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CHAPTER 9

Phenomenology and psychopathology

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Introduction

This is the first of two chapters in which we will be looking in detail at the philosophical basis of the work of Karl Jaspers, the philosophical father of modern psychopathology. As we saw in Chapter 8, Jaspers envisaged his psychopathology as being founded on phenomenology. In this chapter, therefore, we will look more closely at phenomenology itself, and, in particular, the way it developed in the work of Edmund Husserl. In Chapter 10, we will move on to the second main philosophical influence on Jaspers' psychopathology, the *Methodenstreit*, and how Jaspers used this to formulate an approach to psychopathology, which draws on aspects of both the natural and human sciences.

Husserl and Jaspers

The purpose of this chapter, then, is to introduce Husserl's work and to assess how, and to what extent, Jaspers was influenced by him. One of Jaspers' early articles, which we introduced in Chapter 8, is indeed called 'The phenomenological approach in psychopathology', but there has been recent debate over whether Jaspers' notion of phenomenology is anything like Husserl's! Husserl's project is a fascinating one in its own right. It is important, therefore, to gain a sense of what Husserl was doing before trying to decide whether Jaspers was doing the same.

Husserl and many others

There is, however, a further reason why a study of Husserl's work is important—even if it turns out, as we shall see, that Jaspers' notion of phenomenology bears little resemblance to Husserl's. Husserl's phenomenology is commonly regarded as setting in motion the distinctive tradition of twentieth century philosophy

usually known as Continental philosophy (introduced above, Chapter 4). This tradition is made up of a highly heterogeneous set of philosophical approaches, all of which, to a greater or lesser extent, have their roots in a critical engagement with Husserl. Some of the more well known philosophers who fall within this tradition are Martin Heidegger, Hans-Georg Gadamer, Emmanuel Levinas, Jean-Paul Sartre, Paul Ricoeur, and Jacques Derrida. Their work has become a rich source for those seeking a philosophical understanding of mental health and illness in the context of a broad and inclusive approach to human life.

We introduced a number of these philosophers in Part I (especially in Chapter 4). We conclude this chapter with a brief look at a further important figure from this tradition, Martin Heidegger. Additional reading on modern phenomenology, including a number of contributions to this book series, is given in the Reading guide to this chapter.

Session 1 Jaspers' phenomenological approach to psychopathology

In Chapter 8, we looked at the later of Jaspers' two articles, 'Causal and "meaningful" connections' (published in 1913), before turning to his earlier article on 'The phenomenological approach in psychopathology' (published in 1912). The reason for approaching Jaspers' work in reverse order was that the later article, in treating the difference between understanding a mental disorder and giving a causal explanation of it, allowed us to come to an initial grasp of the peculiar nature of psychopathology as a discipline with links to both the human sciences (such as history, where one seeks to understand the thoughts and actions of, say, Napoleon) and the natural sciences (where one seeks to formulate causal laws governing the emergence of observed effects).

Mental states and psychopathology

This 'peculiar nature', however, is of course not restricted to psychopathology but is a feature of psyche, or mental states, as a whole. Phenomenology, as developed by Husserl, is concerned with identifying and characterizing exactly what the peculiar nature of mental states consists in.

The term 'phenomenology', as we will see in this chapter, has been and continues to be used with many different meanings. This has led to much confusion, not least, as we will argue in this chapter, for Jaspers himself. Jaspers often uses the term phenomenology, much as it is widely used today, to mean a method for carefully describing and cataloguing particular mental states. But for Husserl, at least, phenomenology was a more fundamental activity: it was an analysis of the basic conceptual framework within which talk of mental states, including such distinctions as that between meanings and causes, is possible at all.

It is this basic conceptual framework, we will argue, rather than phenomenology as a method, that Jaspers owes to Husserl. It is also through critiques of the framework proposed by Husserl,

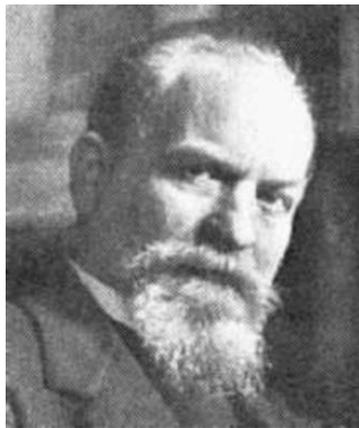


Fig. 9.1 Edmund Husserl

that, as we noted above, later philosophers, in the Continental tradition, have enriched our understanding of psychopathology.

Mental states and Husserl's phenomenology

As a first step, then, in understanding this basic conceptual framework, we will look at the problem with which Husserl himself was concerned, the nature of mental states.

Husserl's problem: what is a mental state?

Consider the following two statements.

- ◆ John is depressed because of the death of his friend,
- ◆ John is depressed because of a neurochemical imbalance in his brain.

The first statement, in the term of Chapter 8, cites a 'meaningful connection'—one might say that being depressed on account of the death of a friend is 'understandable'; whereas the second statement cites a 'causal connection' between the state of depression and brain chemistry, a connection that has been established through lengthy scientific investigations.

In both, we are talking about a type of conscious mental state or a form of experience. John, we said, 'is depressed'. Are we clear, however, about what these terms, 'mental state' and 'experience' mean? They are terms we can easily take for granted—we use them in everyday life as well as in clinical contexts—but are we really clear about what a mental state is, what the essential aspects of it are, whether there are fundamentally different types of mental state, or whether all mental states have structures in common?

For example, under the broad title of 'mental state' one might list 'belief' and 'perception' as two very different types of mental state—and one might then count 'delusion' and 'hallucination' as abnormal forms of these. While the empirical scientist may be interested in surveying the commonest forms of delusion, from a philosophical perspective we seek to understand what a belief is and how it is related to other fundamental types of mental state. Jaspers was interested in the question of the difference between a causal account of a mental state and an understanding of it, but this presupposes a grasp of the very thing we are considering in these two different ways—what a mental state is! This latter question is not an empirical matter, but a conceptual matter—one is seeking clarification of the everyday and seemingly self-evident concepts we use in talking about other people. This type of conceptual investigation was what Husserl, in his early work, called 'phenomenology'—an investigation of mental phenomena aimed at clarifying the very idea of 'mental phenomena'.

Husserl's project: to clarify the concept of a mental state

Husserl was well aware that his more empirically minded colleagues might regard his project as rather trivial—rather than going out and making an empirical survey of the commonest types of mental state

and their abnormalities, Husserl proposed merely to sit down and analyse what we mean by a mental state in the first place!

Throughout his life, however, Husserl regarded phenomenology as playing a vitally important role in relation to scientific research—the clarification of the basic conceptual schemes within which scientific research is undertaken; and in his early work the conceptual scheme he was interested in is that which we use to talk about other people—their 'mental states'. If someone were to regard such an investigation as concerning itself with mere trivialities, then Husserl would agree, but add that this makes the investigation simply more pressing:

It ill befits the philosopher, the dedicated representative of purely theoretical interests, to let himself be guided by considerations of practical use. He must surely know that it is precisely behind the obvious that the hardest problems lie hidden, that this is so much so, in fact, that philosophy may be paradoxically, but not unprofoundly, called the science of the trivial. In the present case at least what seems at first quite trivial, reveals itself, on closer examination, as the source of deep-lying, widely ramifying problems. (Husserl [1900–01] 1970a p. 528)

Husserl and Austin: clarifying concepts basic to science

There are many resonances here with the characterization of the role of philosophy we took from J.L. Austin and others in the Anglo-American tradition of analytic philosophy, developed early in Chapters 2, 4, and 6. But it might otherwise strike you as quite strange that a philosopher should describe philosophy as the 'science of the trivial'. Husserl was concerned throughout his life with a view of philosophy as a process of clarifying the concepts that we normally use without thinking about them, including the concepts that are taken for granted as the basic concepts in a particular science.

This is a very similar conception of philosophy to that of Austin, then. Both philosophers believed that philosophy's role is that of analysing and clarifying our understanding of seemingly trivial concepts—'trivial' because they are so fundamental to our everyday ways of thinking that we normally take them for granted. As you learn more about Husserl, you will see other similarities: in particular, their common emphasis on the need not to just 'play games' with words, but to 'look and see' how concepts are used in concrete practices.

In Husserl and Austin, then, we see the extent to which the distinction between 'analytic' philosophy and 'continental' philosophy breaks down: the father of modern Continental philosophy and a leading figure of British analytic philosophy would seem to be following quite similar paths!

Jaspers' view of Husserl's early and later phenomenologies

The text by Husserl from which the above extract was taken, *Logical Investigations*, although Husserl's second major work,

is definitive of what is now known as his 'early' phenomenology. Published in two volumes, in 1900 and 1901, *Logical Investigations* is a huge (over 800 pages in the English translation) and densely written text. We will be looking at it more closely below.

Husserl's first major work was the *Philosophy of Arithmetic*. This is similar in a number of respects to *Logical Investigations* and is the work in which Husserl first sets out his notion of phenomenology. The *Logical Investigations*, on the other hand, is the work that had most influence on Jaspers. Indeed, it appears that Jaspers only ever read two texts by Husserl; the second being Husserl's short piece entitled 'Philosophy as rigorous science' which was published in 1911.

By 1911, with the publication of 'Philosophy as rigorous science', Husserl had moved to a very different notion of phenomenology. This new account of phenomenology, Husserl's 'later phenomenology', is widely distinguished from his earlier work as 'transcendental phenomenology'. Husserl's transcendental phenomenology is sketched out initially in 'Philosophy as rigorous science' and then developed in a programmatic text of 1913 that he took to replace *Logical Investigations* as definitive of phenomenology. This text has the rather unwieldy title 'Ideas pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy, first book: General Introduction to a Pure Phenomenology'. The title is universally shortened to *Ideas I*, for obvious reasons! We shall look briefly at Husserl's notion of a transcendental phenomenology below.

As far as is known Jaspers never read Husserl's *Ideas I*. Indeed, having read the 1911 text 'Philosophy as rigorous science', Jaspers concluded that Husserl was no longer pursuing a form of philosophy with which he had any sympathy. It was, then, the earlier phenomenology of *Logical Investigations* that Jaspers regarded as more useful for his own work.

There is a further complication, though, of which we have to take account if we are to properly assess the extent to which Husserl's work forms a foundation for Jaspers' psychopathology. This complication relates to what Jaspers means when he uses the terms 'phenomenology' or 'phenomenological approach'. We shall see that Jaspers' idea of phenomenology is different in important ways even from Husserl's early notion, while at the same time, he draws ideas from Husserl that he does not explicitly acknowledge as phenomenological ideas. What this means is that in assessing the role of Husserl's phenomenology on Jaspers' thinking, we are going to have to look deeper than simply at what Jaspers means when he explicitly uses the term.

Five questions about Jaspers' phenomenology

One way to explore the influence of Husserl's work on Jaspers is through a careful reading of Jaspers' article 'The phenomenological approach in psychopathology'.

EXERCISE 1

(60 minutes)

As part of this exercise, please re-read Jaspers' article, which we first looked at in Chapter 8 (Exercise 5).

Jaspers, K. (1968). The phenomenological approach in psychopathology. *British Journal of Psychiatry*, 114: 1313–1323 (anonymous translation of 'Die Phänomenologische Forschungsrichtung in der Psychopathologie', 1912, *Zeitschrift für die gesamte Neurologie und Psychiatrie*, 9: 391–408)

Link with Reading 9.1 (This is same as Reading 8.2—Chapter 8/Exercise 5)

A key part of understanding what Jaspers means by 'phenomenology' is to grasp what he means by the 'subjective symptoms' of a patient's disorder. It is 'subjective symptoms' that are the concern of phenomenology for Jaspers. Before re-reading the article, therefore, note down what sorts of thing you think would fall under the category of 'subjective symptom'. Then, having read it, answer the following questions:

1. How does Jaspers characterize the nature of 'subjective symptoms'?
2. What does Jaspers mean by 'empathy'?
3. What is the place of phenomenology, for Jaspers, within psychopathology as a whole?
4. What is the task of phenomenology in Jaspers' view?
5. What does Jaspers identify as the 'boundaries of phenomenology'?

Question 1: the nature of subjective symptoms

On the face of it, one might guess that the term 'subjective symptom' would refer to the thoughts, ideas, feelings, attitudes, etc. that we think of as making up a patient's 'state of mind'. However, as you may have noticed at the very beginning of Jaspers' article, things are not so simple! We are going to take the answer to the first question in this exercise rather slowly—indeed, you might think the following paragraphs are rather hair-splitting! However, if we are to grasp what Jaspers means by phenomenology, everything depends on first being as clear as we can about what the 'subjective symptoms' are, with which phenomenology is (on Jaspers' view) concerned.

Subjective and objective symptoms

The best way of approaching what Jaspers means by 'subjective symptoms' is to look at how he sets them apart from 'objective symptoms'. We might think of 'objective' symptoms as the external manifestations of a patient's disorder—things that are, in various senses, publicly on view. Jaspers includes 'all concrete events that can be perceived by the senses, and 'measurable performances',

but also, notably, a patient's utterances, written expressions, and ideas.

Jaspers' use of the term 'objective' is thus rather broad; one might, for example, think of the sounds produced or the physical markings made on paper as 'objective' in a strict sense, and clearly the meaningfulness of an utterance is not objective in this sense. Nor is a delusional idea 'objective' in the same way as a facial tic—yet Jaspers counts 'the rational contents of what the patient tells us', i.e. what particular idea is being talked about, what its content is, as 'objective'. Jaspers acknowledges that his notion of objective symptoms includes things that 'are not perceived by the senses, but only understood... through rational thought'—but the problem is that Jaspers tells us that 'subjective symptoms', too, are things that cannot be perceived by the senses. Further, in our initial guess at what might fall under 'subjective symptoms'—thoughts, ideas, beliefs—we included things that precisely are 'not perceived by the senses, but only understood', and are thus 'objective symptoms' for Jaspers! What then does he mean by 'subjective symptoms'?

Things are not helped by what Jaspers goes on to say in the second paragraph of the article. There he says that subjective symptoms 'are all those psychic experiences and phenomena which patients describe to us'—yet if we ask a patient to describe his or her mental state, are we not given 'objective symptoms', in other words, things we 'understand' through 'rational thought'? Given the breadth of what Jaspers counts as an objective symptom, it can begin to seem quite mysterious what precisely a 'subjective symptom' is!

The clue to what Jaspers means by 'subjective symptom' comes in his reference to 'empathy' in the first paragraph. As we have seen, there are objective symptoms that are not purely physical manifestations, and require 'understanding', but our grasp of these symptoms 'is achieved through rational thought, without the help of any empathy into the patient's psyche'. 'Empathy' is again mentioned in the second paragraph, where we find Jaspers directly stating that 'subjective symptoms' are what are given to us through empathy with the patient:

Subjective symptoms cannot be perceived by the sense-organs, but have to be grasped by transferring oneself, so to say, into the other individual's psyche; that is, by empathy. They can only become an inner reality for the observer by his participating in the other person's experiences, not by any intellectual effort.

(p. 1313)

It seemed, at first, that we were going to be told what 'subjective symptoms' are by setting them off from objective symptoms, but now it seems that to have a grasp of 'objective symptoms' one needs to know what Jaspers means by 'empathy' (as 'objective symptoms' include those that can be understood without empathy). Yet the only grasp we have on the notion of empathy is that it gives us access to 'subjective symptoms'. Before we can properly answer our first question, then, we will need an answer to our second: what does Jaspers mean by 'empathy'?

Question 2: Jaspers' notion of empathy

If phenomenology, for Jaspers, is concerned with 'subjective symptoms', then the notion of 'empathy' must be an essential aspect of it, as it is empathy that gives us access to 'subjective symptoms'. We need, therefore, to come to an initial understanding of 'empathy' if we are to grasp Jaspers' notion of phenomenology. (The idea of empathy will be taken up again in the next section, as Wilhelm Dilthey, one of the key protagonists in the *Methodenstreit*, took empathy to be an essential part of what distinguishes the method of the human sciences from that of the natural sciences.)

