an anthropology of this sort can validate itself only by showing how an analysis of human being can be articulated upon an analytic of existence. As a problematic of foundations, it must define in the latter the conditions of possibility of the former’ (IB: 31-32). The analytic of existence is the ‘condition of possibility’ of existential anthropology in the sense that it provides the latter with the theoretical foundation and the methodological tools required to capture its object appropriately. But what is the difference, then, between anthropology and fundamental ontology? The same

difference, I suggest, as between ‘Menschsein’ and ‘Dasein’ as terms of art. This would be easier to characterise if ‘Dasein’ itself was an unproblematic concept: but this is not the case. As pointed out by Wayne Martin,⁹ commentators usually take at least one of the two following options, sometimes both, and most often in an implicit manner: some, like Hubert Dreyfus or Taylor Carman, understand ‘Dasein’ to refer primarily to the class comprising all human beings; others, like John Haugeland, deny that this is the primary extension of the concept and start from its intension (its Fregean sense): they take ‘Dasein’ to mean a self-interpretative way of life,¹⁰ which could in principle include a number of non-human entities as ‘cases of Dasein’.¹¹ Regardless of this important difference, however, both sides would definitely agree that Heidegger himself does *not* explicitly identify ‘Dasein’ with ‘being human’. Yet according to Foucault that is precisely the meaning of ‘Menschsein’.

So if Menschsein is neither ‘*homo natura*’ nor Dasein, then what is it? Foucault proposes the following definition: ‘let us say provisionally that being human (*Menschsein*) is nothing but the actual and concrete content which ontology analyses as the transcendental structures of *Dasein* (IB: 32, translation modified). As we shall see, this is an ambiguous definition, and the manner of this ambiguity both anticipates on and seems to corroborate the difficulties later deemed characteristic of anthropology in OT. But for now let us focus on a more favourable exegetical avenue. As with Dasein, one could go with an extensional or an intensional definition for Menschsein. The first would be unlikely to help, though, because the extension of the class ‘being human’ is precisely what is under debate, and so far we have only had negative definitions (as ‘not a human being’, and ‘not Dasein’): and since (in Spinoza’s famous words) *omnis determinatio est negatio*, and for each determination there is an indefinite number of such negations, that is not

⁹ ‘The Semantics of ‘Dasein’ and the Modality of *Being and Time*’, in *The Cambridge Companion to Being and Time*, CUP: 2013, p. 100-128.

¹⁰ See Haugeland, *Dasein Disclosed*, p. 160.

¹¹ See for example ‘Heidegger on Being a Person’, *Nous*, volume 16, March 1982, in particular p. 23 sq. Haugeland regards such cases of Dasein as ‘units of accountability’.

particularly helpful. If we go down the intensional route, then one possibility would be to take the notion of a ‘concrete content’ in the above quote literally and to understand Menschsein as the set of empirical elements active in our psychic life (such as the drives and the various psychological processes associated with them). However, making this interpretative move would be tantamount to closing the gap repeatedly highlighted by IB between existential anthropology and naturalistic approaches.

A little further in the text Foucault states that the object of anthropology is ‘characterised, not by a line of division [between the empirical and the transcendental] but by an *encounter* with concrete existence’ (IB: 32, my italics). As with the previous quote, one could construe such ‘encounter’ uncharitably, as an early site of the empirico-transcendental confusions that OT will denounce. But a more interesting option, I submit, and one which is licensed by Foucault’s constant emphasis in IB on anthropology as a methodological middle ground, is to understand this ‘encounter’ differently: as an *instantiation* of the transcendental in the empirical.¹² On this interpretative line, to say that Menschsein is the ‘actual and concrete content which ontology analyses as the transcendental structures of *Dasein*’ is to say that Menschsein is the instantiation, in a concrete particular, of the transcendental structures identified by Heidegger in relation to *Dasein*. Whereas *Being and Time* analyses these structures at the ontological level, as *existentiale*, anthropology focuses on a concrete individual (this or that dreamer) understood as the empirical locus of instantiation of the ontological structures. From this perspective, the phenomenological insight into these structures works as a kind of fore-conception (in the technical sense Heidegger gives the word ‘*Vorgriff*’ in *Being and Time*)¹³: it gives the existential anthropologist an advance

¹² I am well aware that this is a double edged suggestion: the notion of ‘instantiation’ is not used by Foucault himself and it comes with a number of difficulties attached, some of which I shall touch upon later in this paper. However having recourse to this notion is the best way I can see to make sense of IB in a hermeneutically charitable manner.

