

## CHAPTER 10

- Reading 10.1 **Mill, J.S. (1974).** That there is, or may be, a science of human nature. In *Collected Works of John Stuart Mill*, Vol. VIII: *A System of Logic (Books IV–VI and Appendices)*, (ed. J.M. Robson). Book VI, Chapter III, § 1–2, pp. 844–847. (Extracts: p844, p845, p846–7).
- Reading 10.2 **Jaspers, K. ([1913] 1974).** Causal and ‘meaningful’ connections between life history and psychosis. Translated with an introduction by J. Hoeing. In *Themes and Variations in European Psychiatry*. (ed. S.R. Hirsch and M. Shepherd). Bristol: Wright, pp. 80–93.
- Reading 10.3 **Dilthey, W. (1977).** Ideas concerning a descriptive and analytic psychology. In *Descriptive Psychology and Historical Understanding* (translated by R.M. Zaner and K.L. Heiges). The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, pp. 21–120 (Extracts pp. 27–28, 52–55).
- Reading 10.4 **Weber, M. (1975).** *Roscher and Nies: the logical problems of historical economics* (translated by Guy Oakes). New York: The Free Press (Extracts pp. 179–183, 184–186).
- Reading 10.5 **Weber, M. (1989).** The concept of ‘following a rule’. In *Max Weber: selections in translation* (ed. W.G. Runciman, translated by E. Matthews). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 99–110 (Extract p99)

## Reading 10.1

## EXERCISE 1

From: Mill, J.S. (1974). That there is, or may be, a science of human nature. In *Collected Works of John Stuart Mill*, Vol. VIII: *A System of Logic (Books IV–VI and Appendices)*, (ed. J.M. Robson). Book VI, Chapter III, § 1–2, pp. 844–847. (Extracts: p844, p845, pp846–7).

### § 1. [There may be sciences which are not exact sciences]

It is a common notion, or at least it is implied in many common modes of speech, that the thoughts, feelings, and actions of sentient beings are not a subject of science, in the same strict sense in which this is true of the objects of outward nature. This notion seems to involve some confusion of ideas, which it is necessary to begin by clearing up.

Any facts are fitted, in themselves, to be a subject of science, which follow one another according to constant laws; although those laws may not have been discovered, nor even be discoverable by our existing resources.

It is thus, for example, with the theory of the tides. No one doubts that Tidology (as Dr. Whewell proposes to call it)<sup>[\*]</sup> is really a science. As much of the phenomena as depends on the attraction of the sun and moon is completely understood, and may in any, even unknown, part of the earth's surface, be foretold with certainty; and the far greater part of the phenomena depends on those causes. But circumstances of a local or casual nature, such as the configuration of the bottom of the ocean, the degree of confinement from shores, the direction of the wind, &c., influence, in many or in all places, the height and time of the tide; and a portion of these circumstances being either not accurately knowable, not precisely measurable, or<sup>f</sup> not capable of being certainly foreseen, the tide in known places commonly varies from the calculated result of general principles by some difference that we cannot explain, and in unknown ones may vary from it by a difference that we are not able to foresee or conjecture. Nevertheless, not only is it certain that these variations depend on causes, and follow their causes by laws of unerring uniformity; not only, therefore, is tidology a science, like meteorology, but it

is, what hitherto at least meteorology is not<sup>g</sup>, a science largely available in practice. General laws may be laid down respecting the tides, predictions may be founded on those laws, and the result will in the main, though often not with complete accuracy, correspond to the predictions.

And this is what is or ought to be meant by those who speak of sciences which are not *exact* sciences. Astronomy was once a science, without being an exact science. It could not become exact until not only the general course of the planetary motions, but the perturbations also, were accounted for, and referred to their causes. (p. 845)

### § 2. [To what scientific type the Science of Human Nature corresponds]

The science of human nature is of this description. It falls far short of the standard of exactness now realized in Astronomy; but there is no reason that it should not be as much a science as Tidology is, or as Astronomy was when its calculations had only mastered the main phenomena, but not the perturbations.

The phenomena with which this science is conversant being the thoughts, feelings, and actions of human beings, it would have attained the ideal perfection of a science if it enabled us to foretell how an individual would think, feel, or act, throughout life, with the same certainty with which astronomy enables us to predict the places and the occultations of the heavenly bodies. It needs scarcely be stated that nothing approaching to this can be done. The actions of individuals could not be predicted with scientific accuracy, were it only because we cannot foresee the whole of the circumstances in which those individuals will be placed. But further, even in any given combination of (present) circumstances, no assertion, which is both precise and universally true, can be made respecting the manner in which human beings will think, feel, or act. This is not, however, because every person's modes of thinking, feeling, and acting, do not depend on causes; nor can we doubt that if, in the case of any individual, our data could be complete, we even now know enough of the ultimate laws by which mental phenomena are determined, to enable us <sup>a</sup>in many cases<sup>a</sup> to predict, with tolerable certainty, <sup>b</sup>what, in the greater number of supposable combinations<sup>b</sup> of circumstances, his conduct or sentiments would be. (pp. 846–847)

[\* *Novum Organon Renovatum*, p. 330.]

<sup>f</sup> MS, 43, 46, 51, 56, 62, 65 at least

<sup>g-g</sup> MS, 43, 46 meteorology perhaps will never be

<sup>a-a</sup> +46, 51, 56, 62, 65, 68, 72

<sup>b-b</sup> MS, 43 if not with perfect precision, what, under any given set] 46 what, under a given set

## Reading 10.2

### EXERCISE 3

Long Extract from: Jaspers, K. ([1913] 1974). Causal and 'meaningful' connections between life history and psychosis. Translated with an introduction by J. Hoenig. In *Themes and Variations in European Psychiatry*. (ed. S.R. Hirsch and M. Shepherd). Bristol: Wright, pp. 80–93.

In a footnote Jaspers said: 'My article of 1913 ("Kausale und verständliche Zusammenhänge zwischen Schicksal u. Psychose bei der Dementia praecox (Schizophrenie)", *Z. Neurol.*, vol. 14, pp. 158–263), and this present book (*General psychopathology*, 1913) were greeted as something radically new, although all I had done was to link psychiatric reality with the traditional humanities. Looking back now, it seems astonishing that these had been so forgotten and grown so alien to psychiatry. In this way within the confines of psychopathology there grew a methodical comprehension of something which had always been present, but which had been fading out of existence and which appeared in striking reverse, "through the looking-glass" as it were, in Freud's psychoanalysis; a misunderstanding of itself. The way was clear for scientific consciousness to lay hold on human reality and on man's mental estate, his psychoses included, but there was an immediate need to differentiate the *various modes of understanding*, clarify them and embody them in all the *factual content* available to us.'