Jaspers gives an initial indication of what he means by 'empathy' in the above quotation: it involves 'transferring oneself, so to say, into the other individual's psyche'. The qualification, 'so to say', is all important here—as clearly one cannot literally transfer oneself into another's psyche! Obviously 'transferring oneself' is a metaphor. But the question is: what aspect of 'transferring oneself' in a literal sense is Jaspers drawing on to illuminate the matter? One suggestion might be that when one literally 'transfers oneself', one moves to a different place and thus sees the world from a different viewpoint. If this is what Jaspers is referring to, then empathy is a process of trying to think how the world seems from the patient's perspective. But this is clearly not what Jaspers means. Finding out about how the world seems from the patient's perspective is to find out what their thoughts, beliefs, ideas, attitudes, feelings, etc., about the world are and these are 'objective symptoms' for Jaspers. Empathy is not a process of trying to think how the patient views the world, as Jaspers is explicit that it does not involve 'any intellectual effort' (literally, 'any thinking', *Denken*). Rather, Jaspers says it involves 'participating in the other person's experiences'. But again this must be a metaphor, as it is difficult to see how one can any more literally participate in someone else's experiences than one can participate in someone else's sneezing!

Many of the expressions Jaspers uses to characterize empathy are similarly metaphorical, and one must be careful not to just leave them unexamined, as if their meaning were unquestionably clear. On p. 1315, for example, Jaspers states that the psychiatrist can 'share' the patient's experience; psychiatrists should seek to 'actualise these phenomena for themselves' (p. 1316), it involves a 'seeing', which is not done through the senses, but through the understanding' (*ibid.*). Perhaps even 'understanding' is metaphorical here—some 'objective symptoms' require 'understanding... achieved through rational thought', so empathy must be a form of understanding achieved without rational thought, and it is certainly difficult to know what this might mean.

Empathy as 'Knowing what it's like'

Just what, then, does Jaspers mean by empathy? While we will consider this question again in Chapter 10, it is important to come to an initial view, because of the place of empathy in Jaspers' understanding of phenomenology. Later in the first section of the article, Jaspers complains that a purely objective psychology leads

'quite systematically to the elimination of everything that can be called mental or psychic' (p. 1314). In order to illustrate what he means, Jaspers refers to the assessment of a patient's fatigue through measurable performances: 'It is not the feeling of fatigue but "objective fatigue" which is being investigated' (*ibid.*). This suggests that what does not fall within the category of 'objective symptoms' is what it's like to be fatigued. One could then extend this idea to other types of objective symptom, for example:

- ◆ *The thought that one's liver has been removed* would be an objective symptom that a patient might manifest—but this would be different from knowing *what it's like to think that one's liver has been removed*.
- ◆ *The belief that one's home is being bugged by Russian spies* would be an objective symptom—but this would be different from knowing *what it's like to believe that one's home is being bugged by Russian spies*.
- ◆ *The feeling of depression* would be an objective symptom—but this would be different from knowing *what it's like to feel depressed*.

It would seem, therefore, that for Jaspers empathy is a process of coming to know, in a personal and direct sense, what it is like to undergo the type of experience that the patient is going through. Towards the end of the article Jaspers himself says that phenomenology, using empathy, 'views psychic events "as from within"' (p. 1322), and the suggestion is confirmed—to an extent—by the following statement from Jaspers:

[The psychiatrist] can share the patient's experiences—always provided this happens spontaneously without his having to take thought over it. In this way he can gain an essentially personal, indefinable and direct understanding, which, however, remains for him a matter of pure experience, not of explicit knowledge.
(p. 1315)

The last part of this statement is quite striking—what empathy gives us remains 'a matter of pure experience, not of explicit knowledge'. Thus it is perhaps not strictly accurate to say, as we did above, that empathy is a process of coming to *know* what it's like to undergo a certain type of experience. Coming to *know* something about the patient's type of experience is what happens when one correctly grasps an *objective* symptom, for Jaspers; it would thus be better to say that in empathy one simply lives through—in one's imagination presumably—the same type of experience as that which the patient is living through.

The incommunicability of empathy

Jaspers himself says, in the above quotation, that in this way the psychiatrist comes to 'an essentially personal, indefinable and direct understanding'—but even this cannot be quite right. To possess an 'understanding' of an experience is surely for that experience to be the object of some sort of rational reflection directed to it. In other words, it would involve reflecting upon it, rather than living through it as a 'pure experience'. It is a consequence, of course, of this notion of empathy that what empathy

gives you is simply incommunicable—one cannot communicate to anyone else what it's like to undergo a certain type of experience, as this is something that can only be lived through (either imaginatively or in reality). Jaspers seems to acknowledge this when he writes: '[The phenomenologist] must make sure that those to whom he addresses himself do not simply *think* along with him, but that they *see* along with him' (p. 1316).

The contrast between 'thinking' and 'seeing' is presumably meant to capture the immediacy of living through an experience—an immediacy that is lost when our grasp of it is 'mediated' by concepts—which is what happens when we attempt to communicate it to others.

The question is, of course, what possible use is empathy, in psychopathology, if what it gives us cannot be communicated to anyone else? If I cannot, in principle, communicate the results of empathy to another psychopathologist, then it could be that his exercise in empathy results in something quite different, and we would never know! More seriously, if one cannot, in principle, communicate the results of empathy to another, then it would seem that the notion of empathy becomes a free spinning cog within the science of psychopathology—in other words, it does no real work. The philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein used similar arguments against theories that give an explanatory role to incommunicable inner mental states, and concluded 'that a nothing would serve just as well as a something about which nothing could be said' (*Philosophical Investigations* # 304!)

We will be looking more closely at Wittgenstein's work in Part V. For the moment it is enough to see that Jaspers' notions of empathy and incommunicable 'subjective phenomena' put him in rather a difficult position. On the one hand he is convinced of the essential role played by empathy in psychopathology:

Only so do we acquire a fruitful critical faculty which will set itself against the framing of theoretical constructions as much as against the barren deadly denial of any possibility of progress. Whoever has no eyes to see cannot practise histology; whoever is unwilling or incapable of actualising psychic events and representing them vividly cannot acquire an understanding of phenomenology.
(pp. 1316–1317)

And on the other hand he has to acknowledge that, in trying to imaginatively live through a type of experience, one has to rely on things that *can* be communicated, for example statements made by a patient: in other words, things that fall under the category of 'objective symptoms'. Thus rather than subjective symptoms providing any basis for our understanding of objective symptoms, Jaspers has to admit that it is objective symptoms that provide any sort of basis for our imaginative re-creation of subjective symptoms:

The more numerous and specific these indirect hints become, the more well-defined and characteristic do the phenomena studied appear. Indeed, this personal effort to represent psychic phenomena to oneself under the guidance of these purely external hints is the condition under which alone we can speak of any kind of psychological work at all.
(p. 1316)

One is left wondering why anyone would bother with this 'personal effort' (i.e. of empathy), and how it contributes to 'psychological work', given that: (1) its results could not be communicated to anyone; (2) no one would know if they had performed it in the same way as anyone else; and (3) no one would know if you had attempted it all!

The role of empathy in psychiatry

There is another initial conclusion one might draw at this point. Given that the idea of 'empathy' with a patient does, intuitively, sound like a good and beneficial psychotherapeutic practice, one might conclude that Jaspers has simply given a wrong analysis of it—rather than thinking that the notion itself is wrongheaded. Whether this is the right conclusion to draw, however, is a question that will have to wait until Chapter 10, when we look more closely at the idea that empathy plays a key role in the methodology of the human sciences as a whole. All we can conclude at present is that there is something deeply problematic with Jaspers' notion of empathy as part of a 'phenomenological approach to psychopathology'.

One might be tempted to conclude, further, that Husserl's influence on Jaspers was not altogether a positive thing—but this would be too hasty. One should not conclude that the notion of empathy is central to Husserl's conception of phenomenology, on the basis of its being central for Jaspers. We shall see below that Husserl's phenomenology differs from Jaspers' quite radically on this point. Before turning to consider Husserl's work, however, it will be helpful to look at what else Jaspers says about phenomenology, in order to be able to form a more balanced assessment of Husserl's influence. In other words, we need to put on one side our reservations about the role of empathy in a 'phenomenological approach', and look at what Jaspers says about the place of phenomenology in psychopathology, its particular aims, and how it differs from other types of psychology. It could be that here we do indeed find evidence of Husserl's influence.

Question 3: Jaspers' view of the place of phenomenology in psychopathology

This question is easier to answer. Psychopathology is made up of 'objective psychology' and 'subjective psychology', and phenomenology is a part of the latter.

From the very beginning of the article, Jaspers is concerned to defend the existence of a 'subjective psychology' alongside 'objective psychology'. The explosion of interest in experimental psychology towards the end of the nineteenth century had led to the proliferation of purely quantitative measures of mental ability, for example, experiments designed to test how many items on a list can be remembered in different conditions, or at different ages. This tendency, Jaspers argues, is in danger of producing a 'psychology without a psyche':

All such concepts as fatigability, the power of recovery, learning ability, practice, the effects of rest periods, etc., refer to performances that can be measured objectively, and it does not matter

whether one is dealing here with a machine, a live but mindless organism, or a human being endowed with a mind. (p. 1314)

It is in the face of the predominance of such 'objective psychology' that Jaspers wishes to defend and develop the idea of a 'subjective psychology', a psychology that retains 'psychic life as its object of study' (p. 1314). Given Jaspers' description of objective psychology above, his complaint that it is a 'psychology without a psyche' looks well founded. It is worth remembering, however, that Jaspers' notion of an 'objective symptom' (i.e. what is studied by objective psychology) is much broader than the above description suggests. The 'rational content' of a person's ideas also counts as an objective symptom for Jaspers—and yet we do not think of this class of objective symptoms as applying indifferently to a machine, a 'mindless organism', and a human being. You would not think of your computer as believing that the sun is shining, even though *believing that the sun is shining* is an objective symptom for Jaspers. He is attempting to strengthen his case for a 'subjective psychology' by presenting an overly narrow view of objective psychology.

Phenomenology as static understanding

For most of the article one might be forgiven for thinking that 'phenomenology' is just another name for subjective psychology; it is only towards the end that we find that it is only a limited part of it. It turns out that subjective psychology is made up of two different ways of understanding mental states, which Jaspers calls 'static understanding' and 'genetic understanding' respectively. In Jaspers' view phenomenology only consists of the former.

'Genetic understanding' [is] the understanding of the meaningful connections between one psychic experience and another, the 'emergence of the psychic from the psychic'. Now phenomenology itself has nothing to do with this 'genetic understanding' and must be treated as something entirely separate. (p. 1322)

While in 'genetic understanding' we are concerned with the meaningful connection between one mental state and another, phenomenology, for Jaspers, is concerned with mental states taken in isolation. A trivial example of a meaningful connection would be that between a belief that one had won the lottery and a state of happiness about having won the lottery; phenomenology, in Jaspers view, would be concerned with each of these mental states—a belief and a state of happiness—taken in isolation.

Jaspers' view of phenomenology and Husserl's

Before we go into Husserl's work in more detail below, it is worth signalling again at this point that Jaspers' conception of phenomenology differs quite considerably from Husserl's. First of all, Husserl always considered his phenomenology as a type of fundamental philosophical investigation, a 'theory of knowledge', or more precisely an analysis of what it means to be a 'knowing subject'. That is, Husserl was concerned to provide an analysis of what it means to be a subject that is capable of scientific knowledge of the world. Phenomenology, therefore, is neither on a par with, nor a part of, other types of scientific investigation, but

rather is conceived as a *foundation* for them: a foundation in the sense of clarifying what it means to be capable of scientific investigation in the first place. We will come back to this idea below.

Secondly, Husserl by no means limits phenomenology to the study of mental states taken in isolation, but is deeply concerned with the connections between mental states: both in the way that one (higher order) type of mental state may depend on the contemporaneous existence of another (more basic) type of mental state, and in the way that mental states may be sequentially connected. We shall see, however, that Husserl limits phenomenology to a much narrower notion of 'meaningful connection' between mental states. Simplifying greatly, one might say that Husserl is interested in 'rational connections' where 'rational' signifies a much stronger form of 'meaningful connection'. For example, the emergence of a state of happiness on the basis of a belief that one had won the lottery, would not strictly be a rational connection for Husserl. One is not rationally obliged to become happy on learning that one has won the lottery, and perhaps there are people for whom winning the lottery would not be a reason for happiness at all (though we don't know any!).

In relation to these two points, and in relation to the notion of empathy, we shall see just how little there is in common between Husserl's conception of phenomenology and Jaspers when we look at Husserl's work below. Again, however, in order to come to a balanced assessment we must look further at what Jaspers says about phenomenology. In particular, we have not yet really considered what Jaspers thinks the *aim* of phenomenology is. What does it do, and what does Jaspers think it's for?

Question 4: Jaspers' view of the aim of phenomenology

The aim of phenomenology is stated near the beginning of Jaspers article, on p. 1314: its aim is to inject some sort of initial order into the 'manifold diversity of psychic phenomena'. What is a little confusing is that Jaspers first provides a statement of the aims of subjective psychology as a whole (which, you remember, turns out to be made up of phenomenology and 'genetic understanding'):

What then are the precise aims of this much-abused subjective psychology? [...] It asks itself—speaking quite generally—what does mental experience depend on, what are its consequences, and what relationships can be discerned in it? The answers to these questions are its special aims. (p. 1314)

This is not itself a terribly clear statement, but it helps us to realize that the statement cannot refer to subjective psychology as a whole, but only to 'genetic understanding', despite what Jaspers says. Jaspers does not distinguish phenomenology and genetic understanding until later, and the description does not fit phenomenology at all, this being the study of mental states taken in isolation. Rather, phenomenology's aims are preparatory to those of 'genetic understanding', which constitutes 'real inquiry':

So before real inquiry can begin it is necessary to identify the specific psychic phenomena which are to be its subject, and

form a clear picture of the resemblances and differences between them and other phenomena with which they must not be confused. This preliminary work of representing, defining, and classifying psychic phenomena, pursued as an independent activity, constitutes phenomenology. (*Ibid.*)

The aim of phenomenology in psychopathology is thus to describe and name the rich diversity of pathological mental states, and to group them in suitable classifications—a taxonomy, one might say, of mental disorder. Jaspers clearly contrasts phenomenology with other psychological approaches that might seek to reduce our appreciation of this rich diversity, by attempting to explain the diverse range in terms of a small number of principles.

For while the ideal of phenomenology is an infinity of irreducible psychic qualities, classified and ordered to permit of their survey, there exists another, opposite ideal, that of the fewest possible ultimate elements, as in chemistry. [...] Phenomenology, on the other hand, rejects the ideal of the fewest possible elements; on the contrary it has no wish to restrict the infinite variety of psychic phenomena, only, as far as possible (for the task is, of course, boundless) to try to make them more lucid, precise and individually recognisable at any time. (p. 1321)

Jaspers' view of the aims of phenomenology and Husserl's

Again, it will be useful at this stage to provide a brief indication of whether the aim that Jaspers attributes to phenomenology bears any resemblance to what Husserl envisages as its aim. On the face of it, as we shall see further below, their views are diametrically opposed. Husserl was precisely concerned in setting out the ultimate elements involved in any mental state—he argued that our everyday rich vocabulary for talking about mental states can be clarified by identifying the essential aspects of our very notion of a mental state. We must be careful not to misunderstand Husserl here, and we will look more closely at this point below. It is not, for example, that Husserl wishes to deny that there are irreducible qualitative differences between mental states, such as happiness, anxiety, worry, fear, hopefulness, anger, etc., but only that in talking about mental states in this way we are referring to a single aspect of mental states, which Husserl calls the 'quality' of a mental state. This aspect of mental states is quite different from another regard in which we talk about them—we are often concerned with the 'content' of a mental state, i.e. *what* someone is happy about, *what* someone is worried about, etc. This aspect of a mental state is what Husserl calls its 'matter'.

To a large extent, then, Husserl abstracts from the rich diversity of mental life, in order to provide a more *formal* description of what belongs to the very idea of mental life, or more precisely, of the mental states or experiences, which we take mental life to consist of. When Husserl does give a detailed description of a specific types of mental state, it is because he takes these to be essential to the very idea of ourselves as capable of knowledge of the world. He talks in detail, for example, about the difference and relation between a belief that such and such is the case, and the

perception that such and such is the case. In other words, he is concerned with basic 'knowledge situations', for example, first merely thinking that one has £10 in one's pocket, and then seeing that this is indeed so.