¹³ (namely a preliminary understanding of the object that guides the inquiry and will (or not) be confirmed by the object itself). See BT, §32: 189.

grasp of the salient articulations of the experience she seeks to understand, and allows her to illuminate such experience in a more appropriate manner.

Viewing *Menschsein* as the instantiation, in a concrete particular, of the *existentiale* of fundamental ontology puts us in a better position to understand the methodological specificity of existential anthropology: it makes sense of the claim that the latter is in ‘basic opposition to any science of human facts of the order of positive knowledge, experimental analysis and naturalistic reflection’ without yet being identified with ‘some a priori form of philosophical reflection’ (IB: 32). It also explains why existential anthropology must not be seen as an “‘application’ of the concepts and methods of the philosophy of existence to the ‘data’ of clinical experience’ (IB: 32). This would be mistaken because it would assume that anthropology and the empirical sciences have the *same* object (‘the “data” of clinical experience’ – note the inserted quotation marks) but use different methods. By contrast, the instantiation reading emphasises the specificity of *Menschsein* as the appropriate object for anthropology. It also allows us to make sense of the introduction of a twin category, namely that of the ‘human fact’. Foucault defines the latter as follows: ‘the theme of the inquiry is the human ‘fact’, if one understands by “fact” not some objective sector of a natural universe, but the real content of an experience which is living itself and is experiencing itself’ (IB: 32). This distinction between objective and subjective meanings echoes the distinction made in *Being and Time* between ‘factuality’ (*Faktualität*) and ‘facticity’ (*Fakticität*). As it is well known, the first refers to the features whereby an empirical entity may be objectively defined (thus in the case of a human being, being male or female, being a certain height, a certain age, etc.). By contrast, the second is specific to *Dasein* and refers to its ability to make sense of these features (reflectively or pre-reflectively) in relation to its own self-understanding: thus ‘male’ may be interpreted as ‘masculine’, ‘macho’, ‘butch’ and the like, 30 as ‘young’ or ‘old’ (30 would be young for a tenured academic but old for a professional athlete). For Heidegger, factuality is best analysed by the empirical sciences, and facticity, by fundamental

ontology. And as with *Menschsein* in relation to both 'man' and 'Dasein', so with the idea of a 'human fact' in relation to factuality and facticity: it differs from the first in that it does not refer to a set of characteristics that could be defined from a third person standpoint (in Foucault's terms: 'some objective sector of a natural universe'). It differs from the second (facticity) in that it is not an ontological structure of existence, but this structure instantiated in the self- understanding of a concrete particular. As the 'real content of an experience which is living and experiencing itself', it is the first-personal, self-interpretative understanding of an actual individual in whom facticity, as an existential structure, is instantiated. In the context of 'Dream and Existence', such understanding is expressed in the dreams recounted by patients.

Let me pause at this point to highlight what I see as the main benefit of this reading: placed in the prospective context of OT, it allows us to understand IB as the one text in which Foucault considers the possibility of a relation between the empirical and the transcendental which goes beyond the Kantian critical project while avoiding the pitfalls of the analytic of finitude: for *Menschsein* is neither a case of confusion, nor of vicious circularity. Why not? According to OT, the main problem with phenomenology is the impossibility of establishing a stable relation between the empirical of the transcendental. For Foucault, this is because from Kant's *Anthropology* onwards, phenomenological enquiry (in particular in its Husserlian form) became focused on 'Man' as a structure. From this anthropological perspective, understanding how the two sides of the empirico-transcendental double are related was taken to require a genetic account through which one would be able to explain, or at least describe, the process whereby the transcendental can appear within the empirical. In other words, the aim became to account for the genesis of the transcendental within 'Man' as an empirico-transcendental double. This genesis can be understood as a developmental story explaining how a child, for example, may grow into the capacity for occupying a transcendental standpoint, or as a methodological story (such as the introduction of the transcendental and eidetic reductions in Husserl) about how such a standpoint