What Jaspers had done and what he characterizes in these modest words was indeed a fundamental contribution to psychiatry, rescuing it from the dilemma of a medical discipline which has to rely on the biological sciences as well as on the behavioural sciences and the humanities, and which had not been able to emancipate itself from the nineteenth-century approach and had not yet developed the methodological clarity which its position required. In his *General psychopathology* Jaspers has given psychiatry this foundation and his work can be seen as the basis on which modern psychiatry stands.

In the first part of this paper on 'Causal and "meaningful" connexions between life history and psychosis,' which has so far never been available in English, Jaspers outlines the differences between the two methods of approach used in clinical psychiatry and psychiatric research, and applies them to the investigation of the syndrome of schizophrenia. The clarity with which the methodological aspects are analysed has not been surpassed by anything written since then.

J. Hoenig

Meaningful connexions are something entirely different from causal connexions. For example, we *understand* meaningfully a particular act in terms of motivations but we *explain* a movement causally in terms of nerve stimuli. We *understand* how moods arise out of affective states, the states of mind arise out of certain hopes, fantasies, and fears; we *explain* how changes in memory arise from fatigue or recovery from it, and so on. Understanding of

psychic material as it arises from other psychic material one also calls 'psychological explanation', and the natural scientist, who is concerned only with what can be perceived by the senses and with causal explanations, expresses an understandable and justified disinclination towards the psychological explanation where it is used to take the place of his own work. The meaningful connexions of psychical events have also been called 'causality from the inside', and this term has characterized the unbridgeable gulf which exists between this which can be called 'causal' only as an analogy and the *real* causal connexions, the 'causality from outside'.

Any analysis of the meaningful and of the causal explanations which emerge from research into man will reveal complex interactions between the two, but meticulous methodological reflection can nevertheless enable a clear-cut differentiation to be made between them. In this essay we shall not try to deal with this in detail. We shall rather attempt to isolate causal and meaningful connexions in certain concrete cases. Only the evidence of concrete material can show whether, and to what extent, understanding what is the so-called 'psychological explaining' can advance our insight. Here we want to add some concrete material. We cannot do this, however, without first defining quite briefly, in the form of a thesis, the methodology involved in this type of research and, in doing so, give definite concepts to the words we use.<sup>1</sup>

## Methodological survey

We have no intention here to convert scientists who use different approaches. We only want to clarify tentatively certain methodological principles underlying our work and that of those who are working on similar lines. The apodictic form used in this essay is to be understood in this sense only, as without it we could not have achieved the required brevity.

### 1. Outer and inner sense

We wish to compare, and this is indeed a comparison only, the existence of the outer world perceived by our sense organs with the existence of the inner world which is not perceived by the senses. Plants, animals, and all other objects we can concretely perceive and individually describe, and can link these sensory data and show how they hang together by explanations, by causal thinking. We can similarly present vividly to ourselves separately and describe in detail psychic states, various psychic data, experiences, modes of awareness (e.g., images, thoughts, feelings, pseudo-hallucinations, delusion-like ideas, instinctual feelings, etc.). Further, we can *understand* psychic connexions: understand how psychic events can emerge out of other psychic material, e.g., how behaviour arises out of motives, how moods and effects emerge out of situations and experiences. In this comparison the sensory perception is analogous to the vivid representation of psychic data. Causal

<sup>1</sup> From the literature Simmel's (1903–6), 'Probleme der Geschichtsphilosophie', Chap. I, and Max Weber, Roscher, Knies and others in Schmoller's *Yearbooks*, vols. 27, 29, 30, are particularly noteworthy.

explanation is analogous to psychological understanding. As both these means of describing psychic life are called 'understanding', we have to distinguish between them by calling the understanding of states 'static' understanding and that of connexions 'genetic' understanding. The representation, definition, description, and ordering of psychic states is the task of phenomenology;<sup>2</sup> on the other hand, the comprehension with conviction of psychic connexions is the concern of the psychology of meaning.

## 2. Genetic understanding

There are many ways of understanding how psychic events arise out of other psychic events. The first important differentiation was made by Simmel, who showed the difference between the understanding of *what has been said* from understanding the *speaker*. When the contents of thoughts emerge one from the other in accordance with the rules of logic, we understand the connexions *rationally*. But if we understand the content of the thoughts as they have arisen out of the moods, wishes, and fears of the person who thought them, we understand the connexions psychologically or empathically. Only the latter can be called 'psychological understanding'. Rational understanding always only enables us to say that a certain rational complex, something which can be understood without any psychology whatever, was the content of a mind; empathic understanding, on the other hand, leads us into the psychic connexions themselves. Whereas the rational understanding is only an *aid* to psychology, empathic understanding *is* psychology itself.

## 3. Psychology of meaning and performance psychology

The psychology of meaning has entirely different tasks from those of performance psychology which has mainly emerged from physiology. Neither really interferes with the other, and neither has the right to criticize the other, as they pursue entirely different aims. Performance psychology, which can only yield results by experiments, proceeds in such a way that it presents tasks to the experimental persons and then assesses the responses by a variety of measurements. The influence of various factors on performance is systematically investigated by changing the conditions of the experiments and in this way complex performances are slowly analysed into their elementary components; the various causes of how they come about are determined and theories are formulated about causal connexions—of memory, of perception, of the extent of awareness, of working ability, and so on; all proceed in principle in the same way and have created in the course of decades a valuable body of physiological psychology underrated in its value only by workers in the humanities who, quite wrongly, took the psychology of meaning for the only valid

<sup>2</sup> Phenomenology was developed by Husserl (*Logische Untersuchungen*, vol. 2). For our purpose here compare my essay 'The phenomenological approach in psychopathology', 1968, *Br. J. Psychiat.*, 114, 1313–1323 (in translation).

method.<sup>3</sup> This performance psychology does not even *want* to understand anything. It does not *try* to feel itself in any way into the psyche, but treats in essence the entire psychophysical mechanism as if it were an organism without a psyche, the functions of which are simply to be investigated. As *objective psychology* (in contrast to subjective psychology), i.e., the *psychology* of meaning and phenomenology, it is capable of reaching extraordinarily exact results but by the same token, by its very nature, it never can give an answer to the questions of phenomenology and of the psychology of meaning. Just as it is wrong when some humanists look deprecatingly on performance psychology as such, thus it is also wrong for natural scientists, who recognize only sensory data, experiments, and statistics, to do the same about the psychology of meaning. The two research methods have entirely different aims. Mistakes only arise when they try to replace each other and try, mistakenly, to translate matters belonging to the one field into the other.