Jaspers, on the other hand, is clearly reacting against this aim of Husserl's phenomenology. Indeed, he over-reacts in that he often emphasizes the irreducible qualitative differences between types of mental states, without being able to see the connection between them:

Now in the present state of phenomenology, it would seem that there exist numerous groups of phenomena between which no relationship can be perceived. Sense-perceptions and ideas, hallucinations and delusions, seem to be phenomena separated by a gulf rather than united by transitions. Such totally unrelated phenomena can only be placed under separate headings and cannot be organised into any particular pattern within the psychic life. (p. 1320)

Husserl might respond in two ways: first, given that the 'phenomena' we are picking out all belong to 'psychic life' one might expect them to share formal features in common that belong to the very idea of a mental state. Secondly, might there not be important connections between say a perception and an idea, or a hallucination and a delusion. If one hallucinates an elephant chasing after you, the relation between this and a delusory belief that one is being chased by an elephant, is certainly not a 'gulf'!

Are their views really so opposed?

On the face of it, Husserl's view of the aim of phenomenology is diametrically opposed to that of Jaspers. It is difficult to see how one could suggest any positive influence by Husserl on this point. Indeed, in giving his view of the aim of phenomenology, Jaspers seems to acknowledge that there is another view of phenomenology (i.e. Husserl's) that is quite different:

As one procedure among others, phenomenology brings to light psychic qualities that appear as constituents of what is being studied. This breaking down of complex structures into constituents is only one way of proceeding; but those who adopt the point of view already described, which is valid only in relation to the origination of psychic phenomena, speak as if it were the only way. They would, for example, explain perception by analysing it into the elements of sensation, spatial perception and intentional act, whereas true phenomenology would first compare perception with imagery, which is composed of the same elements, and come to the conclusion that perception must be characterised as an irreducible psychic quality. (p. 1321)

This is a very revealing statement, and it is worth noting several points. First, we see Jaspers' concern to regard perception as 'an irreducible psychic quality', playing down the fact that it has elements in common with 'imagery'. Secondly, he contrasts 'true phenomenology' with a brief description of an analysis that is very similar to the approach Jaspers himself takes in other papers, for example his two papers on 'false perceptions'. In the footnote to p. 1314 of the present article, he describes these two papers as

conducting 'systematic phenomenological investigations'—whereas in the above quotation this type of phenomenological investigation is held to be not 'true phenomenology'.

Why does Jaspers refuse to recognize Husserl's more analytic approach as 'true phenomenology'? One reason is that, as we saw above, phenomenology for Jaspers is merely a form of descriptive taxonomy of mental states. There is a second reason, however, which is hinted at in the above quotation—he argues that the approach which is concerned to identify common elements in diverse types of mental state 'is only valid in relation to the origination of psychic phenomena'. What Jaspers means is that an approach that aims at 'analysis into ultimate elements' is a procedure of use only in the natural sciences. Indeed, he explicitly states: 'This ideal takes its cue from the natural sciences, and certainly has a meaning in relation to the origin of psychic qualities.' (*ibid.*)

In other words, Jaspers regards Husserl's approach of identifying common aspects shared by all mental states as the first step towards a natural scientific explanation of mental states, and their diversity, in terms of a few general principles: 'Just as the infinite variety of colours can be traced to purely quantitative differences in wave-length, so one could wish to explain the origins of psychic qualities and perhaps establish different classifications on this basis.' (*ibid.*)

It is an aim of natural sciences, clearly, to put forward explanations that are able to account for a diverse range of phenomena in terms of a small number of explanatory principles. Yet, as we shall see below, Husserl in his attempt to analyse mental states into their common elements, was by no means trying to 'explain' them in terms of some simple underlying mechanism, or reduce qualitative differences to merely quantitative ones. Husserl envisages phenomenology as a purely 'descriptive' undertaking—but part of its aim is also to bring clarity to our understanding of mental states by bringing to light the formal structures they have in common. Husserl's phenomenology strives for the simplification of the rich diversity of mental states, but its aim is not 'explanation', but 'clarification' or 'elucidation'. The simplification phenomenology aims for is not that of positing a simple underlying mechanism, but rather is closer to the type of simplification one achieves through 'formalization'. Just as in mathematics we abstract from the rich diversity of things we might choose to count, so in Husserl's phenomenology we abstract from the rich diversity of mental states in order to focus on the formal structures implicit in mental states as such.

It seems then, that while both Jaspers and Husserl regarded phenomenology as a purely descriptive undertaking, Jaspers misunderstood the nature of the type of description Husserl was aiming at, with the result that he did not regard the sort of phenomenological analysis that Husserl would give as 'true phenomenology'. The basic idea, however, that phenomenology is a descriptive and not an explanatory undertaking, still suggests an influence of Husserl on Jaspers, and so we now need to look at what Jaspers says about this 'limitation' of phenomenology more closely.

Question 5: Jaspers' view of the limitations of phenomenology

At the end of the article, Jaspers has a section titled 'The boundaries of phenomenology', the aim of which is to make clear what phenomenology 'does not intend to pursue, and with what phenomenology should not be confused' (p. 1322). You might have picked up on the following points:

1. *Phenomenology is a descriptive and not an explanatory undertaking.* Jaspers makes this point in several different ways: phenomenology does not concern itself 'with any factors that may be thought to underlie psychic events', 'phenomenology can gain nothing from theory', and it 'has nothing to do with the [causal] genesis of psychic phenomena'.
2. *Phenomenology must be kept separate from 'genetic understanding'.* We looked at this point above; Jaspers' term 'genetic understanding' refers to the way that the emergence of one mental state from another may be a 'meaningful connection'. The term should not be confused with 'genetic' in the more modern sense or with a study of the causal 'genesis' of a mental state.
3. *Phenomenology concerns the forms of mental experience, not the particular contents.* You might easily have missed this one, as Jaspers only mentions it in passing at the end of the section while summarizing the above two points!

We have considered the second limitation already, and how it represents a quite different view of what phenomenology looks at, compared with Husserl. The first limitation is going to be our main focus, but it is worth thinking briefly about the third point first.

On the face of it, this again represents a huge departure from Husserl's conception of phenomenology, in that Husserl was predominantly concerned to do justice to the 'content' of mental states—the way that they are about things and events, whether imaginary or real. Having said this, however, Husserl's phenomenology, as a formal analysis of mental states, is not concerned with the particular things people know or believe, or with questions of which beliefs are more common and are more rare. Jaspers is suggesting that phenomenology, as part of psychopathology, is not concerned with providing a taxonomy of, say, all the different things that figure in the context of people's delusions, and Husserl would agree that this is not phenomenology's job.

There is, however, a further more subtle point that needs to be made here. In denying that phenomenology is concerned with the 'contents of the personal experience of the individual' (p. 1323), Jaspers is drawing on a distinction between 'form' and 'content', which he takes to apply to all mental states. Husserl uses the more precise terms 'quality' and 'matter' to name two aspects common to all mental states, but Jaspers is clearly following Husserl in his assumption that one can identify elements common to every mental state. This of course conflicts with Jaspers' expressed

conviction that 'true phenomenology' should not attempt to identify ultimate elements that are common to all mental states. It would seem that Jaspers uses Husserl's conception of phenomenology (as a conceptual analysis of what belongs to the very idea of a mental state) while at the same time denying that this is 'true phenomenology'. You can begin to see that pinning down Husserl's influence on Jaspers' 'phenomenology' is a rather tricky business, and why, as we shall see below, there has been such disagreement about it!

Jaspers' view of phenomenology as purely descriptive

Returning, then, to point 1 above, a key limitation (though not in a negative sense) of phenomenology for Jaspers, is that it does not, and should not, pursue explanations of the emergence and existence of conscious mental states. This is linked closely in Jaspers' thinking with the limitation to static understanding (point 2). Thus he writes: 'Though its practice is a prerequisite for any causal investigation, [phenomenology] leaves genetic issues aside, and they can neither refute nor further its findings' (p. 1322).

However, the limitation to descriptive rather than explanatory accounts of mental states is also spelled out in its own right. In practising phenomenology, Jaspers argued the psychopathologist must constantly be on guard against allowing his descriptions of mental life to become infected by the conceptual schemes of *explanatory theories* of consciousness. Jaspers cites Wernicke as someone who brings 'theoretical constructions of physiological and pathological cerebral processes' into a phenomenological approach to conscious life: 'Thus Wernicke, who in fact did make important discoveries, distorted them by interpretations in terms of "connective fibres", "sejunctions" and the like. These sort of constructs constantly prevent phenomenological investigations from reaching their proper goal.' (*ibid*).

What Jaspers is suggesting is that in our conscious mental lives we have thoughts, perceptions, beliefs, etc., about objects and events, but in having these experiences we are precisely not aware of the neurophysiological processes that make them possible. Reference to these processes should not, therefore, figure in a pure descriptive account of our conscious lives. The phenomenologist should approach mental phenomena without presupposing any particular theory of their causal origin or of the neurophysiological processes that occur in having a given experience. This point leads us to a related idea: the need for a phenomenological approach to be presuppositionless. Jaspers draws this idea from Husserl, for whom the presuppositionlessness of phenomenology was of paramount importance, so it is worth taking a closer look at what Jaspers says about it.

Jaspers' view of the presuppositionlessness of phenomenology

Jaspers notes the need for the phenomenologist to avoid presupposing any particular explanatory theory in describing conscious life, earlier in the paper.

We should picture only what is really present in the patient's consciousness; anything that has not really presented itself to his

consciousness is outside our consideration. We must set aside all outmoded theories, psychological constructs or materialist mythologies of cerebral processes; we must turn our attention only to that which we can understand as having real existence, and which we can differentiate and describe. This, as experience has shown, is in itself a very difficult task. This particular freedom from preconception which phenomenology demands is not something one possesses from the beginning, but something that is laboriously acquired after prolonged and critical work and much effort—often fruitless—in framing constructs and mythologies. (p. 1316)

There are a number of points we can make about this passage. First, what does Jaspers mean by a 'materialist mythology of cerebral processes'? He is not clear on this point, but we can assume he means the citing of general and experimentally unjustified neurological theories to explain the existence of a particular mental state or a sequence of mental states. We must remember that in Jaspers' day the science of neurophysiology was in its infancy, and there certainly was not the technology available to investigate neurological changes in the brain during a particular conscious experience. In the next section we will look at what Jaspers thought of the possibility of giving a neurophysiological explanation of mental disorders in general—as this will be part of understanding how Jaspers tries to accommodate both natural scientific and human scientific approaches within psychiatry.

'Theory-laden' observation

Note, too, how Jaspers regards the avoidance of theoretical notions drawn from causal accounts of mental disorder as something that is hard work, and only acquired after fruitlessly trying to give such accounts. One might say that after an education in various neurological theories of mental dysfunction, the psychopathologist's very observations become 'theory-laden', such that it takes a new effort to free oneself from theoretical presuppositions in one's descriptions.

In Part III, we will be looking much more closely at the notion of 'theory-laden observation', and the argument that—contra Jaspers—observation is always, and inescapably, theory-laden. In a passage that follows on from the above quotation, Jaspers likens psychopathologists to children, who first draw things as they imagine them to be, not as they later see them to be in an 'unprejudiced' way. Jaspers in this way suggests that it is through the putting aside of theoretical approaches to mental disorder that one learns to see them 'as they really are'. One could, however, use Jaspers' analogy to make the opposite point: that children first draw things as they see them, and only later learn how to draw them 'as they really are', when they are educated into a more 'theory-laden' view of the world! It is by no means obvious, then, that theoretical presuppositions have the distorting effect that Jaspers imagines, but again this is an issue that we will return to in Part III.

There is a further issue we can raise about Jaspers' demand that phenomenology be presuppositionless—and that is to ask: why,

exactly? This may seem like a rather trivial question surely it's obvious why one should seek to avoid theoretical presuppositions, if one can. However, being clear about why Jaspers demands presuppositionlessness will help us distinguish it from other notions of presuppositionless—that which figures in DSM-IV, and also Husserl's notion of presuppositionlessness.

Jaspers demands presuppositionlessness because phenomenology, for Jaspers, is a purely descriptive taxonomy of mental states. Phenomenology thus demands a presuppositionless approach in the same way as any other form of taxonomy, that is, in the interests of scientific accuracy and objectivity in one's observations. Imagine, for example, an entomologist, who in studying millipedes, simply rested content with the presupposition that they all possess a thousand legs. One would certainly demand in this case that he 'set aside all outmoded theories' and 'acquire an unprejudiced direct grasp of [them] as they really are'. In other words, Jaspers' demand for presuppositionlessness is in the service of common sense notions of empirical accuracy.

Presuppositionlessness in classifications of mental disorder

We can contrast this with another view of the avoidance of theoretical presuppositions—the one that figures in psychopathological diagnostic manuals, where there is an emphasis on providing 'atheoretical' descriptions. The following justification for this approach comes from the introduction of DSM-III-R:

The major justification for the generally atheoretical approach taken in DSM-III and DSM-III-R with regard to aetiology is that the inclusion of aetiological theories would be an obstacle to use of the manual by clinicians of various theoretical orientations, since it would not be possible to present all reasonable aetiological theories for each disorder. For example, Phobic Disorders are believed by many to represent a displacement of anxiety resulting from the breakdown of defence mechanisms that keep internal conflicts out of consciousness. Others explain phobias on the basis of learned avoidance responses to conditioned anxiety. Still others believe that certain phobias result from a dysregulation of basic biological systems mediating separation anxiety. In any case, clinicians and researchers can agree on the identification of mental disorders on the basis of their clinical manifestations without agreeing on how the disturbances come about.

American Psychiatric Association (1987, p. xxiii)

Here the justification for presuppositionlessness is quite different—and one that is sometimes mistakenly attributed to Jaspers—namely that it should be free from theories of aetiology (or causation). In fact, as we will see in Part III, its origin was the contribution of the American philosopher of science, Carl Hempel, to a WHO symposium on classification, convened under the chairmanship of the British psychiatrist, Irwin Stengel, and incorporated in Stengel's subsequent report and recommendations to the WHO on the future of psychiatric classification). This report led to the publication first of ICD-8 and ICD-9, as symptom rather than aetiology based classifications; and DSM-III

extended the approach with the introduction of clear inclusion and exclusion criteria.

The aim of presuppositionlessness, then, in Jaspers' model is the production of good and accurate descriptions. The aim in the ICD and DSM is to avoid getting drawn into the plurality of theoretical explanations that, in the current state of our scientific knowledge, can be given of the aetiology of any particular symptom. The demand to produce good, accurate descriptions of symptoms as the basis of any classification of mental disorder is, Hempel pointed out, a requirement of any taxonomy. The 'atheoretical' approach taken by the later editions of DSM, however, although often characterized as a 'phenomenological approach', is different from Jaspers' notion, in its aims and justification.

Presuppositionlessness in Husserl's phenomenology

It is worth also noting at this point how Jaspers' notion of presuppositionlessness differs from Husserl's. And again the difference relates primarily to the question of why one should seek to avoid introducing theoretical presuppositions into phenomenology.

There are two related reasons why Husserl places a great emphasis on the need for phenomenology to be descriptive in the sense of avoiding theoretical presuppositions. The first relates to Husserl's view of phenomenology as a theory of knowledge, or as we said above, more precisely, a theory of what it means to be a 'knowing subject'. The purpose of phenomenology for Husserl is to give an account of what is involved in the very idea of being a subject that can arrive at knowledge of, and formulate scientific theories about, the world. He, therefore, regarded it as a form of circular argument to appeal to scientific theories about human consciousness in an account of what it means to be able to formulate scientific theories in the first place. Such an attempt to use scientific knowledge to explain our ability to arrive at scientific knowledge is known as 'naturalized epistemology' ('epistemology' being the philosophical term for theory of knowledge). One of Husserl's lifelong obsessions, from the period of *Logical Investigations* onwards, was the question of how to avoid aspects of naturalized epistemology creeping into one's reflections on knowledge. To this end, as we shall see below, Husserl demands that phenomenology, as a type of theory of knowledge, must avoid drawing on any scientific, explanatory theories of consciousness.

The second, and related reason why Husserl demanded that phenomenology should not make use of scientific theories, was that he was concerned to analyse the notion of a 'knowing subject *as such*'. That is, Husserl wished to give an account of what it means to be an entity capable of knowledge of the world irrespective of whether that entity be a human, an alien sulphur-based life form living in another part of the galaxy, or a silicon-based supercomputer that might be developed in years to come. In other words, Husserl wishes to give an account of our very notion of knowing subjectivity, irrespective of who or what they are. Phenomenology for Husserl is a form of conceptual study, and thus it is a mistake to try and draw on the findings of empirical science in one's analysis. The later would always be limited in

their validity to the particular type of organism being studied, whereas the findings of a phenomenological analysis are to hold universally.