can emerge out of an adult's natural attitude. Either way, the point for Foucault is that such genetic accounts invariably generate paradoxes of retrospection, the form of which is given by constant oscillations between two equally problematic temporal terms: 'as soon as' and 'already'. On the one hand, because a transcendental framework is required to make sense of the very experience through which the transcendental perspective itself takes hold, the transcendental can only appear within the empirical as pre-existing itself in what Derrida called (in relation to Husserl) a kind of 'primitivity' – a 'before' that is unthinkable because it refers to a time 'before' temporality itself takes hold as a framework of intelligibility. In Foucault's words, 'the relation of the given and of the *a priori* takes a reverse structure in the *Anthropology* to that revealed in the *Critique*. The *a priori* in the order of knowledge, becomes in the order of concrete existence an *originary* which is not chronologically first but which, as soon as it appears (...) reveals itself as already there (*Commentary*: 60, Foucault's italics, my underlining). On the other hand, from this genetic perspective the transcendental can only appear to a *pre-existing* empirical being (the empirical side of 'man' as the empirico-transcendental double). As a result, the very contents that are given in the transcendental framework also appear as pre-existing it empirically as an endlessly receding origin: '[man], *as soon as* he thinks, merely unveils himself to his own eyes in the form of a being who is *already*, in a necessarily subjacent density, in an irreducible anteriority, a living being, an instrument of production, a vehicle for words that exists before him' (OT: 313, my italics).

By contrast, on the instantiation reading the perspective of IB is not one of genesis: there is no paradoxical tension between equally impossible temporal terms. Existential anthropology does not proceed diachronically but synchronically. It starts from the view that transcendental structures are instantiated in a particular individual and uses this starting point as a hermeneutic tool to generate results that a positivistic approach (such as Freudian psychology as Foucault characterises it) cannot yield, namely: understanding specific dreams as expressive of specific forms of

intentionality. Thus the whole point of introducing the notion of Menschsein as an ‘encounter’ between transcendental structures and ‘concrete existence’ is precisely both to maintain the empirico-transcendental distinction and to put it to productive use in order to understand a concrete particular appropriately. Consequently, existential anthropology never takes instantiation to be a temporally extended process whereby an entity would become a case of Menschsein. Further, existential anthropology remains agnostic about whether one *needs* a genetic perspective at all to account for the relation between the transcendental and the empirical in human experience: it just starts from Menschsein as its specific object. Thus the significant benefit of the instantiation reading is that it allows existential anthropology to neatly side-steps the main issue that plagues modernity according to OT, namely the problem of the genesis of the transcendental in the empirical and the paradoxes of retrospection that follow from it.

This, of course, leaves open the question of whether the notion of instantiation can do the work it is supposed to do, a difficulty to which I shall return in conclusion. For now, let me pursue this line of interpretation a little further. For Foucault does not just suggest that Menschsein is the instantiation of transcendental structures in a concrete particular. He also makes the following claim: ‘anthropology may thus call itself a ‘science of facts’ by *developing in rigorous fashion the existential content of being-in-the-world*. To reject such an inquiry at first glance because it is neither philosophy nor psychology, (...) because it neither looks like positive knowledge nor provides the content of a priori cognition, is to ignore the basic meaning of the project (IB: 32, my italics). Yet the instantiation reading of Menschsein examined so far does not by itself warrant the idea that anthropology ‘develops in rigorous fashion the existential content of being in the world’; it only licenses the second part of the quote, namely the thought that this kind of inquiry is ‘neither positive knowledge nor provides the content of a priori cognition’ but must be located at its own level. But what, then, is the ‘basic meaning of the project’? In my view, the ‘rigorous development claim in the first part of the quote makes the most sense if taken to mean that there

is something that fundamental ontology itself could learn in return from anthropological developments: this is why the development is about ‘*existential* content’, not about empirical conclusions pertaining, say, to a particular individual’s psychological features. Foucault gives us a further hint in the following passage: ‘[existential anthropology] is a matter (...) of *bringing to light*, by returning to the concrete individual, the place where the forms and conditions of existence articulate’ (IB: 32, my italics). As we shall see, the possibility of such ‘bringing to light’ rests on a specific hermeneutic hypothesis, namely that existential anthropology has a significant advantage over fundamental ontology: whereas everyday life tends to obscure the presence and the role of ontological structures (a recurrent theme in Division One of *Being and Time*), the dream world allows some of the major *existentiale*, in particular projection, thrownness and falling, to come to the fore with greater experiential intensity. Given that these, taken together, form the tripartite structure of care (BT: 284) and are thus definitive of Dasein, it would indeed be a ‘rigorous development about existential content’ for anthropology to thus refine the insights afforded by fundamental ontology.