## 4. The evidence of genetic understanding

The basis from which this evidence is derived is demonstrated, for example, when Nietzsche convincingly makes us understand how, out of the awareness of weakness, wretchedness, and suffering, moral principles, moral demands, and a religion of deliverance can arise because the psyche, via this roundabout way, wants to satisfy its will to power in spite of its weakness; we experience immediate evidence which we cannot reduce further nor base on any kind of other evidence. All psychology of meaning is based on such evidential experiences which we have in relation to quite impersonal, detached, meaningful connexions. Such evidence is gained *while* we gather experience in our contact with human personalities but is not gained *through* such experiences and is *never* inductively proved by repetitions of such experiences. Its power of conviction rests entirely in itself. To accept this type of evidence is a precondition of the psychology of meaning, in exactly the same way as acceptance of perceptual reality and causality are preconditions of the natural sciences.

The question of the psychological genesis of such evidence is outside the methodology of our subject in exactly the same way as the genesis of perception, or of the evidence which underlies a conviction arising out of a causal connexion, is entirely outside its concern, but is in fact the precondition of the natural sciences. The question of how the genesis of evident understanding comes about is being tackled in the 'psychology of empathy'. Here, in the context of methodology, this question is not of interest to us. We should like to emphasize, however, that the view that evident understanding is not something ultimate but can be based on repetitive experience is just as wrong and just as much to be

<sup>3</sup> Experimental psychology has with Külpe's school developed in an entirely new direction beyond performance psychology, by systematic self-observations during the experiments which advance phenomenology. Performance psychology demands experiments. But by no means all experiments serve exclusively the aims of performance psychology, although most of them do.

opposed as the opinion that the evidence based on the principle of causality can be derived from empathic experience. Such an opinion would be wrong even if in a particular case the psychological genesis of evidence should point to repeated experience.

### 5. The evidence of understanding and its relationship to reality: understanding and interpreting

When Nietzsche tries to apply the connexion (which in itself is meaningful and convincing) between awareness of weakness and morality to the actual particular historical events of the origin of Christianity, it is possible that such an application to a particular case can be wrong in spite of the correctness of the general (ideal, typical) understanding of that connexion. The judgement whether a meaningful connexion really has application to a particular case does not rest only on how self-evident this connexion is but most of all on the objective material of perceptible, tangible clues (verbal contents, creative works of all kinds, behaviour, conduct of life, movements of expression) each of which is understood individually but which altogether always remain to a certain extent incomplete. All understanding of individual actual events therefore remains more or less an interpretation which can reach a high level of completeness only in rare cases. These matters become clearest in a comparison between the relationship of the laws of causality and that of the evidently meaningful connexions to reality. The laws of causality are simply laws which have been gained by inductive methods and culminate in theories which surmise something which underlies the immediately given reality. A particular case will be subsumed under these laws under these theories. Meaningful connexions are ideally typical connexions.<sup>4</sup> They are self-evident (not arrived at by induction) and do not lead to theories; they remain only a kind of model by which particular real events can be assessed and recognized as being more or less understandable. Meaningful connexions are sometimes presented wrongly as laws or rules by stating the frequency with which such a meaningful connexion occurs and how often it can be counted. Its evidence, however, is in no way increased by such frequency. Not the meaningful connexion itself but its frequency is inductively established. As an example the frequency of the meaningful connexion between the price of bread and theft has been established. The meaningful connexion between autumn weather and suicide is in no way confirmed by the suicide curve which is highest in spring but that does not mean that this meaningful connexion is wrong. A particular real event can be the occasion which helps us to fully grasp a meaningful connexion, but the frequency of that event does not add anything to the evidence which we have thus gained. To find such frequencies serves entirely different purposes. In principle it is quite thinkable that, for instance, a poet may convincingly represent meaningful

connexions which in reality have never occurred. They are unreal but nevertheless possess their general evidence in the ideal typical sense.

### 6. The limits of understanding and the universal application of explaining

The suggestive assumption that the psychic is the area of meaningful understanding and the physical that of causal explanation is wrong. There is no real event, be it of physical or of psychic nature, which is not in principle accessible to causal explanation: the psychic events too can be submitted to causal explanation. Such causal explanation has already shown successful beginnings for instance in the psycho-physiological investigations about the origin of sense perceptions, or in the discoveries about the relationship between the speech function and certain centres in the central nervous system, etc. The effect a psychic state may have could in principle lend itself to a causal explanation, while the psychic state itself of course must be phenomenologically (statistically) understood. It is not absurd to think that it might one day be possible to have some rules which could causally explain the sequence of meaningfully connected thought processes without paying heed to the meaningful connexions between them. In such cases the meaning of the connexion of these psychic events would be just as irrelevant and accidental for the causal explanation as, in another case, is the lack of meaning. It is therefore in principle not at all absurd to try to understand as well as to explain one and the same real psychic event. These two established connexions, however, are of entirely different origin and have entirely different kinds of validity. They do not help each other in any way at all. The explanation does not make the connexion more meaningful, the understanding does not add to its explanation. The understanding as well as the explanation are each totally separable.<sup>5</sup> In fact there is no single event known to us which, in this sense, cannot be understood as well as explained. To find such an event is an infinitely remote problem. It is an entirely different matter that in almost all psychological investigations understanding and explaining go hand in hand. This combination of methods is indispensable for psychology, but in no case do the understanding and the explanation, coming as they do from different sides, converge on one and the same real aspect of the complex psychic event under study.

Whereas with the method of causal explanation in principle we nowhere encounter barriers but can gain new ground in all directions and without limitation, with understanding we encounter limitations everywhere. The existence of psychic dispositions, the rules of acquiring or losing memory traces, the succession of psychic constitutions which correspond to the different stages of growth and age, and all the rest which we can summarize as the substrate of the psychic, all these are limitations to our understanding. In a mythological age man thought they could understand

<sup>4</sup> Concerning the concept of the ideal type see Max Weber (1904), 'Die Objektivität sozialwissenschaftlicher und sozial politischer Erkenntnis', *Arch. Sozialw.*, 19.

<sup>5</sup> These matters are convincingly presented by Max Weber.

Donar in thunder and lightning. There were authors who still believed that everything psychic is understandable. Now we know that only certain aspects of the psyche are accessible to understanding. The question to what extent these limitations are already defined we shall discuss under the heading of 'Understanding and the unconscious' which will follow the brief description of the various types of causal explanation in psychology.