Jaspers' and Husserl's views of phenomenology as purely descriptive

It seems, then, that even on the issue of the descriptive and presuppositionless nature of phenomenology, there are clear differences between Jaspers and Husserl. For Jaspers, the phenomenologist must avoid theoretical presuppositions, because phenomenology is a purely descriptive taxonomy of mental states. For Husserl, the phenomenologist must avoid theoretical presuppositions, because phenomenology is a conceptual analysis of what it means to be a subject capable of formulating theories at all.

Throughout our close reading of Jaspers' article 'The phenomenological approach in psychopathology', aspects of Husserl's conception of phenomenology have been introduced. It should be clear to you that the question of Husserl's influence on Jaspers, and the question of the proximity or otherwise of their notions of phenomenology, are not going to have easy 'yes' or 'no' answers! We will look below at some of the views that have been taken on these questions, but first it is time to look more closely at Husserl's own notion of phenomenology.

Reflection on the session and self-test questions

Write down your own reflections on the materials in this session drawing out any points that are particularly significant for you. Then write brief notes about the following:

1. What is the difference between subjective and objective symptoms according to Jaspers?
2. What is empathy?
3. What is the connection between phenomenology and subjective psychology?
4. What is the aim of phenomenology, according to Jaspers?
5. What role does Jaspers accord to phenomenology?

Session 2 The background to Husserl's phenomenology

A review of what you have learned about Husserl so far

In this session, we are going to take a look at the philosophical background to Husserl's project of phenomenology. To an extent this will mean exploring Husserl's early work in mathematics. But don't let this put you off! Before beginning our consideration of Husserl's work, however, it would be a good idea to review what you have learned about Husserl's philosophy so far.

EXERCISE 2

(15 minutes)

Look back over the previous session, and make brief notes about what has been said about Husserl's work, in the sections which have contrasted it with Jaspers' view of phenomenology.

Here is a quick checklist of what we have learnt about Husserl's phenomenology thus far:

- ◆ Husserl's work involves a clarification or elucidation of what is meant by a 'mental state', rather than a taxonomy of the rich and varied types of mental state one might come across.
- ◆ Husserl viewed philosophy as a process of clarifying the seemingly trivial concepts we often use without thinking, or the concepts that are taken for granted as basic in a particular science.
- ◆ Husserl's thinking went through a number of distinct phases of development.
- ◆ Phenomenology for Husserl is not on a par with empirical sciences, but is a form of philosophical theory of knowledge or epistemology, or more precisely an analysis of what it means to be a 'knowing subject'.
- ◆ Phenomenology is just as concerned with relations between mental states, as with mental states considered in isolation, but the relations at issue are those that are 'rational', rather than those that are merely 'meaningful'. (Remember that feeling happy when you win the lottery is meaningful but not rational, in Husserl's sense.)
- ◆ Husserl's approach to mental life is 'descriptive', in that it aims at clarification and elucidation of the idea of a knowing subject, rather than an *explanation* of it in causal terms.
- ◆ Thus, in Husserl's view, one must avoid introducing presuppositions from explanatory theories of mind—phenomenology rejects any form of naturalized epistemology.

You may have surprised yourself by just how much you learned about Husserl's work without realizing it! In this session and the next we are going to look at Husserl's project more closely, and, perhaps more importantly, to get a feel of what Husserl was trying to do and why he was doing it. You might be reassured to know, however, that the points we drew out through comparison with Jaspers already give us, in a nutshell, the broad contours of Husserl's thinking. All we shall be doing is expanding them and weaving them into a coherent whole. As you work through this session on the background to Husserl's thinking, keep the above points in mind, and then we will come back to them in detail in the next session.

Husserl: early work in mathematics

Husserl's early work and the background to phenomenology

Husserl's most important work for our purposes has already been mentioned: it is *Logical Investigations*, volume 1, published in 1900, and volume 2, in 1901. It is this work which first launches

Husserl's project of phenomenology. Rather than simply jumping into a discussion of this text, however, it will be helpful to consider the background to it in Husserl's earlier work.

Husserl's original training was in mathematics, and this at a time when new and important developments were taking place in the subject. His first major work, 'Philosophy as rigorous science' (1911), was part of a broad movement at the time concerned with the 'foundations' of mathematics, and a brief consideration of the issues that were in the air will help set the scene for the development of phenomenology.

Husserl's early studies in mathematics were under the tutelage of Weierstrass—a German mathematician whose name is probably unfamiliar to you, but whose work is still recognized by mathematicians today as being of fundamental significance. Weierstrass was concerned with calculus and with the problematic status of some of the key concepts used in it. Calculus is a branch of mathematics concerned, for example, with how one would calculate the acceleration of a body at a given point. It is a vital tool in many natural sciences, as well as a key branch of pure mathematics. The problem was that the traditional proofs of methods used in calculus made reference to shadowy 'infinitesimally small' quantities. For example, in calculating the acceleration of a body at a certain point, one needs, it seems, to consider the distance it travels in an infinitesimally small period of time—a period of time so small that, in fact, no time has passed at all!—as one wants its velocity at a given *point*. It seemed, then, that the foundations of this all important mathematical theory rested on a rather dubious slight of hand. Weierstrass was the first to show how calculus could be put on a firmer basis by drawing on the theory of 'real numbers'.

More mathematical background

To understand Husserl's work we need to look into its mathematical background a little further. The term 'real numbers' can best be explained by introducing two further terms: 'rational numbers' and 'irrational numbers'. Rational numbers are all those numbers that can be expressed as fractions, e.g. $1/2$, $1/3$, $8/5$, etc.; irrational numbers are those numbers that can never be expressed as fractions, for example, the square root of 2—one can always calculate fractions either side of it, but no single fraction hits the mark exactly. 'Real numbers', then, are just the rational together with the irrationals.

A further breakthrough in mathematics was made around the same time. A mathematician called Dedekind finally produced a way of showing how an irrational number could be defined in terms of rational numbers. This was an important breakthrough, because, as we have seen, rational numbers in turn are defined in terms of two natural numbers (making a fraction), and the numbers are simply the numbers we are all familiar with that we use for counting things. In a short space of time, therefore, the theory of calculus, whose foundations were for so long rather shaky, had suddenly been shown to be derivable from the simplest and most secure branch of mathematics—everyday numbers and arithmetic. The question naturally arose, however, of whether

natural numbers and arithmetic could be derived from even more basic foundations—and it is at this point in the story that Husserl enters the picture, along with one of the most famous logicians of modern times, Gottlob Frege.

Husserl's 'Philosophy of Arithmetic'

Gottlob Frege (1848–1925) was a German mathematician, logician, and philosopher who worked at the University of Jena. He is credited with putting logic on its modern footing through the construction of a formal system called 'predicate calculus'.

Frege tried to show that even natural numbers and arithmetic could be defined in terms of more basic notions: purely logical notions. If Frege could succeed in this, he would have shown that even the higher reaches of mathematics have their roots in logic and the basic principles of what makes for a valid argument. It would be quite an achievement and Frege (1980), in fact, produced a popular and very readable outline of his project, *The Foundations of Arithmetic*, which is worth looking at if you are interested in the issue. He then went on to write a technical proof of his theory, showing how numbers themselves could be defined purely logically. But just after Frege finished this huge work, a flaw was identified in his proof by the young Bertrand Russell, a flaw that has become known as Russell's paradox. Husserl, however, was unhappy with Frege's approach even before this problem was brought to light, and his early work, *Philosophy of Arithmetic*, is highly critical of Frege's project.

Husserl's objections to Frege's ambitious project are rather technical and we do not need to go into them here. What is important for our purposes is that Husserl concluded that numbers could not be defined in terms of anything more basic—our number

concepts are themselves basic and irreducible. He argued further, however, that a different form of clarification and foundation of our number concepts could be given: a *psychological*, as opposed to logical, foundation. Husserl's line was essentially this: even though we cannot define our number concepts in terms of anything more basic, what we can do is show how they are connected to our abilities to count and to perceive groups of things as groups. For example, to see a pair of objects is not to see one object and then to see another, rather we have to see them 'together.' Yet in seeing them together we do not see them as one thing, rather we see them as two. Husserl thus argued that our basic number concepts—even though they are basic notions—can be clarified by an analysis of the psychological abilities involved in perceiving groups of objects.

Husserl and the problem of psychologism

Husserl's work, *Philosophy of Arithmetic*, is a long and technical mathematical work, though it does contain a number of insights into what we would now call 'Gestalt psychology'—the theory that stresses the importance of the ability to perceive wholes, groups, and patterns. Weierstrass had recommended to Husserl that he should study with the philosopher Franz Brentano, as a way of balancing his mathematical training with a firm grasp of current thinking in psychology. Brentano's key work, *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint*, had appeared in 1874, and we will come back to him below, as his influence is very much evident in the phenomenology of *Logical Investigations*. The key concept of Brentano's psychology is that of 'intentionality': mental states, he argued, differ from physical states in that the former possess 'intentionality'—they are 'of' or 'about' things. We will be looking at this notion in detail below. It is centrally important because it is at the heart of the psychological analysis of the perception of groups that Husserl gives in the *Philosophy of Arithmetic*, as well as of the phenomenological analysis of mental states generally, which he gives in *Logical Investigations*.

How then do the psychological analyses of the *Philosophy of Arithmetic* differ from the 'phenomenological' analyses of *Logical Investigations*? On the face of it, one might think there has only been a change in subject matter: the early work giving an analysis of mathematical abilities using Brentano's intentional psychology, the later work looking at our more basic logical abilities. In fact, the question of just how close the two works are is a matter of some debate. It depends very much on how one interprets Husserl's project in the earlier work, knowing what we do about *Logical Investigations*, because in many places the *Philosophy of Arithmetic* is unclear and ambiguous.

The main bone of contention concerns a philosophical standpoint known as 'psychologism', and whether Husserl held this position in his early work (what the term means will be explained below). What we do know is that by the time of *Logical Investigations* Husserl comes to reject psychologism completely: the whole of the first volume is taken up with its refutation; an understanding of the issue of psychologism is vital to a proper understanding of Husserl's phenomenology. It is widely held that Husserl's early

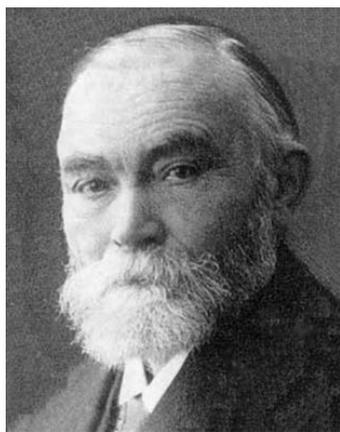


Fig. 9.2 Gottlob Frege

work is a form of psychologism, and this view derives almost entirely from a scathing review that Frege wrote of Husserl's book. Frege was a life-long opponent of psychologism, and his review is widely regarded as having forced Husserl to change his ideas. Frege's review is now, however, itself regarded as unfair and rather uncharitable: picking on the points of unclarity and ambiguity to make it appear to support an extreme form of psychologism. Certainly the review had some impact on Husserl: otherwise he would not have thought it necessary to introduce his next work with a 200-page refutation of psychologism to make sure nobody misunderstood him this time!

To psychologize or not to psychologize?

So what then is psychologism? While there are a number of different forms of psychologism, the basic idea is that logical and/or mathematical truths ultimately have a psychological basis. One way to think about psychologism as a philosophical movement is to keep in mind what you read above about the interest in the foundations of mathematics at the end of the nineteenth century, and then combine this with the fact that huge advances were being made in experimental psychology at the time. That is, in the context of a debate about the foundations of mathematics, it seemed natural to many philosophers to argue that its foundations should be sought in an account of the workings of the human mind or brain. Another, and related, reason why psychologism became widespread at this time, was that mainstream philosophy itself was generally empiricist in orientation.

Empiricism is a philosophical theory about knowledge, which argues that all aspects of knowledge derive from experience. Empiricism became popular in Germany in the nineteenth century as a reaction against the metaphysical excesses of German Idealism. In an extreme form of empiricism one might argue that mathematical truths, such as $2 + 2 = 4$, are generalizations derived from experience—that is, whenever in the past you have put any two objects together with any other two objects, you have ended up with four objects. Frege (1980) commented rather caustically, in *The Foundations of Arithmetic*, that if the truth of $2 + 2 = 4$ depended on being able to put two objects together with two other objects, then it was a good job that not all objects were nailed down, otherwise it wouldn't be true!

In fact, one would be hard pushed to find anyone who seriously held such an odd view of mathematics as having an empirical basis in observations about the world. But psychologism is a related position. It holds that logical or mathematical truths are empirical in that there are psychological laws concerning how human minds or brains function. One famous exponent of this view is J.S. Mill. We will come back to Mill in the next section also, as not only did he argue that logic, as a part of psychology, was a form of natural science, but also that the human sciences must seek to base their findings on natural science too. In *Logical Investigations*, Husserl cites the

following passage from Mill:

Logic is not a science separate from and co-ordinate with psychology. To the extent that it is a science at all, it is a part or branch of psychology, distinguished from it on the one hand as the part is from the whole, and on the other hand as the art is from the science. It owes all its theoretical basis to psychology, and includes as much of that science as is necessary to establish the rules of the art.

(J.S. Mill *An examination of Sir William Hamilton's philosophy*, quoted by Husserl, [1900–01] 1970a, p. 90)

It is this type of view that Husserl seeks to refute in the first volume of *Logical Investigations*, and that Frege, a life-long opponent of such views, accuses Husserl of holding in the *Philosophy of Arithmetic* (Husserl 1970b). Husserl certainly never explicitly stated such a view in his early work, though many of his remarks are unclear, and generally he did not come to a clear view about the relation between mathematical concepts and psychological concepts. It would also be odd if Frege's review had had the impact on Husserl generally attributed to it, since Husserl was already familiar with Frege's antipsychologism from *The Foundations of Arithmetic*. What is more likely is that Frege's review prompted Husserl to come to a clear view on what the relationship is between logic/mathematics as such, and a psychological analysis of our logical and mathematical *abilities*, and just what sort of 'clarification' a *psychological* analysis can provide.

You may, however, be wondering at this point just what is so wrong with psychologism. It is to this question that we now turn, and this will bring us closer to an understanding of the nature of Husserl's phenomenology in *Logical Investigations*.

What is wrong with psychologism

As noted above the whole of volume 1 of *Logical Investigations*, entitled 'Prolegomena to Pure Logic', is taken up with an analysis and refutation of psychologism. Husserl starts by drawing attention to a number of differences between how we usually think of logical or mathematical laws, and how they would be if psychologism were true, thus suggesting that psychologism does not provide a very suitable analysis of their nature. We think of logical laws, he argues, as having a certainty that outstrips that of even the most well-founded empirical laws of nature. If logical laws were empirical generalizations about how our minds work, then they would only be as certain as the empirical evidence in their favour, but this is simply not how we think of them. The Law of Non-Contradiction (which states that a statement and its negation cannot both be true) would appear to have a degree of self-evidence that no empirical law could have.

Secondly, Husserl cites a further point often made at the time against psychologism, namely that logic, but not psychology, is normative. That is to say, logical laws tell us how one *ought* to think, not how we *do* think. If during a psychological survey, 5% of people were found to hold contradictory beliefs, one would not conclude that the Law of Non-Contradiction holds

only in 95% of cases, but rather that people holding two contradictory beliefs *ought* rationally to give up one of them.

The normative character of logic

Many opponents of psychologism held that it was enough to cite the normative character of logic in order to refute psychologism, but Husserl was, in fact, not convinced. Husserl argued, against this traditional antipsychologistic view, that logic was not fundamentally a normative discipline, and for two reasons. First, if logic were a normative discipline giving the rules one ought to follow while thinking, then alongside the Law of Non-Contradiction one would expect to find rules such as: don't listen to loud, distracting music while thinking; make sure you've had enough sleep before thinking etc. Logic as traditionally conceived (and to which we had an introduction in Chapter 5) simply doesn't concern itself with such psychological rules for thinking well.