So the development claim points to the thought that the analysis of Menschsein can shed further light on the ontological lineaments of being-in-the-world. If this correct, then on the early Foucault’s interpretation the relation between the transcendental and the empirical is not a one way ticket: we can learn something about the *existentiale* themselves by analysing specific cases of Menschsein as their instantiation in a concrete particular. This, however, is only possible if the relevant concrete particular is taken to be *exemplary* of all other cases of Menschsein: the claim that ontological structures are instantiated in a concrete particular must be supplemented by the further claim that this particular exemplifies Menschsein for the enquirer.¹⁴ For unless this was

¹⁴ Pettit usefully distinguishes between instantiation and exemplification in the following way: ‘instantiation is a two place relationship between a set of examples and a rule and it certainly has the feature of being a one-many relationship: one finite set of examples instantiates many rules. (...) Exemplification is a three place relationship, not a two place one. It involves not just a set of examples and a rule but also a person for whom the examples are supposed to exemplify the rule. (Pettit, 1990: 10).

true, no general conclusions about ontological structures could be legitimately inferred from the examination of a specific particular they are instantiated in. By contrast, if that concrete particular is taken to be exemplary of Menschsein, then anything we learn from its consideration will also apply to all such instantiations, since what is true of an exemplar is by definition true of all of its kind.¹⁵ Thus if a particular animal is taken as an exemplar of a mammal and is ineliminably warm-blooded, then we can legitimately infer that all mammals are warm blooded. Analogically, if a particular feature is disclosed about, say, understanding or thrownness through the analysis of an exemplary case of Menschsein, then this will apply to all other instantiations of the *existentiale* in question. Thus the exemplarity claim is an implicit requirement for existential anthropology to offer a 'rigorous development of the existential content' of fundamental ontology: the instantiation reading also has to be an exemplarist reading, and this how I shall refer to it from now on.

If both the instantiation and the exemplification claims are correct, then IB can be viewed in a particularly interesting light: it appears, not as a precursor of the analytic of finitude but as an *alternative* to it. By regarding Menschsein as the instantiation, in a concrete particular, of the transcendental structures analysed by fundamental ontology, and further, by regarding the particulars analysed by existential anthropology as exemplary of such instantiation, one can both shed better light on the relevant particulars and gain a more detailed understanding of the *existentiale* at play. This may sound too much like having one's anthropological cake and eating it. But before I turn to the difficulties afferent to this position, let me attend to some of its hermeneutic benefits.

Re-interpreting phenomenology in the light of existential anthropology: the disclosive potential of the dream world.

¹⁵ For an exemplarist reading of 'Dasein' itself, see Martin (2013) on what he calls 'exemplar semantics' (in particular p. 117 sq.).

The thought that existential anthropology can shed further light on ontological structures is emphasised in the following passage: ‘the theme of this 1930 essay (...) is less dream *and* existence than existence as it appears to itself and can be deciphered in the dream. (...) [its aim is] to *arrive at a comprehension of the existential structures*’ (IB: 33, second italics mine). Foucault is well aware of the paradox which consists in analysing existence, as involvement with the world, by starting from the somewhat disconnected and disjointed perspective of dreams. Yet his view is that precisely *because* of this relative disconnection from the everyday, such perspective allows us to deepen our comprehension of three key *existentials*: (a) transcendence as freedom, (b) thrownness as materiality, (c) falling as a ‘plunge’ into inauthenticity. I shall look briefly at each in turn.