## 7. The varieties of causal explanation in psychology

Causal research using inductive methods looks for laws which govern the connexions. In a primitive form one finds simple rules by regarding one event as cause and the other as effect, as for instance a certain affective state resulting from the presence of alcohol in the body. In its perfected form causal equations<sup>1</sup> are formulated on the basis of established theories (for instance the atomic theory in chemistry). In psychology only the former level need be considered. Here we do not possess any far-reaching established theories but use quite diverse material as elements of causal thinking, whether we consider them as cause or as effect. These elements are established according to the prevailing research possibilities and according to the *ad hoc* research purpose. The types of causal thinking employed in psychology vary with the type of elements used. In order to provide such elements for the purpose of causal research, phenomenology and meaningful psychology with their entire conceptualization move into the realm of causal thinking. Phenomenological elements, for instance an hallucination or a particular mode of perception, are explained by bodily processes. Meaningful connexions of a quite complex kind are regarded as single elements; for instance, a manic syndrome with all its contents is explained as the effect of a cerebral process or as a meaningless effect of an emotional upset such as the death of a close person. Even the infinite whole of all meaningful connexions in a particular individual which we call personality can under certain circumstances in the course of causal investigations be regarded as a single element, the causation of which might be investigated on lines of heredity. In all such causal investigations of phenomenological elements or meaningful connexions, we have to surmise something *extra-conscious* underlying them, and have to operate with such concepts as 'extra-conscious dispositions', 'Anlagen', 'psychic constitutions', and 'extra-conscious mechanisms'. These concepts, however, cannot be developed into all-embracing theories in psychology but only be used for the investigation in hand as far as they are useful for that particular purpose.

## 8. Understanding and the unconscious

In essence all causal investigations try to penetrate into the *extra-conscious* basis of the psyche. Initially it may appear that all phenomenology and all psychology of meaning are exclusively concerned with *what is conscious*. This dichotomy is in fact valid. For phenomenology and the psychology of meaning, however, it is

never absolutely clear where exactly the *borders of awareness* lie. They both seem to gain new ground the farther they try to penetrate. Phenomenology may describe modes of psychic existence which have previously been *unnoticed*, and the psychology of meaning may grasp psychic connexions which have until then been hidden such as when it understands certain moral views as reactions to an awareness of weakness, powerlessness, and wretchedness. Thus every psychologist notices in himself that his psychic life becomes clearer and clearer to him, that he becomes aware of previously unnoticed things, and that he never knows for certain whether he has reached the ultimate limits of his self-understanding.

It is absolutely wrong when *this* kind of unawareness, which is turned into knowledge by phenomenology and psychology of meaning, is confused with the really unconscious, the essentially *extra-conscious*, which can never enter awareness. The unconscious in the sense of 'unnoticed' is in fact experience. The unconscious in the sense of the extra-conscious is *never* actually experienced. We would do well to call the unconscious in the first sense ordinarily *unawareness* and the unconscious in the second sense *extra-conscious*.<sup>6</sup>

It has always been the task of psychology to bring what has been unnoticed into clear awareness. The evidence of such insights has always been maintained by the fact that everyone could also observe the same thing in himself and would be able under favourable circumstances to really experience it. There are, however, a number of things which, on reflection, we *cannot* understand in terms of real experiences but which we nevertheless feel we can understand. For instance, Charcot and Möbius point out how the extent of hysterical disturbances of sensation or movement coincide with crude physiological and anatomical notions held by the patient and how they could be understood in this way. One could never prove that such ideas were actually the starting point of the disorder, except in cases of suggestion; nevertheless, one could understand the disorder 'as if' it were determined by such a conscious event. It must, however, remain open whether such cases really do have their origin in such unnoticed but real psychic events which could never be demonstrated, or whether one is dealing here only with an apt characterization of certain symptoms by a fiction. Freud, who described such 'as if understood' phenomena in large numbers, compares his activity with that of an archaeologist who interprets human cultural activities of past eras with the help of a number of unearthed fragments.

The big difference, however, is that the archaeologist interprets what has really been there at one time, whereas in the 'as if understanding' the reality of what has been understood is an entirely open question.

The psychology of meaning therefore has possibilities of extensive growth by bringing material of which one has been unaware into clear consciousness. Whether by an 'as if understanding' it can also penetrate into the extra-conscious must always remain dubious. Whether the fiction of 'as if understanding' can be

<sup>6</sup> See Hellpach, 'Unbewusstes oder Wechselwirkung', *Z. Psychol.*

useful to characterize certain phenomena is a question which can never be answered in general but only for each particular case.

### 9. The tasks of psychology of meaning

The formulation of meaningful connexions which have everyday familiarity for everyone and are reflected in everyday language would only produce trivialities. The real task of psychology of meaning is the extension of our understanding beyond this already well-known material into the hitherto unobserved, and further into quite unusual connexions (as, e.g., sexual perversions and their links with other instinctual drives), and finally into the demonstration of meaningful connexions emerging in psychotic states, which may at first glance appear to be quite senseless.

### 10. Understanding and value judgement

It is a fact that when dealing with meaningful connexions as such we inevitably tend to value positively or negatively, while everything meaningless we merely value, if we do so at all, only in relation to something else. Thus the emergence of moral demands from resentment we may value as something despicable, whereas we value memory merely as a tool. In the *science* of psychology, however, we must strictly refrain from any such value judgement. Our task is merely to grasp the meaningful connexions as such and to recognize them. Quite naturally sometimes it may appear 'as if' we were making a value judgement when in a particular case we point out a meaningful connexion. This appearance comes about because meaningful connexions as such are always immediately valued negatively or positively. We cannot get away entirely from this misleading appearance. Besides, correct value judgement rests on correct understanding, and since correct understanding is rare and so difficult to come by, it can really only be relied on to any extent in people with a special gift and after a deliberate and reflective study of the methodology. Value judgements by most people are usually wrong; they depend on accident and are arrived at by methods which are far from pure.

Since everyone likes to be judged favourably they usually only feel themselves properly 'understood' if the result is such a favourable valuation. Hence common usage takes the word 'understand' frequently to be identical with 'favourably judged' and negatively valued persons, particularly in situations where their negative value becomes obvious, say they cannot find 'understanding' and always feel themselves 'not understood'.

### 11. The present achievements of the psychology of meaning

With every analysis of an individual personality or of a definite piece of behaviour something can be achieved for the psychology of meaning. What has not been derived from such individual analyses, but was achieved by the uncovering of meaningful connexions of a general nature, has never been brought about by planned methodical research but in the form of essays, reflections,

or aphorisms, and here the acquisition of psychology of meaning is almost always diluted with value judgement and 'worldly wisdom'. Nevertheless, the unique value of such contributions remains. Meaningful connexions, as far as they are new and convincing, have always been discovered through the intuition of exceptional persons. From them flows directly or indirectly, handed down through secondary sources, most of our conscious knowledge of meaningful human psychic life. After a few ancient antecedents (Theophrastus's characters) outstanding contributions came particularly from the French: Montaigne, La Bruyère, La Rochefoucauld, Vauvenargues, and Chamfort. Entirely unique and the greatest of all subjective psychologists is Nietzsche (in particular his books *Human all too human*; *Dawn*; *Happy science*; *About the genealogy of morality*).