Husserl's second argument against the ultimately normative character of logic builds on this first argument. Every normative discipline, he argues, is 'founded' on a non-normative or purely 'theoretical' discipline. Husserl doesn't mean that normative principles can be derived from a non-normative science—one cannot derive an 'ought' from an 'is' (see Chapter 4)—but rather that every normative discipline makes reference in its evaluations to a realm of objects and states-of-affairs, which are the subject matter of particular non-normative sciences.

An example will help clarify what Husserl means. Nutrition, as a normative discipline, posits rules about what one *ought* to eat to stay healthy; its value judgements make reference, however, to studies of the effect of certain chemicals or their absence on the human body, and thus are founded (in Husserl's sense) on the findings of biology and physiology. What, then, is the theoretical science upon which logic as a normative discipline is founded? Those who cite the normative character of logic against psychologism tend to leave this question unanswered. If logic is a normative science about how one ought to think, then one might be tempted to think that its value judgements ultimately concern processes ordinarily studied in psychology. Yet, whereas the findings of biology and physiology have relevance for nutrition as a normative discipline, the findings of empirical psychology simply have no relevance to logic. Husserl thus argues that it is not enough to cite the normative character of logic, unless one can make clear what non-normative, theoretical science it is founded on, if this is not psychology.

Relativism and the 'absurdity' of psychologism

Husserl's main arguments against psychologism, however, have a different focus. Basically, Husserl argues that psychologism entails that logical laws are relative to the psychological functioning of human beings as a particular species. This further entails that truth is relative to particular species, and thus it is conceivable that psychologism, as a theory put forward as true by us, could be both true and false (that is, from the same premises, someone from a different species may validly argue, with their logic, to

contradictory conclusions). Psychologism is thus a theory whose truth undermines its own status as true, and this self-conflicting nature of psychologism is what Husserl calls its 'absurdity'. Husserl's argument here is rather dense. It is set out in detail, along with a number of related arguments against psychologism, in chapter 7 of Husserl's *Logical Investigations*, volume 1, a chapter titled 'Psychologism as sceptical relativism'.

For our present purposes we do not need to look in detail at Husserl's 'absurdity' argument against psychologism, but it will be worth looking at a brief example. Consider, then, this famous syllogism:

1. All men are mortal
2. Socrates is a man
3. Socrates is mortal

Now psychologism has to explain why it is we feel obliged to hold the third statement to be true, if we accept the first two. Different types of psychologism would give different answers depending on the type of psychological theory. In general, such explanations will argue that there are psychological laws that govern human thought processes such that if one thinks the first belief, followed by the second, one is caused to think the third. We can imagine, then, as Husserl pointed out, other creatures governed by different psychological laws such that thinking the first two statements causes them to think 'Socrates is not mortal'. If psychologism were correct, this conclusion would be 'true for them' and their 'logic', while 'Socrates is mortal' would be 'true for us' and our 'logic'. In this way, one can see how psychologism entails that truth becomes relative—one cannot talk about truth *per se*, but only 'truth for species x', 'truth for species y', etc. Husserl ends chapter 7 with a tirade against such views:

One need only try to think out what [psychologism] implies: that there might be peculiar beings, logical supermen, as it were, for whom *our logical principles do not hold*, but rather quite different principles, so that every truth for us is a falsehood for them. For them it is the case that the mental phenomena they are experiencing are not experienced by them. That we and they exist may be true for us, but is false for them, etc. We everyday logicians would say: Such beings are mad, they talk of truth, yet destroy its laws [...]. Yes and No, truth and error, existence and non-existence, lose all their distinctness in their thought.

Logical Investigations (pp. 165–166)

The diagnosis of where psychologism goes wrong

Chapter 7 of *Logical Investigations* also introduces elements of Husserl's 'diagnosis' of the problem of psychologism and his proposed 'cure': that is, what the fundamental mistake being made by supporters of psychologism is, and what needs to be put in its place.

If someone wished to argue from the fact that a true judgement, like any judgement, must spring from the constitution of the judging subject in virtue of appropriate natural laws, we should warn him not to confuse the 'judgement', *qua* content of the

judgement, i.e. as an ideal unity, with the individual, real act of judgement. It is the former that we mean when we speak of the judgement $2 \times 2 = 4$, which is the same whoever passes it. One should likewise not confuse the true judgement, as the correct judgement in accordance with truth, with the *truth* of this judgement or with the true content of judgement. My act of judging that $2 \times 2 = 4$ is no doubt causally determined, but this is not true of the truth $2 \times 2 = 4$.

Logical Investigations (pp. 141–142)

This passage repays careful study. Husserl is arguing that the supporters of psychologism are confusing two senses of the term 'judgement': first, in the sense of the real mental process, or 'act of judgement' that goes on in a particular individual, and then 'judgement' in the sense of *what is being judged*—in Husserl's example, *that* $2 \times 2 = 4$. If two people are both thinking that $2 \times 2 = 4$, then here we have two distinct *acts* of judgement, going on in two different people, but the 'content' of their judgements is identically the same, the judgement or proposition that $2 \times 2 = 4$. Our former example,

1. All men are mortal
2. Socrates is a man
3. Socrates is mortal,

can be thought of in two ways: either as a temporal sequence of real beliefs going on in someone's mind, or as a set of three propositions, between which certain relations hold. If Husserl's diagnosis of psychologism is the confusion of these two, then his 'cure' is to argue that logic is not a study of real, psychological acts of judgement or belief, but a study of relations between propositions. You may have noticed in the above quotation that Husserl calls the content of judgements an '*ideal*' unity. We do not talk of judgement contents or propositions as existing in particular places, or at particular times, which is the way we think of the occurrence of *real* acts of judgement; and Husserl uses the term '*ideal*' to mean this atemporal and non-spatial way of being, which we use in our talk of judgement-contents. Husserl's 'cure', to repeat, is the argument that logical laws simply do not refer to real psychological events and their relations, but to relations between propositions:

If the relativist says that there could be beings not bound by these principles [the principles of contradiction and excluded middle]—this assertion is easily seen as equivalent to the relativistic formula stated above. He *either* means that there could be propositions or truths, in the judgements of such beings, which do not conform to these principles, *or* he thinks that the course of judgement of such beings is not *psychologically* regulated by these principles. If he means the latter, his doctrine is not at all peculiar, since we ourselves are such beings.

Logical Investigations (p. 141)

If the supporter of psychologism says there may be beings not bound by the laws of logic, then Husserl is arguing that this either applies to judgement-contents, or propositions, in which case relativism is the consequence, or that it applies to psychological

acts of judging, in which case, the supporter is saying nothing more than that there are creatures that sometimes think illogically—i.e. creatures like us!

Psychology as the new 'queen of the sciences'

The entirety of volume 1 of *Logical Investigations*, then, 'Prolegomena to Pure Logic', is concerned with arguing that psychology has nothing to do with logic, and with offering a refutation, diagnosis and cure for the view that logical laws are a type of psychological law.

Husserl, like Frege, felt particularly strongly about this because psychology, at this time, was making a takeover bid for philosophy. Towards the end of the nineteenth century in Germany, many chairs of philosophy in German universities had been awarded to experimental psychologists. At that time most universities did not have separate departments of psychology. In some circles, the recent advances in experimental psychology were taken as a sign that the new science of psychology would come to replace moribund philosophy as the 'queen of the sciences'. Psychology seemed to some to offer a new way of solving the fundamental problems that were traditionally the preserve of philosophy. Franz Brentano, whom we came across above as an influence on Husserl, was one who saw psychology as the 'science of the future':

Let me point out merely in passing that psychology contains the roots of aesthetics, which, in a more advanced stage of development, will undoubtedly sharpen the eye of the artist and assure his progress. Likewise, suffice it to say that the important art of logic, a single improvement in which brings about a thousand advances in science, also has psychology as its source. In addition, psychology has the task of becoming the scientific basis for a theory of education, both of the individual and of society. Along with aesthetics and logic, ethics and politics also stem from the field of psychology. And so psychology appears to be the fundamental condition of human progress in precisely those things which, above all, constitute human dignity.

Brentano ([1874] 1995, p. 21)

It was in this context of the perceived encroachment of psychology into philosophy departments and into the traditional problems of philosophy, that Husserl launched his attack. Essentially, he was arguing for the limitations of empirical psychology—and this, not in relation to questions of aesthetics, ethics, or politics, but in relation to a more fundamental field: logic as the study of reasoning itself.

The confusion caused by volume 2 of *Logical Investigations*

In this context of worries about psychology's encroachment on philosophy, it is not surprising that philosophers at the time welcomed Husserl's sustained attack on psychologism with open arms! Volume 1 of *Logical Investigations* was published in 1900, with volume 2 promised for the next year, and many waited eagerly for it. Perhaps many expected a further development of

the sort of formal logical concerns to which Husserl turns at the end of volume 1. But they were in for a surprise! In the next exercise, you are going to read what they read (with dismay!) on opening volume 2, Husserl's introduction to the six 'logical investigations', which constitute the second volume. Part of the reason for looking so closely at the problem of psychologism above was to allow you to 'empathise' with the confusion, consternation, and bewilderment that the early readers of *Logical Investigations* experienced. Having argued in volume 1 for the sharp opposition between logic and psychology, volume 2 suddenly argues that one in fact needs a form of psychology to supplement pure logic. This form of psychology, which Husserl describes as a 'descriptive psychology', is what Husserl calls 'phenomenology'. Some readers at the time must have simply assumed Husserl had gone mad: volume 1 had precisely argued for the *irrelevance* of an empirical, descriptive psychology of how people think, to logic.

In a later introduction to *Logical Investigations* (which Husserl wrote, but never used, for the new edition published in 1913), Husserl talks about the cold reception that volume 2 was given. Part of what he was trying to achieve in volume 1, he says, was to create in people a sense of dissatisfaction with the tension between the purely logical and the psychological. He wanted people to think: well, yes, psychology is irrelevant for logic, but surely logic must have something to do with the way people think. It was this sense of dissatisfaction with the gulf between logic and psychology that Husserl sought to build on in volume 2. The strategy failed. In his own words:

Quite a few, unfortunately even the majority, of the critics of the book proceed, however, in a different manner. On the basis of a cursory glance at it, they write off the second volume. This happens, for opposite reasons, on the part of both groups: the psychologists take the investigations in question *eo ipso* as psychology, but as a scholastically adulterated form because there is everywhere in them talk of the ideal, of the a priori. But the idealists [the Neo-Kantians] find their expectations of transcendental constructions from above disappointed; instead of such constructions there is everywhere talk of lived-experiences, acts, intentions, fulfilments, and the like—in other words, for them too, talk of the psychological. Time and again they speak of a 'relapse into psychologism'. They find absolutely nothing wrong with the fact that the very same author, who in the first volume displays an acuteness of judgement which they praise highly, would in the second volume seek his salvation in open and outright childish contradictions.

Introduction to *Logical Investigations* (pp. 22–23)

The confusion on the part of his readers was forgivable, though. Husserl's first major work had sought to draw on psychology to provide a 'clarification' of numbers and arithmetic, and had been attacked by Frege, a staunch opponent of psychologism. In the *Philosophy of Arithmetic*, Husserl had indeed used ideas in that earlier work from Franz Brentano, who appeared to strongly support psychologism. And here, again, in the second volume of *Logical Investigations*, Husserl was once more using Brentano's

intentional psychology. Husserl, in volume 1, seemed to have renounced his earlier psychologism, and now it appeared that he had changed his mind again! Just what was going on?

Reflection on the session and self-test questions

Write down your own reflections on the materials in this session drawing out any points that are particularly significant for you. Then write brief notes about the following:

1. With what was Husserl's early work mainly concerned?
2. What is the connection between Husserl's work on logic and 'psychologism'?
3. What is Husserl's key argument for distinguishing logic and arithmetic from psychology and thus against attempting to reduce the former to the latter?
4. Did he succeed in persuading his critics that his theory was not psychologistic?

Session 3 Husserl's conception of phenomenology

Husserl's introduction of phenomenology

In this session we come square on to Husserl's conception of phenomenology as introduced in the second volume of *Logical Investigations*. We will be looking in a moment at the introduction to volume 2. Before doing so, there are a couple of preliminary points worth making. First, the translation you will be reading is the translation of the second edition of *Logical Investigations*, published in 1913. This is important because, as we mentioned above, by 1913 Husserl had radically changed his notion of phenomenology, and the new edition was revised by Husserl from his new standpoint. Depending on one's view of the development of Husserl's thinking, the revisions are simply clarifications, bringing out what was already there, or they are an attempt by Husserl to project back his new ideas into his first account of phenomenology. The answer is probably somewhere in the middle.

There is a change made by Husserl to the new edition at one point, which is particularly striking. Fortunately, the translation of the second edition also gives the text of the first edition at that point. The change occurs in §6 of the Introduction (pp. 260–263): in the first version, Husserl states that 'phenomenology is descriptive psychology', while in the second edition, he writes 'phenomenology is not descriptive psychology'! As early as 1903 Husserl felt that calling phenomenology 'descriptive psychology' was causing a widespread misunderstanding of what he was doing, and clearly the issue bears directly on the relation of Jaspers' work to Husserl's. For Jaspers, remember, phenomenology very much is descriptive psychology.

The second preliminary point is simply to warn you that reading Husserl is not easy! Husserl has a writing style that rivals Kant's for its density and difficulty. The result is that one has to work quite hard even to grasp what he means by 'phenomenology' and a 'phenomenological analysis'—not a good idea if one is seeking to launch a fundamentally new approach to the analysis of mental life! Indeed Husserl adds to the confusion by starting off his 'Introduction' by flagging yet another new approach. His analysis of mental life, he says, is going to start not by talking vaguely of 'mental experiences', 'ideas', 'representations', or other traditional psychological terms of the time, but rather with an analysis of *language* ability.

The centrality of language in Husserl's phenomenology

The way to read the Introduction, then, is to hold on to the idea that phenomenology, for the early Husserl, is a type of analysis of the mental states involved in possessing knowledge in a form that can be communicated in language. As *analysis* of our linguistic and cognitive abilities, that is to say, Husserl's intention is that phenomenology will unravel the complexities involved in our everyday, and normally taken for granted, ability to talk about things. Phenomenology is going to ask, for example, about the relation between the following seemingly trivial things:

- ◆ The proposition that the sun is shining
- ◆ Saying that the sun is shining
- ◆ Thinking that the sun is shining
- ◆ Perceiving that the sun is shining
- ◆ Perceiving the following series of small black printed marks on the piece of paper in front of you...

THE SUN IS SHINING

If this list strikes you as rather trivial and hair-splitting, you would not be alone. In part, it was the extraordinary detail that Husserl dug out of our everyday linguistic and cognitive performances, that led to the charge of 'scholasticism' to which Husserl referred above. You need to remember, though, 'that it is precisely behind the obvious that the hardest problems lie hidden', and that the types of ability Husserl will be looking at seem trivial precisely because they are so fundamental to our sense of ourselves, and the sort of beings we are.

Seven questions about Husserl's phenomenology

The crunch question though is, exactly what *type* of analysis it is, which phenomenology attempts to give. In order to grasp what is distinctive about phenomenological analysis, as conceived by Husserl, you need to look out for the places where he contrasts it with an empirical, psychological approach to mental life on one side, and links it up with a purely logical analysis of language on the other.

EXERCISE 3

(60 minutes)

Read:

Husserl, E. ([1900–01] 1970a). 'Introduction' to Logical Investigations Volume II *Logical Investigations*, 2 Volumes, (translated by J.N. Findlay), London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, Volume I pp. 248–266

 Link with Reading 9.2

Don't worry if there are parts you can't understand at all!—Husserl introduces technicalities, especially in §§4–5, which we don't have to worry about here. Before you start, though, look through the following list of questions. Then as you read, make brief notes for yourself about what Husserl says.

1. Is phenomenology an empirical science or a 'pure' and 'a priori' discipline?
2. What does phenomenology seek to do for pure logic?
3. Why is a phenomenological approach to mental life so difficult?
4. In what sense is phenomenology a 'descriptive' discipline?
5. What sort of 'theory of knowledge' is phenomenology?
6. In what way is a phenomenological analysis 'free from presuppositions'?
7. Why does Husserl say at the end that the worth of a phenomenological analysis does not even depend on there being 'such things as men'?