Foucault states that ‘the dream discloses paradoxically the movement of freedom toward the world’ (IB: 51). In the *Metaphysical Foundations of Logic*, Heidegger himself had identified freedom and transcendence toward the world: ‘Dasein’s transcendence and freedom are identical! Freedom provides itself with intrinsic possibility: a being is, as free, necessarily in itself transcending’ (MFL: 184, Heidegger’s italics). Such freedom is by definition projective, so long as projection is distinguished from planning as the reflective sequencing of possibilities harnessed to a particular end. By contrast (and very sketchily), projection is the practical deployment of Dasein’s possibilities through its everyday comportment: thus Dasein projects itself as a writer not by making plans for its publishing career but by understanding writing as an agential possibility for itself. As many have pointed out, such understanding does not need to be reflective: it can take the form, for example, of exercising the ability to write, or of developing that ability through immersing oneself in reading, attending a course, etc. In the everyday world, though, Dasein’s sense of the possible is significantly constrained by a large number of factors: natural laws (in particular the laws of physics and of biology), economic and political constraints, cultural and social norms, etc. Against this restrictive background, and given the pressures of conformism, it is all too easy for Dasein to understand its agential possibilities very narrowly, and ultimately to lose

sight of its own role in the deployment of such possibilities, and thus of its own freedom. In fact such forgetfulness, Heidegger suggests in Division One of *Being in Time*, is the most common situation.

By contrast, the kind of projection involved in dreaming is free from many of these restrictions, and in particular from the constraints of logic, of time and of natural laws: this is evidenced by the numerous non sequiturs and logical impossibilities experienced in dreams, by the possibility of 'rewinding' various events of our lives when we dream, and by such phenomena as dreams of flight, of falling upwards and the like. In the dream world our sense of the possible is much wider, and freer (in the sense of free play) than in real life: just as in aesthetic experience the play of the faculties is not constrained by concepts, in the same way in dreams our sense of the possibilities available to us is not constrained by the laws of the waking world. Correlatively, our ability to project comes to the fore in proportion to the degree in which it is liberated from everyday constraints. Thus in its most radical, unconstrained form, the dream is 'the originary movement of freedom, the birth of the world in the very movement of existence' (IB: 51). Rather than finding itself constrained by a pre-existing world, the dreamer is able to open up both her possibilities and the world in which these make sense in a single originary projection. At its utmost degree, the freedom of the dreamer appears as a frictionless spinning in which her agential possibilities, rather than having to find their place in a pre-existing context, deploy that very context in the very movement of projection. Such frictionless spinning can be experienced as euphoric or as terrifying, or even both at the same time: either way, the analysis of dreams allows for the full disclosure of freedom as projective transcendence in a way which the analysis of the everyday does not.

Yet the world of the dream, although it is free from a number of the constraints operative in the real world, is not totally unconstrained. In *Being and Time*, thrownness is the name Heidegger uses to refer to the constraints that Dasein finds as already bearing on itself. Such constraints are

usually understood, in line with the above considerations, as a set of natural, economic or social determinants which restrict Dasein's projective abilities and bind the horizon of its agential possibilities. Yet for Foucault the analysis of dreams allows thrownness to come to the fore in another, perhaps more primal form: 'in its anthropological significance the history of the dream teaches us that it both reveals the world in its transcendence and modulates the world in its substance, playing on its *material* character' (IB: 49, my italics). Here Foucault's analyses borrow heavily from Bachelard's notion of 'material imagination' to suggest that the particular ways in which the dreamer's projective abilities are constrained in the dream world depend on the dreamer's affinity with a particular element (such as water for Baudelaire or Poe, for example). The theme of materiality is also very strongly linked to that of corporeality, another major figure of thrownness. But for Foucault, the utmost of thrownness is revealed by dreams in the form of radically unintelligible constraints. Thus 'the dream is deployed (...) in a world which secretes its opaque contents and the forms of a necessity which cannot be deciphered' (IB: 54). A fictitious example of such a world, and of how oppressive unintelligible constraints can be, is given by Kafka's nightmarish description of K's struggles against the 'official world' in the *Castle*. By contrast, in real life we (thankfully) rarely find ourselves faced with situations which radically resist all our attempts to understand them; and if we do, then such situations appear particularly intolerable – thus one of the reasons why Blanchot, another author dear to Foucault, deems the Holocaust so chilling (in *The Writing of the Disaster*) is the impossibility of *making sense of it* within our standard framework of intelligibility. So the 'opaque contents' of the dream world represent a radical form of thrownness because the combination of apodicticity and undecipherability they manifest renders the dreamer utterly powerless: from revealing the extreme of freedom, the dream world now reveals the extreme of thrownness in the form of

radical unintelligibility experienced as necessity, and as the deprivation of all meaningful agential possibilities.¹⁶