Within psychiatry, the psychology of meaning has always been active. On the one hand it was applied far too widely in the earlier teachings of 'The psychic causes' of mental illnesses. On the other hand, particularly recently when there has been a decrease in the general level of acquaintance with the humanities, it has become crude, oversimplified, and latterly there has even been the wish to eliminate it completely. It has always had a particular importance in France. At this time Janet is its most eminent representative. In German psychiatry the psychology of meaning has in our time taken a new step forward with the writings on the reactive psychosis (Bonhoeffer, Wilmanns, Birnbaum, and others) which was investigated particularly in the abnormal states found in prisoners in remand or penal institutions. It has also been developed in the study of the psychopathic personalities, hysterical personality, etc.; on the whole, however, the quality has remained rather poor.

Simultaneously with these endeavours in psychiatry, Freud's psychological teachings were developed in a certain sense as a reaction to the earlier extreme somatic orientation in research. In the number of its collaborators and the mass of publications this school has achieved an unrivalled success. Not only because of this success, however, but much more because of the extraordinarily interesting contents of these teachings, no psychopathologist can ignore it. Unfortunately at present the situation is that the majority are either Freudians or anti-Freudians instead of engaging in a critical evaluation of the particular achievements, and selecting what is sound and convincing. The one group takes over the teachings unconditionally lock, stock, and barrel and the other rejects it all out of hand. Amongst the outstanding researchers who have accepted essential parts of Freud's teaching is Bleuler. Bleuler is one of the few who maintains a critical attitude.<sup>7</sup> We too have tried to contribute to those parts which make sense to us, and have endeavoured to arrive at a critical position

<sup>7</sup> Bleuler's *Schizophrenia* (transl. 1952), to which we shall come back in more detail later, is a psychiatric book about psychoses in the narrow sense, which at long last shows again how to use psychology of meaning in the analysis of these psychoses. It is full of excellent observations. While rich in detail, however, it contains as a whole errors due to a lack of methodological clarity, due to too many repetitions and due to wrong, or at least very debatable, general psychological and philosophical opinions, presented rather dogmatically.

which we should like to present here briefly, and which is based on earlier methodological comments:

- a. In Freud's work we are dealing in fact with *psychology of meaning*, not *causal explanation* as Freud himself thinks. Causal explanations are involved when the physical basis is regarded as the cause of an entire meaningful connexion, as for instance in the paralysis of an arm, the clouding of consciousness, etc.
- b. Freud teaches us many new individual meaningful connexions and does it in a convincing way. We understand how complexes repressed into unawareness re-emerge in symbolic form. We understand the reaction-formation to repressed instinctual drives, the differentiation between the primary real psychic events from the secondary ones which are merely symbols or sublimations. Freud takes up Nietzsche's teachings and develops them in detail. He penetrates deeply into the unnoticed parts of psychic life which through him is brought into clear consciousness.
- c. The confusion of meaningful connexions with causal connexions is the basis of the incorrect Freudian postulate that every aspect and event in psychic life can be understood (is meaningfully determined). However, it is only the postulate of unlimited causality, not the postulate of unlimited meaningfulness, which is justifiable. Associated with this error there is another one. Freud proceeds from meaningful connexions to theories about the causes of the entire psychic process. While understanding, by its very nature, can never lead to general theory, causal research must always do so. (The tentative interpretation of an individual psychic event—and only such individual interpretations are justifiable—is, of course, not a general theory.)
- d. In many cases in Freud's work we are not dealing with 'understanding' and the raising into full consciousness of unnoticed connexions, but with an 'as if understanding' of extra-conscious connexions. If one considers that psychiatrists, when faced with an acute psychosis, may see nothing but confusion, performance defects or meaningless delusions while orientation is intact, it must appear as a step forward if one succeeds initially by 'as if understandable' connexions to characterize and order something out of such chaos (for instance the delusional contents in dementia praecox). It was equally a step forward earlier when the type of distribution of hysterical sensory and motor disturbances could be characterized in terms of the meaningful connexion with the crude anatomical ideas entertained by patients. In particular, the investigations of Janet show that the splitting off of psychic connexions can, in fact, exist in hysteria. In extreme cases one is dealing with two minds or two psyches in one and the same individual, one not knowing anything of the other. In such factual dissociations the 'as if understanding' assumes real significance. It is impossible to prove how far and how often such dissociations occur (Janet's cases are very rare), or whether in dementia praecox such dissociations really exist (as for instance Jung and Bleuler teach). One might do well to reserve a final judgement. The Freudian

workers with their rash assumptions of dissociations are in any case rather lacking in caution and the 'as-if-understandable' connexions, which for instance Jung thought he had shown in dementia praecox, are to a large extent not very convincing.

- e. An error in the Freudian teaching consists in the increasing simplification of his understanding which is connected with the transformation of meaningful connexions into general theories. Theories tend to simplification. Understanding finds infinite variety and complexity. Now Freud believes that nearly everything in the psychic life can be traced back meaningfully to sexuality, viewed in the broad sense as the only primary force. The writings of many of his pupils become unbearably boring because of this over-simplification. One always knows in advance that every paper will contain the same conclusion. Here the psychology of meaning no longer advances or no longer makes any progress.

It is not the object of our methodological comments to prove anything but simply to explain our position and the terminology which we shall use from now on. In the following essay we shall endeavour to investigate the meaningful connexions between the life history and certain acute psychoses, the particular characteristics of which, among the other active psychoses, we would like to determine here. In order to clarify this, we need yet a second condition, namely a conceptual clarification of the teaching of the reactive psychoses.

## Postscript

There follows the second part of the paper called 'The precept of the reactive psychoses', which applies the foregoing general principles to the clinical study of psychotic illnesses and gives the extensive case histories of four patients illustrating the newly evolved methods.

The concept of the 'reactive psychoses' has recently become of topical interest during the discussions sponsored by the World Health Organization to evolve an international classification of psychiatric disorders when the Scandinavian participants argued for the inclusion of 'reactive psychosis' as a diagnostic entity. (See p. 97ff.)