Question 1: phenomenology as a 'pure' or 'a priori' discipline

In §1 Husserl uses the term 'pure' to describe both logic and phenomenology. The idea is that each of these disciplines is not an empirical study; they do not seek empirical or experimental evidence for their results. Phenomenology is concerned with 'the experiences of thinking and knowing', but in a quite different way to that of empirical or experimental psychology. Phenomenology is concerned with them 'in the pure generality of their essence, not experiences empirically perceived and treated as real facts, as experiences of human or animal experiences' (p. 249). This statement is, in fact, an addition made in the 1913 edition, but what it says certainly characterizes phenomenology as Husserl thought of it in the first edition. Phenomenology is an analysis of the very notions of thinking and knowing, not an empirical study of the real psychological events we identify in human beings as instances of thinking and knowing.

Husserl immediately signals a connection between pure phenomenology and empirical psychology, however:

[Pure phenomenology] analyses and describes in their essential generality—in the specific guise of a phenomenology of thought

and knowledge—the experiences of presentation, judgement and knowledge, experiences which, treated as classes of real events in the natural context of zoological reality, receive a scientific probing at the hands of empirical psychology. (*ibid.*)

While empirical psychology studies the mental processes of particular individuals or particular species, phenomenology is concerned with the very idea of such mental processes conceived in ‘essential generality’, that is, irrespective of their real instantiation in any particular sort of entity. In §6 (though again as part of the 1913 addition) Husserl compares phenomenology with other ‘pure’ disciplines, such as arithmetic and geometry. In the same way as arithmetic and geometry can play a vital role in empirical sciences and technologies, so phenomenology’s findings can have relevance for empirical psychology: ‘Our essential insights into perceptions, volitions and other forms of experience will naturally hold also of the corresponding empirical states of animal organisms, as geometrical insights hold of spatial figures in nature.’ (p. 262).

Question 2: phenomenology’s relation to logic

Aside from having relevance for empirical psychology, in clarifying the very conceptual scheme within which the study of ‘mental states’ is undertaken, Husserl regards phenomenology as having key relevance for logic. Essentially, Husserl’s idea is that formal logic, with its concern to analyse the parts of propositions and relations between propositions, is in danger of simply becoming an esoteric study lacking any relevance to real life. Phenomenology seeks to provide a clarification of the place of logic in everyday life by using it in the analysis of what it means to possess logical, rational abilities, and the place of these abilities in the idea of being a ‘knowing subject’. Husserl expresses this idea in two passages which are rather misleading, but which repay careful consideration, precisely because of the misunderstanding they can (and did!) give rise to. At the bottom of p. 249, Husserl writes: ‘Phenomenology on the other hand, lays bare the “sources” from which the basic concepts and ideal laws of *pure* logic “flow”, and back to which they must once more be traced, so as to give them all the “clearness and distinctness” needed for an understanding and epistemological critique of pure logic.’ (p. 249–250)

On the face of it, except for the scare quotes around ‘sources’ and ‘flow’, which indicate that we should not take these words at face value, there could not be a clearer expression of psychologism! Supporters of psychologism precisely argued that logic concerns psychological processes, and that its laws are ultimately psychological laws. It prompts one to ask, as Husserl does rhetorically in §6, ‘what then was the point of the whole battle against psychologism?’

One might have expected Husserl to be a little more careful, after his experience of being savagely criticized by Frege for saying the same sort of thing about the concepts of arithmetic! What Husserl is trying to say—none too clearly—is that there is a clarity in our understanding of logic which comes by seeing how

it is connected to a pure, a priori analysis of what it means to be an entity capable of logical thought. Unless we relate logic back to subjectivity in this non-psychologistic way, then the rejection of psychologism is apt to make logic seem like a free-floating, esoteric discipline. What phenomenology tries to do is bring logic back down to earth, re-connect it with the idea of a cognitive agent, yet not in the sense that logic *derives* from subjective experiences.

Yet in §2 Husserl seems to say that logical concepts originate in intuitions about our mental states. Again, on the face of it, this is a form of psychologism: not only would logical concepts be psychological concepts, but they are formed through empirical introspection upon our own real mental lives in each case. Here is the passage:

Logical concepts, as valid thought-unities, must have their origin in intuition: they must arise out of an ideational abstraction founded on certain experiences, and must admit of indefinite reconfirmation, and of recognition of their self-identity, on the reperformance of such abstraction. Otherwise put: we can absolutely not rest content with ‘mere words’, [...] we must go back to the ‘things themselves’ (p. 252; translation modified)

‘Back to the things themselves’ is one of phenomenology’s most famous watchwords, yet in the context in which it is introduced, it supports psychologism: to clarify logical concepts, we must go back to subjective, psychological experiences! Yet Husserl is not saying that ‘logical concepts’ *do* have their origin in intuition, but that they ‘must’. Why? In order that one can bring a new ‘epistemological clarity’ to logic. Again the idea is that logical concepts must be related back to essential types of psychological act, not that they are themselves empirical concepts.

We can understand this better if we consider Husserl’s term ‘ideational abstraction’. What he has in mind is the sort of procedure used by someone doing geometry. Someone draws a circle in the process of a geometrical proof, but they are not concerned with just this particular circle, they are concerned with *the circle per se*, as a geometrical form. Husserl would say that while perceiving the drawn circle, they are performing an ‘ideational abstraction’ upon it: they are regarding it as a mere instance of a universal type. If we reflect on our own mental lives, phenomenology demands that we do the same thing: merely use our empirically real mental lives as a useful aid towards formulating an analysis of the *essential types* of mental act that we regard our own mental lives as instantiating, through performing an ‘ideational abstraction’ upon them.

Question 3: the difficulty of a phenomenological analysis

We mentioned the watchword of phenomenology above, ‘back to the things themselves’. Connected to this is the emphasis Husserl puts on the place of ‘intuition’, and we have already seen that Husserl by no means has simple empirical observation in mind. On the face of it, what Husserl has in mind is the idea that one

must not be content with constructing idle, free-floating ideas of what mental life involves, but we *must look and see!*

Yet even this seemingly trivial advice can give rise to misunderstandings. In §3 Husserl talks about the difficulty of doing a phenomenological analysis: in everyday life we deal with things and situations without reflecting on the mental acts we are having at the time; in seeing a chair, for example, it is the chair that is the object of our attention, not the mental act of perceiving it. Phenomenology is, however, the study of the essential types of mental act involved in the perception and recognition of a chair, and Husserl acknowledges that this change in the focus of our attention is difficult. The way Husserl describes this difficulty can make it seem that phenomenology is difficult because it is a form of introspection, and this is difficult because we more often focus on objects and situations in the world and not on our mental states: 'The source of all such difficulties lies in the unnatural direction of intuition and thought which phenomenological analysis requires. Instead of becoming lost in the performance of acts built intricately on one another, [...] we must rather practice "reflection", i.e. make these acts themselves, and their immanent meaning-content, our object.' (pp. 254–255)

The idea that phenomenology is a method of 'introspection' or 'reflection' (note again the scare quotes!) can suggest that Husserl envisages that, with practice, we can achieve a transparent access to our own mental states. While difficult, ultimately all we need do is introspect, and describe what we see. One might call this a 'Cartesian' view of the mind, as Descartes thought that we have a (transparent) grasp of our mental contents ('ideas'), which we can never attain for things out in the world.

Even a passing familiarity with the tortuous arguments of Husserl's *Logical Investigations* is enough to show, however, that phenomenology is not a matter of mere reflection or introspection! There are two passages in the Introduction that give us a better picture of the complexities involved. In the first Husserl points out that in characterizing mental states one must use language suited to talking about objects in the world: 'it is, in fact, impossible to describe referential acts without recurring in our expressions to the things to which such acts refer' (p. 256; translation modified). This suggests that a description of myself or another as 'perceiving a chair' is not a straightforward matter of introspection upon my mental life, or empathy with another's, but depends precisely on a prior ability to use the term 'chair' correctly for objects in the world.

In the course of six *Logical Investigations*, we find lengthy discussions on the nature of universals (Investigation II), part-whole relations (Investigation III), and logical grammar (Investigation IV). Husserl draws on all these to clarify our understanding of our cognitive and logical abilities, first broached in Investigation I—again, indicating how far phenomenology is from a simple introspective discipline. What we in fact find is described by Husserl himself as a 'zigzag' movement: 'We search, as it were, in zigzag fashion, a metaphor all the more apt since the close interdependence of our various epistemological concepts leads us

back again and again to our original analysis, here the new confirms the old, and the old the new.' (p. 261)

It is clear, then, that we should not think of phenomenology as presupposing a Cartesian, transparent access to our own mental states, such that all we need do is 'reflect' on ourselves and describe what we see. Why then does Husserl constantly stress the importance of 'intuition'? The answer is that while phenomenology seeks to be an analysis of what belongs a priori to the notion of a 'knowing subject', in terms of the essential types of mental state involved in our logical and cognitive abilities, we must constantly check to see that the analysis does indeed make sense of how we think of ourselves. Husserl is concerned that phenomenological analysis should not become a mere flight of conceptual imagination, but rather that the essential types of mental acts posited in the analysis can all the time be found instantiated in ourselves.

Question 4: phenomenology as a descriptive discipline

We can already see that phenomenology is not a descriptive discipline in the usual sense we think of 'descriptive'. It is not concerned with the simple recording of the empirical observations or introspections we make of ourselves; it is not a descriptive taxonomy of mental life, but an a priori conceptual analysis of what it means to be a knowing subject, of which we take ourselves to be an instance. One might argue that phenomenology is no more a descriptive study of mental life, than geometry is a descriptive study of the shapes of different objects we happen to find lying around our homes.

What then led Husserl to call phenomenology 'descriptive psychology'? Given that Husserl envisages that the conceptual scheme of essential types of mental acts, posited in a phenomenological analysis, can also be of use in empirical psychology, it seems likely that Husserl used the description to give a flavour of what a phenomenological analysis is going to look like. Even in the first edition, though, Husserl has reservations about using the term 'descriptive psychology':

Since it is epistemologically of unique importance that we should separate the purely descriptive examination of the knowledge-experience, disembarassed of all theoretical psychological interests, from the truly psychological researches directed to empirical explanation and origins, it will be good if we rather speak of 'phenomenology' than of 'descriptive psychology'. It also recommends itself for the further reason that the expression 'descriptive psychology', as it occurs in the talk of many scientists, means the sphere of scientific psychological investigation, which is marked off by a methodological preference for inner experience and by an abstraction from all psychophysical explanation. (p. 263)

At the end of this passage, Husserl is basically saying that the term 'descriptive psychology' already has a well established use in relation to a particular form of empirical investigation. Indeed, in the next section we will come across the term used by the philosopher and historian, Wilhelm Dilthey, whose work was a great

influence on Jaspers. It was thus quite a risk to use the term for an essentially distinct approach to mental life, and Husserl paid heavily for it, in terms of the misunderstandings to which it gave rise.

There is a sense in which the term 'descriptive' is quite apt for phenomenology, so long as we think about the term in the right way. Ordinarily, we think of description as 'empirical description', i.e. the reporting of observations, as opposed to the formulation of an empirical explanation. This is the sense of 'descriptive' in Dilthey's idea of a 'descriptive psychology'.

We can also think of 'descriptive' in the sense of unpacking and clarifying what is implicit or unclear in our ways of thinking; 'descriptive' in this sense is used by the English philosopher Peter Strawson, in his idea of a 'descriptive metaphysics' (Strawson, 1964). In such an approach one must be careful not to draw on ideas that are themselves founded on the very ways of thinking one is seeking to examine. In particular, in this context, one needs to be careful not to draw on explanatory theories of mental life, when one is precisely trying to clarify the idea of the very type of mental life that would make theory formation possible. Husserl hints at this in the above passage, where he states that it is 'epistemologically of unique importance' that one hold off from any ideas drawn from an 'empirical explanation' of mental life. It is, however, the following section, §7, which makes clear this restriction on phenomenology, on the basis of the nature of phenomenology as 'epistemology' or 'theory of knowledge'.

Question 5: phenomenology as a theory of knowledge

§7 refers back to the last chapter of volume 1 of *Logical Investigations*, the 'Prolegomena to Pure Logic'. In that chapter Husserl had developed the idea of pure logic as culminating in the formal study of *theories* as sets of interrelated propositions: logic as a formal theory of what a *theory* is. Phenomenology's task is to relate this abstract study back to a concrete understanding of the essential types of mental act possessed by a subject that can formulate theories:

This theory of theories goes together with, and is illuminated by, a formal theory of knowledge which precedes all empirical theory, which precedes, therefore, all explanatory knowledge of the real, all physical science on the one hand, and all psychology on the other, and of course all metaphysics. Its aim is not to *explain* knowledge in the psychological or psychophysical sense as a *factual* occurrence in objective nature, but to *shed light* on the *Idea* of knowledge in its constitutive elements and laws. (p. 265)

This is a very important passage for our understanding of phenomenology. In it phenomenology is described as a 'formal theory of knowledge' that seeks to 'illuminate' or 'shed light' on the Idea of knowledge, as analysed in pure logic as a theory of theories. The terms 'illuminate' and 'shed light' both translate the German term '*aufklären*', which Husserl contrasts with explanation, or '*erklären*'. Husserl's term 'descriptive' for phenomenology thus needs to be understood not as part of the opposition 'empirical

description vs. empirical explanation', but in terms of the opposition 'explanation vs. clarification'.

Question 6: phenomenology's presuppositionlessness

The idea that phenomenology must hold back from drawing on any explanatory theories of mental life, is also part of what Husserl means by the 'presuppositionlessness' of phenomenology. This is also discussed in §7: phenomenology is neither an explanatory theory, nor presupposes any explanatory theory. Husserl gives another useful characterization of what sort of theory phenomenology then is: 'The "theory" that it aspires to, is no more than a thinking over, a coming to an evident understanding of, thinking and knowing as such, in their pure generic essence.' (p. 263)

And, as we have seen, this 'thinking over' and 'coming to an evident understanding of' are by no means achieved through simple introspection; it involves a complex zigzag process, drawing on a number of different types of investigation, and on the findings of an analysis of the logical structure of theories. By bearing this in mind, we can also avoid a rather misleading connotation of the idea of a 'presuppositionless' approach to mental life. This connotation can suggest precisely that in phenomenology one simply introspects and describes what one sees without any presuppositions. It is rather the case that formal logic, together with, for example, investigations of formal grammar and formal ontology (which is what Husserl later calls part-whole theory), are presupposed and drawn on to help make explicit what is involved in the idea of knowledge and of being a knowing subject.

What is going on here can be made clearer by drawing on an idea from Husserl's later work, which is only implicitly present in *Logical Investigations*. In his later work, Husserl introduces the idea of 'bracketing' our everyday beliefs and theories. The notion of 'bracketing' does not merely mean that we are to avoid drawing on them, but rather that while they are 'bracketed' our everyday beliefs and theories, *with all their presuppositions*, are precisely to become the objects of study. In the later work, phenomenology becomes a far more general approach to uncovering, making explicit, and clarifying the hidden depths of presuppositions in our everyday 'natural attitude'. In the same way, we can think of the phenomenology of *Logical Investigations* as a more limited investigation aimed at uncovering, making explicit, and clarifying what is involved in the very idea of one sort of entity: ourselves, as knowing subjects.

Question 7: phenomenology does not presuppose the existence of human beings

There is a further and related connotation to Husserl's idea of the presuppositionlessness of phenomenology that we need to consider. We can think about it in this way: it would be odd to imagine that one could undertake a descriptive taxonomy of caterpillars, if none actually existed, yet phenomenology as a 'descriptive psychology' does not presuppose that there is anything

with mental states! Husserl makes this point at the very end of the Introduction:

It can easily be seen that the sense and the epistemological worth of the following analyses does not depend on the fact that there really are languages, and that men really make use of them in their mutual dealings, or that there really are such things as men and a nature, and that they do not merely exist in imagined, possible fashion. (p. 266)

Again, we need to remember that phenomenology, for Husserl, is an a priori, conceptual analysis of the idea of being a certain sort of subject, irrespective of the physical manifestation of such entities. We might think of it as making clear what is implicit in our everyday sense of ourselves, and also what would be implicit in the recognition of a Martian or gaseous extraterrestrial as being a 'knowing subject', i.e. something that we take to possess beliefs and knowledge about the external world. Husserl returns to this point at the very end of *Logical Investigations*, in a passage that underlines the generosity of spirit implicit in the rather formal approach to subjectivity found in phenomenology. It is worth citing this passage, even though it makes reference to a number of concepts that Husserl has analysed in the course of the book, which we cannot go into here.