Finally, existential anthropology brings ‘falling’ into view by disclosing the possibility of authentic and inauthentic ethical comportment in dreams, thus completing the series of anthropological insights into the tripartite structure of care. Here too, the logic is one of magnification and radicalisation. In particular, whereas *Being and Time* identifies three ethical modes of being for Dasein (authenticity, inauthenticity and undifferentiatedness), in IB Foucault only acknowledges the first two: ‘the dream experience cannot be isolated from its ethical content. Not because it may uncover secret inclinations, inadmissible desires, (...) but because it restores the movement of freedom in its authentic meaning, showing how it establishes itself or alienates itself, how it constitutes itself as radical responsibility in the world, or how it forgets itself and abandons itself to its plunge into causality’ (IB: 52). Authenticity and inauthenticity seem understood here in a Sartrean rather than a Heideggerian manner, as (respectively) the heroic shouldering of full responsibility for oneself and for the world or, conversely, the total relinquishing of responsibility that comes from understanding oneself as causally determined, and thus on the mode of present-at-hand entities. At any rate, the important point is that dreams seem to perform a similar role to anxiety in *Being and Time*: they have an ontologically disclosive power and force the individual to come back to herself: ‘the dream is free genesis, self-accomplishment, emergence of what is most individual in the individual’ (IB: 54).

The limits of the exemplarist reading: methodological difficulties in IB and consequences for Foucault’s own project.

¹⁶ Interestingly, identifying unintelligibility with the most radical form of thrownness is a move that has recently been made in the context of the literature on Heidegger by Katherine Withy (2011), who understands the ultimate of thrownness as the fact that the horizon of intelligibility for our practices is itself beyond our ability to make sense of things.

Thus IB is of particular interest because – on the exemplary reading presented above - it is the only text in which Foucault sees and develops the possibility of a productive partnership between phenomenology and anthropology. The upshot of such partnership is a new way of thinking of the relation between the empirical and the transcendental: neither fully separated, as in the *First Critique*, nor superposed in the ambiguous figure of ‘Man’ as in Kant’s *Anthropology* and the subsequent figures of thought identified by OT. By contrast, Menschsein appears as the specific, and appropriate, object of existential anthropology. I have suggested above (a) that the best way to understand Menschsein is to regard it as the instantiation, in a concrete particular, of the structures analysed by fundamental ontology (the *existentiale*); and (b), that to warrant Foucault’s claims about existential anthropology being a ‘rigorous development of the existential content’ of fundamental ontology, the relevant concrete particulars must be regarded as exemplary for the enquirer of all cases of Menschsein. If these conditions are fulfilled, then a positive circularity is established between the empirical and the transcendental in anthropological analysis: starting from Menschsein allows for a non-reductive analysis of human experience. But conversely, existential anthropology can contribute to phenomenological analysis: the anthropological examination of dreams reveal and magnify the major articulations of being in the world with a clarity that surpasses that of the everyday.

Yet like most seemingly perfect solutions, this may be too rosy a picture – Foucault’s later indictment of anthropology certainly suggests that it is. Indeed, there are some significant methodological issues in the early work. That Foucault himself knew this is indicated by a number of promissory remarks such as the following: ‘to be sure, this encounter [with concrete existence], and *no less surely, the status that is finally to be assigned to the ontological conditions*, pose problems. But we leave that issue for another time’ (IB: 33, my italics). Or again, ‘in another work we shall try to situate existential analysis within the development of contemporary reflection on man, and try to show, by observing the inflection of phenomenology towards anthropology, what

foundations have been proposed for concrete reflection on man' (IB: 31). To my knowledge, there was never time for that 'other time', or that 'other work'.¹⁷ We are left with IB, where Foucault himself defines the shape of the problem more precisely as follows:

[IB: 32] [Binswanger] outflanks the problem of ontology and anthropology by going straight to concrete existence, to its development and its historical content. Thence, by way of an analysis of the structures of existence (...) he moves continually back and forth between the anthropological forms and the ontological conditions of existence. He continually crosses a dividing line that seems so difficult to draw, or rather he sees it ceaselessly crossed by a concrete existence in which the real limit of *Menschsein* is manifested.