Careful reading of Jaspers' paper, which is the reference for the Scandinavian diagnostic usage, shows that he did not consider the 'reactive psychosis' to be a diagnostic entity, but that he was concerned with methodological problems of clinical studies. Whereas psychoanalysis, newly introduced at the time, was using the method of meaningful understanding and mistakenly considering this to encompass the entire psychosis, thereby over-extending the method, much orthodox psychiatry with its biological approach was concerned with the 'process' and neglected the study of the meaningful aspects of these illnesses. Jaspers' striving for methodological clarification tried to define the scope and the limitation of each of these methods, thus creating the space in which each of them could legitimately be exercised.

J. Hoenig

**Reading 10.3****EXERCISE 4**

From: Dilthey, W. (1977). Ideas concerning a descriptive and analytic psychology. In *Descriptive Psychology and Historical Understanding* (translated by R.M. Zaner and K.L. Heiges). The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, pp. 21–120 (Extracts pp. 27–28, 52–55).

**First Extract: pp. 27–8**

Those who represent explanatory psychology have the habit of invoking the example of physical and natural sciences [*Naturwissenschaften*] in order to legitimate such a large employment of hypotheses. But we are going to establish here at the outset of our investigation that the human studies [*Geisteswissenschaften*] have the right to determine their methods independently corresponding to their object. The human studies must begin from the most universal concepts of general methodology in the effort to apply them to their particular objects, and thus to succeed in constituting in their own proper domain more determinate methods and the most precise principles, just as it has been done in the sciences of nature. It is not by transporting into our domain the methods found by the great scientists which we display to their true disciples, but by adapting our inquiry to the nature of our objects and thus conducting ourselves toward our knowledge as they towards theirs. *Natura parendo vincitur*. The human studies are distinguished from the sciences of nature first of all in that the latter have for their objects facts which are presented to consciousness as from outside, as phenomena and given in isolation, while the objects of the former are given originaliter from within as real and as a living continuum [*Zusammenhang*]. As a consequence there exists a system of nature for the physical and natural sciences only thanks to inferential arguments which supplement the data of experience by means of a combination of hypotheses. In the human studies, to the contrary, the nexus of psychic life constitutes originally a primitive and fundamental datum. We explain nature, we understand psychic life. For in inner experience [*innere Erfahrung*] the processes of one thing acting on another, and the connections of functions or individual members of psychic life into a whole are also given. The experienced [*erlebte*] whole [*Zusammenhang*] is primary here, the distinction among its members only comes afterwards. It follows from this that the methods by means of which we study psychic life, history, and society are very different from those which have led to the knowledge of nature. As for the question which we are here considering, it follows from the difference we noted that hypotheses do not all play the same role in psychology as in the study of nature. In the latter, all connectedness [*Zusammenhang*] is obtained by means of the formation of hypotheses; in psychology it is precisely the connectedness which is originally and continually given in lived experience [*Erleben*]: life exists everywhere only as a nexus or coherent whole. Psychology therefore has no need of basing itself on the concepts yielded from inferences in order to establish a coherent whole among the main groups of mental affairs.

**Second Extract: 52–55**

We know external physical objects from without through our senses. Whatever may be the manner in which we break them up, or divide them, we do not reach their ultimate elements. We adduce such elements by adding to or supplementing experience. What is more, the senses, to consider their purely physiological results, never give us the unity of the object. The latter exists for us in any case only due to an inner synthesis of sensory stimuli. This assertion would remain correct even if one were to consider the splitting up of the unitary perception into sensations and their syntheses as a simple heuristic expedient. When we then place the object in the relations of cause and effect, the sensory impressions prompt us to apprehend that relatedness only by means of the regularity of their succession, whereas the causal relation itself results, to repeat, from our inner synthesis. The validity of this assertion stands, whether one seeks the origin of this synthesis in the understanding, or whether the relation of cause and effect, as I have stated in an earlier essay,\* is derived only from the living conduct of the will experiencing the pressure of another will—in which case the relation depends on a primary and constitutive element, our living conduct being only intellectually interpreted through abstract thought. In whatever fashion one conceives the formation of objective representations and their causal relations, their totality is in no way whatever in the sensory excitations, nor in their coexistence and succession. How different is our knowledge of psychic life! Contrary to outer perception, inner perception rests on an inner awareness [*Innewerden*], a lived experience; it is immediately given. The sensation or pleasure which accompanies it is given as something indivisibly simple. The sensation of violet, whatever may be its origin, is indivisible in so far as it is an inner phenomenon. If we perform an act of thought we can discern in it a plurality of inner facts which are, however, enclosed in the indivisible unity of a function; thus is presented, in internal experience, something new which has no analogue in nature. If we reflect on the identity, which simultaneously holds together several inner processes and joins their succession into a living unity, we find still more surprisingly that in inner experience [*innere Erfahrung*] something is given as a lived experience [*Erlebnis*] which can in no way be compared to the processes of nature. Thus we continually experience [*erleben*] a sense of connectedness and totality in ourselves, whereas we must impute connections and totalities to sensory stimuli. This lived experience, we are incapable of ever making clear to our theoretical understanding. The personal identity which unites whatever is simultaneous and successive in the individual living processes, reveals, before the tribunal of the understanding, the contradictions already signaled by Herbart. When the premises give birth in us to a conclusion, we experience [*erleben*] a wider nexus: here a whole stands out which leads from causes to effects, but this also has its origin in us and is given in lived experience as a reality. Thus we formulate the concepts of the unity of a diversity, of parts of a whole, of causal relations, and we subsequently

\* See "On Our Belief in the Reality of the External World," Part One of *Die Geistige Welt, Gesammelte Schriften*, Band V. [Tr.]

understand nature by applying these conceptions to it under certain conditions of coexistence or of uniform succession.

We experience [*erfahren*] this nexus only in a piecemeal fashion; the light of awareness illuminates sometimes one point, sometimes another, because the psychic power can only, in accord with an important feature of it, raise to consciousness a limited number of components of the inner nexus. Yet we are constantly conscious of such connections. In spite of the extreme variability of the contents of consciousness, the same connections always return, and their form is disengaged gradually with clarity. We have the same consciousness, always more distinct, clearer and more certain, of the manner in which these syntheses enter into more encompassing combinations which finally form a nexus. If a member regularly called up a second, or one class of members another, if in a number of other cases this second member or second class called up a third, and if there were followed by a fourth or fifth—then a consciousness of the nexus of these members or a whole class of members must finally follow with universal certainty. In other cases, we pick out in the same way, thanks to the attentive concentration of our activity of observation, a particular fact from the chaos of phenomena and we seek to maintain it in the field of perception or of memory in order to apprehend it more exactly. From the rapid, indeed too rapid flux of inner processes, we separate out a determined process, we isolate it, we bring it to focal attention. In this particular activity is found the condition for the more extensive operation of abstraction. It is only by abstraction that we disengage a function, a mode of combination from a concrete nexus. And, it is only by a generalization that we ascertain or establish the form under which a function is always presented, or the determinate constancy of certain gradations of sensory data, the scale of intensity of the sensations and feelings which each of us knows. All these logical acts imply differences, similarities, and the determination of the degrees of diversity. The classification and designation wherein the germ of definition is found, results necessarily from these logical activities. I would say that it is precisely by beginning from inner experience that one can best grasp the elementary logical operations as they are revealed to us in impressions and lived