An understanding governed by other than the pure-logical laws would be an understanding without understanding. If we define understanding, as opposed to sensibility, as the capacity for categorial acts, also, perhaps, as a capacity for expression and meaning directed according to such acts, and made 'right' by them, then the general laws rooted in the specific nature of these acts belong to the definitory essence of understanding. Other beings may gaze upon other 'worlds', they may also be endowed with 'faculties' other than ours, but, if they are minded creatures at all, possessing some sort of intentional experiences [...] then such creatures have both sensibility and understanding, and are 'subject' to the pertinent laws. (p. 828)

Phenomenology is concerned to make explicit what is involved in the very ideas of 'understanding' and what one might call 'mindedness', such that if we take another entity, a Martian say, as possessing knowledge and beliefs about the world, then the phenomenological analysis will fit them too. From out of the undeniable formality and complexity of Husserl's phenomenology, a commitment shines through: not to allow contingent aspects of our physical constitution—being carbon-based organisms of a certain species, having two eyes and two legs, having blue eyes and blond hair—to encroach upon what properly makes up our sense of who and what we are. This only makes it all the more poignant that in the last years of his life, in 1930s Germany, Husserl suffered under a regime that labelled who and what he was purely in terms of his being Jewish.

Five key concepts in Husserl's *Logical Investigations*

With a background in place of what the nature of Husserl's phenomenology is, we can turn to the some of the key concepts

which figure in *Logical Investigations*—'intentionality', 'quality', 'matter', 'fullness', and the distinction between 'objectifying acts' and 'founding acts'. Although somewhat obscure as terms, Husserl's concepts actually capture rather intuitive aspects of how we think about mental states.

Intentionality and mental acts

Husserl's first key concept aims at drawing a distinction between two forms of experience that make up our mental lives. We think of certain experiences as being *about* or *of* things; for example, thoughts and perceptions. In having a thought, we are thinking *about* or *of* something; a perception is always a perception *of* something. A mental state such as pain, is not about anything in the same way—a pain is just a pain. Husserl distinguished these two types of experience by using the term 'intentional' for the former and 'non-intentional' for the latter. Husserl is here following Brentano, who had introduced the notion of intentionality as a defining characteristic of mental phenomena. Husserl differs from Brentano not only in allowing for non-intentional mental experiences, but also in the clarity of his analysis of the idea. Brentano's sole explication of the term in his major work *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint* ([1874] 1995) is the following rather obscure passage:

Every mental phenomena is characterised by what the Scholastics of the Middle Ages called the intentional (or mental) inexistence of an object, and what we might call, though not wholly unambiguously, reference to a content, direction toward an object (which is not to be understood here as meaning a thing), or immanent objectivity. Every mental phenomena includes something as object within itself, although they do not all do so in the same way. In presentation something is presented, in judgement, something is affirmed or denied, in love loved, in hate hated, in desire desired, and so on. (p. 88)

We do not have to worry here, however, about the details of the way Husserl criticizes, in Investigation V, the infelicities in Brentano's account. All we need to be clear about is that, used in this technical sense, 'intentional' does not mean anything like 'done on purpose'. It means purely the 'of-ness' or 'about-ness' of certain mental states, i.e. the way one might say, they are aimed at or directed to particular other things. Husserl introduces the term 'act' or 'mental act' as a short-form for 'intentional experience'.

The quality and the matter of mental acts

'Quality' and 'matter' are terms that Husserl uses to denote two aspects necessarily possessed by any mental act. Matter is the specific 'content' of a mental act, its being about the specific thing it is about; quality is more the 'attitude' one takes to what it is the mental act is of. We can make this clear though a few simple examples:

Quality is what the following mental acts have in common:

Being afraid of spiders

Being afraid that one has left the gas on

Whereas the following differ in quality but have the same matter:

Being afraid *that one has left the gas on*

Hoping *that one has left the gas on*

The fullness of a mental act

'Fullness' is Husserl's term for the third aspect necessarily possessed by a mental act; it is the extent to which a mental act is infused by sensory data. For Husserl, what primarily distinguishes the mental act of merely thinking of a friend, from the mental act of perceiving him in his bodily presence in front of one, is the different extent to which sense-data are woven into the experience. Mere thought of one's friend has a zero degree of sensory content, while a perception of one's friend is infused by visual sensory experiences.

Conceived of in isolation from their part in an intentional experience, sensory data are not of or about anything—they are non-intentional experiences such as pain. It is only when they become part of an encompassing intentional act that they become the visual experience of anything, for example, one's friend.

Husserl thinks of this in terms of the matter of an act informing the way that sensory content is 'apprehended'. For example, on a dark and murky night, the very same sensory content may at one moment be taken as giving one the visual experience of a person, and then after closer examination, as the visual experience of tree stump. These two experiences differ not in quality or in sensory content, but in their matter: one is *of a person*, the other is *of a tree stump*.

Husserl gives another example, which it is useful to cite, because it will later illuminate the relation of Husserl's early work both to Jaspers' phenomenology and to Husserl's own later conception of phenomenology.

Whatever the origin of the experienced contents now present in consciousness, we can think that the same sensory contents should be present with a differing apprehension, i.e. that the same contents should serve to ground perceptions of different objects. Apprehension itself can never be reduced to an influx of new sensations; it is an act-character, a mode of consciousness, of 'mindedness'. We call the experiencing of sensations in this conscious manner the perception of the object in question. [...] I see a thing, e.g. this box, but I do not see my sensations. I always see *one and the same box*, however *it* may be turned and tilted. I have always the *same* 'content of consciousness'—if I care to call the perceived object a 'content of consciousness'. But each turn yields a *new* 'content of consciousness', if I call experienced contents 'contents of consciousness', in a much more appropriate use of words. Very different contents are therefore experienced, though the same object is perceived. The experienced content, generally speaking, is not the perceived object. We must note, further, that the object's real being or non-being is irrelevant to the true essence of the perceptual experience, and to its essence as a perceiving of an object as appearing thus and so, and as thus and so thought of. (pp. 565–566)

There are a lot of ideas here, but for now we need only take note of two. First, there is the way that by distinguishing between the

matter and sensory content of an act, Husserl tries to do justice to the way that perceiving a three-dimensional object can involve very different visual experiences, yet bound into a single mental state, which we would describe as the perception of one and the same object. Secondly, note that being able to distinguish sensory content as part of a mental act does not mean that we are explicitly aware of it when we 'live through' the mental act, so to speak. The object of the intentional experience is the object we are perceiving not the sensory content woven into the intentional mental state.

Objectifying acts and founded acts

In the context of a long discussion of Brentano in Investigation V, Husserl makes the claim that every mental act is either an objectifying act or founded on an objectifying act. What Husserl is getting at here, is the way that we can regard certain complex forms of mental state as having simpler mental acts as components. For example, instead of analysing the mental state of being happy that the sun is shining as a unitary state having a certain quality ('being happy') and matter ('that the sun is shining'), we can think of it as having, as a component, the self-standing mental act of believing that the sun is shining. We can say that the more complex happy mental state is 'founded on' this simpler mental act, in the sense that the former requires the latter for its existence. Husserl's name for these basic mental acts, which serve as a basis for all other attitudes we might take towards things, is 'objectifying acts'. Without going into the technicalities, the term 'objectifying act' is rather broader than 'belief', and is best thought of as the basic mental act involved in simply 'having something in mind'.

This is not to say, however, that in having the more complex mental state of happiness about something, we experience a distinction between what is given in the objectifying act and our attitude towards it. Husserl's analysis precisely tries to take account of what he calls the 'phenomenological unity' of a given experience: 'A sad event, likewise, is not merely seen in its thing-like content and context, in the respects which make it an event: it seems clothed and coloured with sadness.' (p. 574)

Here again we see how inadequate it is to think of phenomenology as simply involving an introspection of our mental states. The distinction Husserl draws between objectifying and founded acts is simply not one that we are aware of in the course of our mental lives. Rather, Husserl is attempting to give an analysis of such complex states as being happy and sad about things, which will show in a convincing way how such states figure in a broader conception of ourselves and our cognitive and logical abilities.

Husserl's later transcendental phenomenology (the attempt to get out of the box)

Before we end this session on Husserl's phenomenology, it would be worthwhile briefly considering his later conception of phenomenology, as found in the two works referred to above: 'Philosophy as a rigorous science' (1911) and *Ideas I* (1913). Rather than going into any detail—as Jaspers was clear that Husserl's later phenomenology was no longer helpful for his purposes—we shall look

more at what Husserl thought was wrong with his own earlier conception of phenomenology.

If you look back at the long quotation from *Logical Investigations* above under 'The fullness of a mental act', you will see two things. First, that 'the origin of the experienced contents now present in consciousness' is not relevant to a phenomenological analysis, and second, that 'the object's real being or non-being is irrelevant to the true essence of the perceptual experience'. The picture this gives us of a knowing subject is that of a self-enclosed mental realm, with sensory-content that carries no information about its causal origin, or whether indeed the object we take ourselves to be perceiving exists or not. As a theory of knowledge, Husserl's early phenomenology ends up appearing to deny that we can ever have any knowledge of the external world at all!

Husserl's later diagnosis of what has gone wrong with the analysis is telling. He concludes that he has not been careful enough in 'bracketing' out naturalistic presuppositions in his analysis of subjectivity. What are these presuppositions that have crept in? Well, the knowing subject has been approached as a type of entity existing in the midst of other entities, such as tables and chairs—and it is this natural, everyday conception of ourselves that must now be 'bracketed', for the later Husserl, when we undertake a phenomenological analysis. When we bracket this naturalistic framework, we are no longer thinking of ourselves as an empirical subject, but as a 'transcendental subject'. In this 'transcendental attitude' we conceive of ourselves as a realm of absolute subjectivity, itself 'constituting' the objects that, in the 'natural attitude' we thought of as having independent existence.

Even from this rather brief description of 'transcendental phenomenology', one can see that it will be rather less useful for an empirical psychopathologist, such as Jaspers. If you want to find out more about Husserl's later work, however, and its relation to his earlier phenomenology, you should consult some of the works in the Reading guide at the end of this chapter.

Reflection on the session and self-test questions

Write down your own reflections on the materials in this session drawing out any points that are particularly significant for you. Then write brief notes about the following:

1. How does Husserl's view of phenomenology relate it (in his view) to logic and arithmetic?
2. By what method was phenomenological analysis meant to proceed?
3. What is the object of study of phenomenology, according to Husserl?
4. What does 'bracketing' mean? In modern phenomenology; and in Husserl's work?
5. What is the key aspect of the mind according to Husserl?

Session 4 Assessment of Husserl's influence on Jaspers

We have seen that both Jaspers' and Husserl's phenomenologies are complex and many-faceted. Assessing Husserl's influence on Jaspers, therefore, is itself a complex task. Such an assessment will depend on one's reading and interpretation of the work of both. It will also depend on what one regards as the most important characteristic of Husserl's phenomenology and whether that characteristic is, or is not, reflected in Jaspers' work. All the same, given our examination of Jaspers and Husserl above, it would seem that any assessment of Husserl's influence on Jaspers will need to take account of the following points.

Five differences between Husserl's phenomenology and Jaspers'

1. *The empirical or non-empirical nature of phenomenology.* Phenomenology for Jaspers is clearly an empirical discipline, a part of psychopathology, and more generally of psychology. Its aim is to yield a descriptive taxonomy of mental states. For Husserl, phenomenology is an a priori, conceptual study, quite distinct from empirical psychology, though its results, in terms of the conceptual scheme it yields, may be of use to the psychologist.
2. *The role of introspection and empathy.* For Jaspers, a phenomenological approach involves an empathetic re-living of a mental state by the phenomenologist, in order that he or she may grasp 'what it's like', in a way that cannot be communicated. Husserl, on the other hand, presupposes no transparent access to our own mental states in formulating an account of their essential nature; rather logic and other formal disciplines are used to shed light on what it means to possess logical and cognitive abilities.
3. *Phenomenology as 'static understanding'.* Jaspers thinks of 'phenomenology' as having a narrower range than Husserl envisages. For Jaspers phenomenology is merely 'static understanding', as opposed to 'genetic understanding', which concerns relations between mental states. Phenomenology for Husserl is equally concerned with relations between mental states, but in a more limited regard: connections that are 'rational' in a stronger sense, e.g. the relation between the wish that p and the perception that p . The notion of 'understanding' does not figure in Husserl's thinking in the same way as it does in Jaspers'. Husserl is more concerned with a priori rational relations between mental states, and not with what relations between belief states are 'understandable' or 'comprehensible', in a weaker sense. We must look elsewhere for the source of Jaspers' concern with 'understanding' and 'empathy', and we will be looking at this in Chapter 10.
4. *Phenomenology as a descriptive, rather than explanatory, undertaking.* For Jaspers, phenomenology should avoid drawing

on explanations of mental life, because it is to be purely a descriptive taxonomy. Phenomenology is descriptive for Husserl because it cannot, without circularity, invoke concepts drawn from explanatory sciences in its clarification of what it means to be an entity capable of engaging in an explanatory science.

5. *Phenomenology as presuppositionless.* Jaspers stresses the presuppositionlessness of phenomenology in virtue of the methodological requirement for a descriptive taxonomy to be undertaken honestly and accurately. For Husserl, the presuppositionlessness of phenomenology is in virtue of its status as a theory of knowledge. Further, as an a priori, conceptual analysis, phenomenology does not even presuppose the real existence of anything possessing mental states; rather it seeks to uncover, make explicit, and clarify the very 'presuppositions' implicit in the idea of a 'knowing subject'.

Signs of influence of Husserl on Jaspers

On each of the above five points, there would appear to be quite major differences between Jaspers' conception of phenomenology and Husserl's. We should not be too hasty in concluding, however, that there is, in fact, no influence by Husserl on Jaspers. This is because there are signs that Jaspers sought to draw on Husserl's phenomenology in the very way Husserl envisaged that an empirical psychologist could. The following passage comes from Jaspers' 1911 paper, 'The analysis of false perceptions':

We give a second example from Husserl: 'I see a thing, e.g. this box, but I do not see my sensations. I always see one and the same box, however it may be turned and tilted.' The experience of the sensation changes, new sensations always appear in consciousness. It remains the same intending—the box as its object—the same act. We have in the total experience of perception the to-and-fro of the tilting box, changing parts, sensations, and the constant and invariable 'intending' of the box.

Jaspers ([1911] 1963a, p. 197)

Here we see Jaspers directly drawing on Husserl's analysis of perception in terms of the way the matter of an intentional act can remain constant, while its sensory-content changes. In this article, Jaspers uses the concepts that Husserl had developed in the course of an a priori analysis of the knowing subject, in order to understand better the nature of a particular psychopathological symptom. Just as Husserl envisaged, his phenomenological analyses are being used to supply what we called at the start of this chapter, the basic conceptual framework for empirical psychological investigations. This use of Husserl's phenomenology is also much in evidence in Jaspers' major text, *General Psychopathology*. What tends to confuse the situation with regard to an assessment of Husserl's influence, is that Jaspers does not use the term 'phenomenology' for the basic conceptual scheme he takes from Husserl. Rather, as we have seen above, he uses the term 'phenomenology' for a type of psychological investigation

that he regards as an essential component of empirical psychology and psychopathology.

You can easily see, therefore, how one might come to two diametrically opposed conclusions about Husserl's influence on Jaspers. If one focuses on what Jaspers means by 'phenomenology' when he uses the term, one would have to conclude that there is little influence from Husserl: for Jaspers uses the term phenomenology to mean something quite different from Husserl. If, however, one focuses instead on the basic conceptual scheme that informs Jaspers' psychological investigations, one would conclude, to the contrary, that there is clear evidence of Husserl's influence. A brief survey of the current literature on the Husserl–Jaspers question shows that commentators have indeed tended to take up these diametrically opposed positions.

The debate continues

The question of Husserl's influence or lack of influence on Jaspers, has been explored by Osborne P. Wiggins and Michael Schwartz (a philosopher and psychiatrist respectively, working in America), by Manfred Spitzer (a German philosopher and psychiatrist) and by Chris Walker and G.E. Berrios (both psychiatrists working in England), as listed in the Reading guide. Wiggins and Schwartz, and Spitzer, argue that Husserl was indeed a major influence, while Walker and Berrios argue that there is no substantive presence of Husserl's thinking in Jaspers' work.