This passage shows that Foucault was aware of the locus of the difficulty – as ever, that 'dividing line that seems so difficult to draw', namely the articulation of the empirical and the transcendental, and more specifically the status of *Menschsein* and its relation to 'concrete existence'. So what are the 'real limits' of *Menschsein*? The exemplarist reading I developed above was my best attempt to make sense of the concept as a specific and viable relation between the empirical and the transcendental. But while it is (in my view) supported by the text, such reading is not the only possible one. In the very passage that introduces it, *Menschsein* can also be read uncharitably: not as the instantiation of ontological structures in a concrete particular but as a locus of empirico-transcendental confusions. Recall Foucault's words: 'let us say provisionally that being human (*Menschsein*) is nothing but the actual and concrete content which ontology analyses as the transcendental structures of *Dasein* (IB: 32, translation modified, my underlining). Yet the theme of an 'actual and concrete content' being analysed *as* a transcendental structure can be seen as exhibiting precisely the kind of methodological confusion denounced by the analytic of

¹⁷ (neither *Maladie mentale et personnalité* nor *Maladie mentale et psychologie* fit that particular bill).

finitude: namely, as a case of empirical contents acquiring a ‘quasi-transcendental’ function. From this perspective, Menschsein would then anticipate exactly on the structure of ‘lived experience’ as criticised in chapter 9 of OT: ‘lived experience is at the same time the space where all empirical contents are given to experience; it is also the originary form which makes them possible and points to their primary belonging. (...) The analysis of lived experience (...) does nothing but fulfil with greater care the hasty demands that were laid out when one decided to give, in man, the empirical transcendental value [faire valoir l’empirique pour le transcendental]’ (OT: 332, my translation). On this interpretative line, Menschsein would be both given in experience as an ‘actual and concrete content’ on the one hand, and the very framework through which experience itself is mediated (the ‘transcendental structures of Dasein’) on the other. Then Menschsein in IB would simply be an early illustration of ‘Man’ as the structure of the analytic of finitude whereby the ‘pre-critical analysis of what man is in his essence becomes the analytic of anything that can be given in general to man’s experience’ (OT: 352).

This is the most unfavourable interpretation of IB, and one I have sought to avoid. But the exemplarity reading I have proposed instead is not exempt of difficulties. The first concerns the exemplary status of Menschsein. As we have seen, unless the particular instance of Menschsein under examination can be regarded by the enquirer as exemplary of all cases of instantiation of the *existentiale*, Foucault’s claim that anthropology is a ‘rigorous development of the existential content’ of fundamental ontology cannot be warranted. But the problem with this exemplary reading is that it is vulnerable to the set of difficulties that beset the idea of rule following in general: in particular, it raises the thorny issue of the identification of the conditions under which something may or not count as an exemplar of a particular rule. It goes well beyond the remit of this paper to consider these difficulties in detail. In a nutshell, the general form of the problem is that since any finite set of examples can *instantiate* indefinitely many rules, it may be impossible

to establish with any degree of certainty whether a particular set *exemplifies* a determinate rule.¹⁸ In the specific case that has occupied us so far, this means that there may be no way of telling whether any particular case of Menschsein is a genuine exemplification of the instantiation of the *existentiale* of fundamental ontology. In that case, it would be impossible to draw any general conclusions, from the analysis of a particular case of Menschsein, about the nature of the *existentiale* involved. This may not be an unsolvable problem, although no decisive solution has been offered yet.¹⁹ But unless or until an argument from instantiation to exemplification is offered, existential anthropology will not be in a position to deliver ontologically robust results: the ‘back and forth’ between phenomenology and anthropology may turn out to be, after all, a one way ticket.