experiences. To distinguish, to identify, to establish degrees of diversity, to combine, to separate, to abstract, to connect several wholes into a single one, to disengage a similarity from several affairs: operations of this kind are encountered in every inner perception, or result from their coexistence. *The intellectuality of inner perception* is also the prime characteristic of the apprehension of inner states which condition psychological investigations. Inner perception occurs precisely like external perception, by means of elementary logical processes, and it permits one to recognize in a particularly clear manner that these elementary logical processes are inseparable from the same apprehension of elements.

From this there appears a second characteristic of the apprehension of psychic states. This apprehension originates from *lived experience* and remains connected with it. The processes of *the whole psyche* operate together in this experience. In it the entire nexus is given, whereas the senses offer only a multiplicity of items. In the lived experience particular occurrence is supported by the totality of psychic life and the nexus in which it itself stands, and the whole of psychic life belongs to immediate experience. The latter already determines the nature of our *understanding* [*Verstehen*] of ourselves and of others. We explain by purely intellectual processes, but we understand through the concurrence of all the powers of the psyche in the apprehension. In understanding we proceed from the coherent whole which is livingly given to us in order to make the particular intelligible to us. Precisely the fact that we live with the consciousness of the coherent whole, makes it possible for us to understand a particular sentence, gesture or action. All psychological thought preserves this fundamental feature, that the apprehension of the whole makes possible and determines the interpretation of particulars. The psychological reconstruction of a common human nature must adhere to this original procedure of understanding if it wants to remain sound, vigorous, well-informed and fruitful for the comprehension of life. The nexus of psychic life which experience discloses to us must remain the firm, lived and immediately secure foundation of psychology, however deeply it may become engaged in particular experimental inquiries. (pp. 52–55)

## Reading 10.4

## EXERCISE 5

From: Weber, M. (1975). *Roscher and Nies: the logical problems of historical economics* (translated by Guy Oakes). New York: The Free Press (Extracts pp. 179–183, 184–186).

**First Extract: pp. 178–183**

Suppose that an historical account appeals to our “feelings.” In other words, suppose the historian attempts to provoke us to have an “experience” which cannot be conceptually articulated. In this case, the historian is doing one of the following. *On the one hand*, he may be employing a shorthand description for partial aspects of his object. These will be aspects of the following sort: given the concrete theoretical purpose of the historical investigation, their analytical determination is not essential. This is a consequence of the following consideration: the logical inexhaustibility of the empirically given manifold of experience entails that every description can be “valid” only as a “relative” conclusion of the historical investigation. *On the other hand*, the historian may see the attempt to provoke us to have a purely emotional experience as a unique means of attaining *knowledge*: for example, as a way of getting a “perspicuous view” of the “character” of a cultural epoch or of a work of art. In which case, the historian’s use of suggestively effective techniques can have two different sets of logical properties. It can claim to represent a “reproduction in immediate experience” of the—depending upon the appropriateness of the expression—“intellectual” or “mental” “content” of the “life” of the epoch, personality, or concrete work of art concerned. Consider both the historian and his reader who “empathizes” with the help of this “reproduction.” As long as “reproduction in immediate experience” remains on the plane of “feelings,” it will produce in both the historian and his reader *first-person* value feelings that are intrinsically unarticulated. There is no guarantee at all that these value feelings will correspond in any way to the feelings of the historical persons with whom the writer and the reader empathize.<sup>85</sup> In consequence, these feelings fail to provide a verifiable standard for distinguishing the *causally* “essential” from the *causally* “inessential.” A foreign city can produce in us a “feeling of totality” which is absolutely arbitrary—i.e., irrelevant to those elements which are essential to a *causal* explanation of the “life-style” of its inhabitants. It is produced on the plane of the purely emotional by things like the disposition of chimneys, the shape of roof cornices, and other things of that sort. Experience indicates that the same holds without exception for all unarticulated historical “intuitions.” On the whole, their theoretical value for science decreases as their aesthetic charm increases. Under certain circumstances, they *can* have significant “heuristic” value. Under other circumstances, however, they can constitute an obstacle to empirical knowledge. This is because they obscure the awareness that the “intuition” is constituted by the emotional contents of the

observer, not by those of the “epoch” described: e.g., the emotional contents of the creative artist, etc. In this case, the claim that “knowledge” of this sort is subjective is equivalent to the claim that it is not “valid.” It is not valid simply *because* it has not been analytically articulated. In consequence, “mutual participation in the feelings of others” is withdrawn from the domain of demonstration and verification. Moreover, historical “intuition” includes the following eminent danger. Causal analysis may be repressed in favor of the search for a “total character” which corresponds to the “feeling of totality.” Since the need for a *formula* which reproduces the “synthesis of feeling” replaces the need for a formula which expresses the results of empirical analysis, this “total character” is affixed to the “epoch” like a label. Subjective, emotional “interpretation” in this form does *not* constitute empirical, historical knowledge of real relations (causal interpretation). *Nor* does it constitute that which it otherwise could be: *interpretation based on values*. In addition to “causal ascription,” this is the only other sense of the “direct experience” of an historical object that can be included in the “category” with which we are concerned at this point. Elsewhere, I have discussed the logical relation of this sense of “direct experience” to history.<sup>86</sup> At this point, it is sufficient to establish the following. In this sense, “interpretation” of an object which has aesthetic, moral, or intellectual value, or any conceivable cultural value at all, is not a *constituent* of a (in the logical sense) purely empirical-historical account—i.e., an account which explains concrete “historical entities” in terms of concrete causes. On the contrary, from the point of view of history, it constitutes the *formation* of an “historical entity.” The “interpretation” of “Faust” or of “Puritanism” or of some specific aspect of “Greek culture” in *this* sense is an inquiry into those “values” which “we” *can* find “embodied” in these objects. It is an inquiry into the invariably concrete “form” in which “we” find these values “embodied,” the “form” that constitutes these “entities” as objects of “historical explanation.” In consequence, “interpretation” in this sense is accomplished by the *philosophy* of history. In fact, *this* sort of “interpretation” does “subjectify,” if we mean by this the following: it is self-evident that the “validity” of these values can never be established in the sense that the validity of empirical “facts” is established. Consider the sense of “interpretation” now at issue. The object of interpretation is not whatever those who historically participated in the production of the “valued” object subjectively “felt” from their own point of view. Insofar as this kind of interpretation is conceived as having intrinsic value, knowledge of this sort is only a possible heuristic device which we could use to improve our own “understanding” of the value.<sup>87</sup> On the contrary, what is interpreted is the values that “we” “can” find in the object—or perhaps even “should” find in the object. In the latter case, “interpretation” sets for itself the aims of a normative discipline—like aesthetics, for example. “Interpretation” in this sense constitutes “evaluation.” In the former case, “interpretation,” from a logical point of view, is based upon a “dialectical” *analysis* of values. It only investigates “possible” axiological relations of the object. However, it is precisely these “axiological relations”—and in the