We cannot do justice here to the detailed way in which each of these authors defends their position. However, in terms of the material presented in this chapter, we can understand their respective positions broadly as follows:

- ◆ Wiggins and Schwartz (1995) downplay the differences we have noted above, and they do this by emphasizing the role of 'intuition' in Husserl's phenomenology. This allows them to understand Husserl's views of the descriptive and presuppositionless nature of phenomenology in a way that fits far better with what Jaspers says. That is, by emphasizing the way that Husserl demands that we go beyond merely playing with concepts, and directly 'look' at what is going on, Husserl's approach seems very similar to what Jaspers demands for an accurate descriptive taxonomy of mental states.
- ◆ Walker does much to balance this interpretation, by stressing the purely conceptual (or 'eidetic', to use a term from the later Husserl) nature of phenomenology. He convincingly argues that the clearly eidetic approach of Husserl's later phenomenology—which Jaspers rejected—was already implicit in Husserl's earlier work. He draws the conclusion that Jaspers misunderstood the nature of Husserl's early work, and thus that it had no real influence on him. We have seen, however, that a purely conceptual analysis can be of use to an empirical science, that Husserl envisaged that his phenomenology could be of use in this way, and that Jaspers did indeed use Husserl's phenomenology in this way.

Walker goes on to argue that it is Kant, rather than Husserl, who provides the philosophical force behind Jaspers' psychopathology, and in Chapter 10 we will be looking at the influence of 'Neo-Kantian' thinking more closely.

- ♦ Berrios, who is a historian as well as psychiatrist (we drew on his work in Chapter 7), does a great service in demonstrating how prevalent the idea was of a descriptive taxonomy of mental states, independent of Husserl's approach, at the time Jaspers was working as a young man in Heidelberg. He goes so far as to suggest that Jaspers cited Husserl's *Phenomenology* merely 'to legitimate his own youthful ideas on psychopathological description' (p. 317). As we saw above, Dilthey for example, also argued for the need for a 'descriptive psychology'.

What Berrios perhaps underplays is the way that even a purely 'descriptive' approach moves within a certain general conceptual framework, and that the key notion of 'intentionality' does not figure, for example, in the 'descriptive psychology' of Dilthey. It was Husserl who, more than anyone, strove to clarify the conceptual scheme in which we talk of *mental states*, and thus one might indeed be able to find evidence of a distinctive influence from Husserl on Jaspers.



Fig. 9.3 Heidegger

Reflection on the session and self-test questions

Write down your own reflections on the materials in this session drawing out any points that are particularly significant for you. Then write brief notes about the following:

1. Is there a clear answer to the degree of influence of Husserl on Jaspers?
2. Are there differences in the accounts of phenomenology given by Jaspers and Husserl? If so, give an example.

Session 5 Conclusions: the contemporary relevance of the phenomenological tradition in psychiatry

As indicated at the start of this chapter, Husserl's importance for psychopathology and psychiatry is very far from being limited to any influence he may have had, directly or indirectly, on Karl Jaspers. Husserl's phenomenology, as we noted, generated a rich tradition of phenomenological work in the twentieth century, much of it inspired by critical engagement with the master!

A number of major figures from this tradition have had important influences on psychiatry. We noted some of these in Chapter 4—Sartre and Merleau-Ponty, for example. Clearly we cannot do justice, here, to a century of phenomenological psychiatry

and to the work of the many important contemporary figures in the field. We give illustrative references in the Reading guides at chapter 4. A number of books in this series explore phenomenological approaches: *The Vulnerable self*, by Joseph Parnas, Louis Sass, Giovanni Stanghellini, and Thomas Fuchs provides a detailed introduction to contemporary phenomenology and psychiatry; and the sister volume to this book, Jennifer Radden's *Companion*, includes a number of chapters by important contemporary phenomenologists.

By way of illustration, however, we will conclude this chapter with a brief excursion into the contemporary relevance of one of Husserl's most famous pupils, the German philosopher, Martin Heidegger. Heidegger became notorious for his support for the Nazi party (see, e.g., Sheehan, 1988; Farias, 1989). But his phenomenology is important as an illustration of the relevance of phenomenology not just for psychopathology, classification, and diagnosis, but also in generating new approaches to treatment.

Heidegger and Husserl's problem

Heidegger, who worked in Heidelberg before and during the Second World War, was deeply influenced by Husserl, particularly the Husserl of *Logical Investigations*. Like Jaspers, however, Heidegger was unhappy with Husserl's move to a 'transcendental phenomenology'. The work that put Heidegger on the philosophical map was *Being and Time*, first published in 1927. Though dense, and difficult to read, this work caused huge excitement at the time. The book was part of a much larger philosophical project, the first stage of which involved fundamentally questioning our sense of who and what we are. Heidegger was convinced that Husserl's phenomenological analysis of what it means to be a 'knowing subject' was deeply, if largely implicitly, informed by a traditional Cartesian framework.

We saw above how Husserl himself came to be unhappy with the analysis of *Logical Investigations* because it seemed to leave the subject strangely cut off from his or her world, never really in contact with it at all. Husserl sought to avoid this problem by moving to an approach in which one no longer regards oneself as an entity in the world at all, but rather as a 'transcendental ego', the ground of the very existence of the world.

Heidegger and the analysis of Dasein

Heidegger's diagnosis of what had gone wrong was different. The mistake was not in regarding oneself as an entity *per se*, but rather in the Cartesian view of that entity as essentially constituted by a subjective realm cut off from the world outside it. Whereas Husserl sought to analyse what it means to be a 'knowing subject', Heidegger even thought that the very term 'subject' is best avoided, because of its deeply entrenched Cartesian connotations. Instead, Heidegger uses the less 'theory-laden' term 'Dasein' (which is used in everyday German for 'existing' or 'being', and literally means 'being there') as the name for the sort of entity 'we' are. 'We' is in scare quotes here because, following Husserl, Heidegger is not giving an empirical analysis of what it means to be an entity of the empirical species 'human being'. Rather, Heidegger is concerned to give an analysis of what it means to be open to the world in the way we take ourselves to be everyday, and would equally apply to any other entity we take to be like us in this way. *Being and Time* thus involves what Heidegger calls the 'Analysis of Dasein'.

Heidegger argues that traditional views of ourselves, which also inform Husserl's analyses, are marked by certain 'atomistic' ways of thinking. This happens in regard to two 'dimensions' of life, so to speak. First of all, in a vertical dimension, we think of subjectivity as an independent and self-standing realm, with the world outside it; then secondly, we think of mental life as a discrete, 'atomised' series of mental acts or experiences. Heidegger's aim is to re-think life or Dasein in a way free of these theoretical presuppositions, and also to explain why these artificial ways of thinking (as he considers them) come so naturally to us.

You can get a feel for Heidegger's approach in the following brief extract from *Being and Time*, which outlines what he takes to be the proper starting point for a description of Dasein's engagement with the world, which stresses its practical rather than its theoretical nature.

EXERCISE 4

(15 minutes)

Read the short extract from:

Heidegger, M. (1962). *Being and Time* (trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson). Oxford: Basil Blackwell, pp. 95–99

Link with Reading 9.3

- ◆ What is the role of equipment in Heidegger's account of Dasein's understanding of the world?

One of Heidegger's key innovations in overcoming these two atomistic conceptions is to focus on our involvement in practices by which we use everyday items of 'equipment'—chairs, tables, pens, pencils, hammers, etc. That is, traditionally one might think of mental life as consisting of a series of discrete 'ideas', 'representations', or 'acts' that correspond in some way to items in the world outside. Heidegger, however, suggests that we think of ourselves more in terms of our concrete ability to become involved in ongoing practices, in which such items as chairs and tables take on significance for us.

Heidegger's impact on psychotherapy

This is only the briefest indication of Heidegger's project—for additional reading, see the introductory books on Heidegger in the Reading guide. Heidegger's work has proved a rich source, however, for psychiatrists and psychotherapists unhappy with existing conceptual frameworks for understanding human beings.

One of the first therapists to take up Heidegger's approach was Ludwig Binswanger, who introduced a distinctive type of 'existential psychotherapy' that he called 'daseinsanalysis'. Heidegger's thinking also entered the clinical domain through the work of Medard Boss. Boss, who had trained as a psychiatrist and psychoanalyst, became fascinated with *Being and Time* during the Second World War. After the war Boss wrote to Heidegger and they struck up a close friendship that was to last until Heidegger's death in 1976. Throughout the 1960s Heidegger would often visit Boss's home in Zollikon, Switzerland and hold seminar discussions with Boss's students. Transcripts of these seminars, together with Boss's notes from his conversations with Heidegger were published in 1987 as the *Zollikoner Seminare*. In the introduction, Boss tells us that Heidegger's hope was that his work might 'escape the confines of a philosopher's study and become of benefit to wider circles, in particular to a large number of suffering human beings' (p. 7).

Recent phenomenological strands

In the Reading Guide to this chapter, we include examples from the very rich literature in modern phenomenology and psychopathology. A useful review, which brings the 'phenomenological' approach up to the end of the twentieth century, is a paper by the philosopher and psychiatrist, Patrick Bracken (1999).

In this paper Bracken outlines a number of developments in contemporary thinking about psychiatry. His suggestion—very much in line with the theme of this chapter—is that contemporary psychiatry can learn from the technical uses of the term 'phenomenology'. As Bracken points out, the current use of this term at least in Anglo-American psychiatry is simply as a listing of clearly described symptoms without presupposing any particular aetiological theory. But as we have seen, the term has a rich and complex philosophical history. Bracken suggests that contemporary psychiatry should take note of and could usefully draw on that philosophical history.

Bracken argues further that a key moment in phenomenology for psychiatry was Heidegger's move away from Husserl to the engaged view of Dasein he set out in *Being and Time* as involving everyday practical activities that we normally take completely for granted. Bracken suggests that the Cartesian elements within Husserl's picture would dovetail with contemporary cognitivism in philosophy and the neurosciences, and, hence, that if there are a priori arguments in favour of Heidegger and against Husserl, these might translate into arguments against cognitivism.

Whether Bracken is right in his general claim remains an open question. We have found in this chapter that simply describing Husserl's position as Cartesian is an oversimplification. But as we will see in Part V, when we consider cognitivism in detail (see especially Chapter 24), Bracken is not alone in pointing to the need for 'understanding' and 'meaning' to move outside the skull, as it were, to escape from the narrow confines of the intrapersonal space of cognitivism into an extended interpersonal space of social exchanges (see, for example, the work of Rom Harre, Grant Gillett and Steven Sabat in Part V). And Bracken, taking his Heideggerian phenomenology right through into practice, has developed a distinctively Heideggerian analysis of post-traumatic stress disorder which, combined with his clinical work in Africa, has become the basis of a policy statement by Amnesty International.

Important, therefore, as the links between phenomenology and the new neurosciences may eventually turn out to be, Bracken's work, in drawing on Heidegger's analysis of Dasein to develop new policies and treatment approaches in some of the most challenging areas of clinical practice, provides a clear signal of the continuing relevance of phenomenology for psychiatry today.

Reflection on the session and self-test questions

Write down your own reflections on the materials in this session drawing out any points that are particularly significant for you. Then write brief notes about the following:

1. Besides Jaspers, what other phenomenologist has particularly influenced psychiatry, and in what area?
2. What term does Heidegger use in reference to subjects in *Being and Time*?
3. What does his term mean literally and why does he use it?
4. In what parts of the world did phenomenology particularly develop in the twentieth century?

Reading guide

Husserl

Husserl wrote an overview of his project in the *Logical Investigations* from the perspective of his later position. This has been published in English as:

- ♦ Edmund Husserl (1977). 'The task and the significance of the *Logical Investigations*' (trans. by J.N. Findlay) in *Readings on Edmund Husserl's 'Logical Investigations'* (ed. J.N. Mohanty). The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, pp. 197–215.

A useful (though still difficult!) overview of transcendental phenomenology in English is given by Husserl in an article he wrote for the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*:

- ♦ Edmund Husserl [1927]. 'Phenomenology', Edmund Husserl's Article for the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, revised translation by Richard E. Palmer, in Husserl, *Husserl: Shorter Works*. Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press (1981), pp. 21–35; reprinted from (1971) *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology* 2: 77–90.

Among excellent commentaries on Husserl's philosophy, note: Bernet, Kern, and Marbach's (1993) *An Introduction to Husserlian Phenomenology* (this covers each period of Husserl's thinking with great clarity) and de Boer's (1978) *The Development of Husserl's Thought* (trans. by Theodore Plantinga) on Husserl's early work on mathematics up to the point where he develops transcendental phenomenology.

The Husserl–Jaspers question

The Cambridge psychiatrist and historian, G.E. Berrios, whose foundational work on the history of psychiatry and psychopathology we noted in Chapter 7, has written critically of many of the widely held views about the relationship between phenomenology, Jaspers and psychopathology today. See Berrios (1993) 'Phenomenology and psychopathology: was there ever a relationship?', and (1992) 'Phenomenology, psychopathology and Jaspers: a conceptual history'.

The debate in *Philosophy, Psychiatry, & Psychology* exploring contrary views on the importance of Husserl's influence on Jaspers, includes four papers by the British psychiatrist Chris Walker, with a reply in two parts by the American philosopher, Osborne Wiggins, and the psychiatrist (and founder President of the American Association for the Advancement of Philosophy and Psychiatry), Michael Schwartz.

Chris Walker sets out his detailed case in four papers: 'Karl Jaspers and Edmund Husserl—I: The perceived convergence' (1994a); 'II: The divergence' (1994b); 'III: Jaspers as a Kantian phenomenologist' (1995a; with a commentary by Ruth Chadwick, 1995); and 'IV: Phenomenology as empathic understanding' (1995b).

Wiggins and Schwartz reply to Walker in a first paper in *Philosophy, Psychiatry, & Psychology* and set out their own views directly in a later paper:

- ◆ Wiggins and Schwartz (1995). 'Chris Walker's interpretation of Karl Jaspers' phenomenology: a critique', with a commentary by Fulwiler and Folstein (1995).
- ◆ Wiggins and Schwartz (1997). 'Edmund Husserl's influence on Karl Jaspers' phenomenology', with a commentary by Handin and Azarin (1997).

The original statement of their position is given in: Wiggins *et al.* (1992) 'Phenomenological/descriptive psychiatry: Husserl and Jaspers', in Spitzer, *et al.* (ed.), *Phenomenology, Language and Schizophrenia*.

Heidegger

Heidegger's *Being and Time* is generally acknowledged to be one of the most difficult philosophical texts of modern times! You may, therefore, want to start by reading one of the lecture courses Heidegger gave at the time, which provide more accessible introductions to his project. The lecture course *History of the Concept of Time*, in particular, has a lengthy discussion of Husserl's phenomenology. See: *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, trans. by A. Hofstadter (1982) (a 1927 lecture course), and *History of the Concept of Time: Prolegomena*, trans. by T. Kiesel (1985) (a 1925 lecture course).

Heidegger's Zollikon seminars are not available in translation as a whole, however, the following is a translation of a number of extracts: 'On adequate understanding of daseins-analysis: excerpts from Martin Heidegger's Zollikon teaching', translated by Michael Eldred (1988).

Two of the best short introductions to Heidegger's work are: Mulhall (1996) *The Routledge Philosophy Guidebook to Heidegger and 'Being and Time'*, and Polt (1999) *Heidegger: an introduction*.

The Heideggerian tradition in psychiatry

Two key publications marking the translation of Heidegger's philosophy into psychotherapy are: Biswanger (1963) *Being-in-the-World*, and Boss (1963) *Psychoanalysis and Daseinsanalysis*.

The Irish psychiatrist and philosopher, Patrick Bracken, has drawn on Heideggerian phenomenology in developing new approaches to the management of severe trauma in society that retain a strong cultural rather than individual identity (see, Bracken *et al.*, 1997; Bracken and Peay, 1998; Bracken, 2001; Bracken, forthcoming). For an ingenious extension of the concept of *Dasein* to current issues of user and carer empowerment within multidisciplinary (hence multimodel, see Part I) services, see Heginbotham (2004) in *Psychiatric Dasein*.

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