Admittedly, even so Menschsein may still be coherently and legitimately understood as the instantiation of transcendental structures in a concrete particular. But because the relation between instantiation and exemplification is not examined, let alone grounded, the possibility of a productive partnership between phenomenology and anthropology remains formal: it is impossible to draw any decisive ontological conclusions from the analysis of dreams. In that case – short of an argument which neither Foucault nor Binswanger will present – the main gain from IB remains the warding off of reductive naturalism through the introduction of Menschsein as the specific object of anthropology and the appeal to phenomenological concepts and methods to illuminate it. The naturalistically-minded would likely deny that this is a gain at all. However, the fact that the early Foucault sees this as a positive is important in the wider context of his later rejection of Marxism as overly focused on causal explanations. It brings further evidence (if it was needed) of Foucault’s lifelong concern for avoiding reductive empiricism and for defining a

¹⁸ P. Pettit formulates the problem in the following way: ‘the fact is that any finite set of examples, mathematical or otherwise, can be extrapolated in an infinite number of ways; equivalently, any finite set of examples instantiates an infinite number of rules. It appears then that I cannot be put in touch with a particular rule just on the basis of finite examples’. (Pettit, 1990: 7). See also Pettit: *Rules, Reasons and Norms*, OUP, 2002.

¹⁹ For a detailed discussion of the problem and of possible solutions, see Watts (2012).

specific level of analysis for his own work. Yet even this anti-naturalist gain is not fully secure: for further difficulties attach to the notion of instantiation itself. The problem is this: how do we know that a concrete particular is a case of *Menschsein* at all? In other words, how do we account for the instantiation relation itself? There are at least two possibilities to answer these questions: one is to say that we need a third term linking *Menschsein* and the concrete particular in question to account for such instantiation. But if that is the case then yet a further term will be needed to account for the relation between the newly introduced third term and the instantiation relation, and this *ad infinitum*. This version of the Third Man argument (*Parmenides*, 132 a-b) is sometimes referred to as ‘Bradley’s regress’.²⁰ There are a number of theoretical moves available: but none so far has been considered decisive. The other possibility is to deny that we need any intermediaries and to regard the relation of instantiation as a primitive. Thus G. Bergmann (1960) likens it to ‘metaphysical glue’ and P. Strawson (1959) understands instantiation a ‘non-relational tie’.²¹ Yet here too the suggestion is not decisive – in particular, one may complain that it only solves the problem by stipulation.

As with exemplification, the difficulties afferent to the notion of instantiation do not *per se* invalidate the exemplarist reading I have presented above. The latter remains a viable alternative to the thought that IB is simply a prefiguration of the analytic of finitude. But it is a *formal* alternative, and this doubly so (because further arguments are needed regarding both exemplification and instantiation). Whether the securing of this formal possibility is a Pyrrhic victory or a genuine gain is hard to say, especially since Foucault himself did not develop this early line of investigation any further. Still, there is another respect in which IB is important. If considered archaeologically, so to speak, it is the first *stratum* of Foucault’s intellectual journey,

²⁰ For a formulation of the problem, see Bradley, *Appearance and Reality: A Metaphysical Essay*, TheClassics.us, 2013. There is a useful discussion of the Third Man argument in Vlastos, G., ‘The Third Man Argument in the *Parmenides*’, *Philosophical Review* 63 (1954), 319-349. See also Sellars, X; ‘Vlastos and the Third Man’, *Philosophical Review* 64 (1955), 405-437.

²¹ Respectively: *Logic and Reality*, Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, in particular p. 45-63, and *Individuals: An Essay in Descriptive Metaphysics*, Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1959.

his first published work. From this perspective, it is very significant that its methodological focus should be on the relation between the empirical and the transcendental. Even though by 1966 Foucault has given up on anthropology and sees it as part of the problem rather than as a solution, he is still concerned with rethinking the relation between the empirical and the transcendental. Thus IB is a prefiguration of OT in yet another, positive sense: whether it anticipates on the doomed analytic of finitude or provides the shape of an alternative to it, this early text sets Foucault's theoretical agenda for at least the next ten years. It is the crucible in which Foucault started to see the shape of the problem that would govern his own archaeological work: how to avoid bald naturalism and conceive of a relation between the empirical and the transcendental that goes beyond the *First Critique*, but without falling into anthropological confusions. Whether Foucault's own reinterpretation of the empirico-transcendental relation was a success is, as we know, still a debated question. But set against the context of IB, the historical *a priori* appears as the desubjectivised inheritor of Menschsein, and archaeology itself – even though it was designed to wake us up from our 'anthropological sleep' (OT: 351) – as the methodological successor to existential anthropology.

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