present context, this is their preeminent function—which at the same time represent the only path out of the complete indeterminateness of “empathy” to that kind of determinateness which makes knowledge of the concrete mental contents of consciousness possible. In contrast to mere “emotional contents,” we ascribe “value” to an item if and only if it can be the content of a commitment: that is, a consciously articulated positive or negative “judgment,” something that appears to us to “demand validity.” The “validity” of a judgment is a “value” “for” us. Accordingly, it is accepted or rejected “by” us. Or it becomes the object of a “value judgment” in the most diverse contexts. The “imputation” of an ethical or aesthetic “value” invariably entails the making of a “value judgment.” A closer analysis of the nature of “value judgments” cannot be undertaken here.<sup>88</sup> However, for the purposes of the present discussion, the following point should be made: it is *determinateness of content* which removes the object of the value judgment from the sphere of that which is merely “felt.” It is impossible to establish unambiguously that someone else sees the “red” in a certain carpet in “just the same way” as I see it and that it has the same “emotional tones” for him that it has for me. The “perception” in question necessarily remains indeterminate in its incommunicability. On the other hand, it would make no sense for one person to communicate an ethical or aesthetic judgment about some item to another person unless—admitting the interplay of incommunicable “emotional” components—the “essential” aspects of the content of the judgment were “understood” in the same way. The relation of individuals to possible “values” always implies that exclusively intuitive “feelings” have been eliminated, at least to some degree, which is invariably only relative.

Let us conclude this analysis—unavoidably somewhat monotonous—of the diverse theories of the alleged peculiarity of the “subjectifying” disciplines and the significance of this peculiarity for history, theories which fairly glitter in the variety of their colors and forms. The only result of this analysis is really quite trivial. Nevertheless, its soundness has repeatedly been questioned. Consider any given piece of knowledge. Neither the “substantive”

qualities of its “object” nor the “ontological” peculiarities of the “existence” of this “object” nor, finally, the kind of “psychological” conditions required for its acquisition are of any consequence as regards its *logical* content and the presuppositions on which its “validity” is based. *Empirical* knowledge in the domain of the “mental” and in the domain of “external” “nature,” knowledge of processes “within” us and of those “without” us, is invariably tied to the instrument of “concept formation.” From a logical point of view, the nature of a “concept” in these two substantive “domains” is the same. The *logical* peculiarity of “historical” knowledge, in contrast to “natural-scientific” knowledge—in the *logical* sense of this expression—has nothing at all to do with the distinction between the “psychical” and the “physical,” the “personality” and “action,” on the one hand, and the dead “natural object” and the “mechanical process of nature,” on the other.<sup>92</sup> To identify the “self-evidence” of “empathy” in the actual or potential “conscious” inner “experience”—an exclusively phenomenological quality of “interpretation”—with a unique empirical “certainty” of processes “susceptible to interpretation” is an even more serious mistake. Physical and psychical “reality,” or an aspect of “reality” comprehending both physical and psychical components, constitutes an “historical entity” because and insofar as it can “mean” something to us. “Meaningfully” interpretable human conduct (“action”) is identifiable by reference to “valuations” and “meanings.” For this reason, our criteria for *causal* explanation have a unique kind of satisfaction in the “historical” explanation of such an “entity.” Finally, suppose that human conduct is oriented to “values.” Or suppose that “values” can be ascribed to human conduct. In this case, there is a peculiar sense in which the “understanding” of human conduct is “self-evident.” The question of the special role of the “interpretively” understandable in “history” therefore concerns differences in (1) our causal *interest* and (2) the quality of the “self-evidence” pursued in the investigation of concrete causal relations. However, it does *not* concern differences in the concept of causality, the significance of concept formation, or the kind of conceptual apparatus employed.

## Reading 10.5

### EXERCISE 6

From: Weber, M. (1989). The concept of 'following a rule'. In *Max Weber: selections in translation* (ed. W.G. Runciman, translated by E. Matthews). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 99–110 (Extract p99).

The defining characteristic of 'social life', its 'formal' property, according to Stammer, is that it is a '*rule-governed*' communal life, consisting of reciprocal relationships 'governed by external rules'. Let us immediately pause and ask, before following Stammer any further, what might be meant in total by the words 'rule-governed' and 'rule'. 'Rules' might mean first (i) general assertions about causal connexions, or 'laws of nature'. If the term 'laws' is to be reserved, in this context, for general causal propositions of unconditional strictness (in the sense that they admit of no exceptions), then the term 'rule' may be kept only (a) for all those empirical propositions which are incapable of this degree of strictness; but no less (b) for all those so-called 'empirical laws' to which, on the contrary, no exceptions can be discovered empirically, but for which we

lack insight (at any rate of a theoretically adequate kind) into the decisive causal determinants of this lack of exceptions. It is a 'rule' in the sense of an 'empirical law' (sense (b)) that men 'must die'; it is a 'rule' in the sense of a general empirical proposition (sense (a)) that certain reactions of a specific nature are an 'adequate' response on the part of a student belonging to a fraternity to a slap in the face. The term 'rule' may further mean (ii) a 'norm' against which present, past or future events may be 'measured' in the sense of a value-judgment: that is, the **general assertion of a logical, ethical or aesthetic 'ought'**, as opposed to an empirical 'is', which is all that is referred to by the examples of 'rules' given under (i). The 'validity' of the rule in this second case refers to a general imperative, of which the norm itself provides the content. In the first case, the 'validity' of the rule refers merely to the truth claims of the assertion that the factual regularities corresponding to the rule are either 'given' in empirical reality or may be inferred from what is given by generalisation.

Besides these two basic meanings of the concepts of a 'rule' and 'rule-governedness', which are very simple in sense, there are also others which do not seem without further ado to fit smoothly under one of these two headings.