The theoretical root of Karl Jaspers' *General Psychopathology*. Part I: Reconsidering the influence of phenomenology and hermeneutics

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Abstract

The present paper investigates the methodology involved in Jaspers' psychopathology and compares it with Husserl's phenomenology and with Dilthey's cultural science. *Allgemeine Psychopathologie* and other methodological works by Jaspers, the works of Husserl and Dilthey that Jaspers cited, and previous research papers on Jaspers are reviewed. Jaspers had conflicting views on understanding, which were comprised of both empathic understanding and rational, ideal-typical understanding. Such a standpoint on understanding is considerably different from Dilthey's. Additionally, the present paper reconfirms that Jaspers' 'phenomenology' as a form of descriptive psychology for the understanding of empirical psychic states is different from Husserl's phenomenology. Thus, this paper casts doubt on the common opinion that Jaspers was under the profound influence of Husserl or Dilthey.

Keywords

Descriptive psychology, Edmund Husserl, empathy, Karl Jaspers, methodology, Wilhelm Dilthey

Introduction

Karl Jaspers' *Allgemeine Psychopathologie* (1913), first published 100 years ago, is still considered to have been a significant methodological contribution to psychiatry (Ghaemi, 2003); however, the background of his methodology is equivocal. The influence of Edmund Husserl on Jaspers' works tends to be stressed (Spiegelberg, 1972; Wiggins & Schwartz, 1995, 1997). In contrast, some researchers deny the significant influence of Husserl (Berrios, 1992; Langenbach, 1995; Walker, 1994a, 1994b) and note the influences from Immanuel Kant, Max Weber and others (Henrich, 1987; Okada, 2010; Walker, 1995a, 1995b). Although the latter is not the prevailing view, the personal connection between Weber and Jaspers is well documented (Fulford, Thornton

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and Graham, 2006; Kirkbright, 2004), and Jaspers himself acknowledged the influence of Weber in *AP1*.¹

Recent studies remark that Jaspers was influenced by a number of schools of thought. Ghaemi (2003), who endorses the pluralism of Jaspers, states that Jaspers was under the influence of Husserl and Weber, and that the roots of Weber's methodology were due to Wilhelm Dilthey and Heinrich Rickert. Kirkbright (2004: 67) also lists Dilthey, Husserl, Rickert and Weber as the sources of Jaspers' ideas. Fulford and colleagues (2006: 219) give three sources for Jaspers' methodology: (1) Husserl, (2) Dilthey, (3) 'Rickert-Weber line'. They also note 'tensions' between these elements within Jaspers' methodology (Fulford et al., 2006: 233). So, while these studies all list Jaspers' forerunners, they have different views with regard to detailed analyses.

The standpoint of the present study is that Jaspers' methodology in *AP1* was influenced most significantly by Weber, and only secondarily by other scholars. The works cited in the methodological portion of *AP1* are strikingly similar to those cited in Weber's *Roscher und Knies* (1903–6; *R&K*). In addition, the terminology in *AP1* is remarkably similar to Weber's. These similarities are probably due to the similarity in their respective methodologies. Such similarities to *AP1* cannot be seen with any other literary work. However, a minor difference between Weber's and Jaspers' methodology may be due to the difference in their respective specializations. It is highly likely that Jaspers adopted past philosophical and sociological studies via Weber's work.

The influence of Weber on Jaspers has already been investigated by Walker (1994a, 1994b, 1995a, 1995b), and the present study adds to Walker's arguments. He compared the text of *AP1* with various textbooks on philosophy and sociology, and remarked that Jaspers was under the influence of Kant and those whom Walker called 'neo-Kantian' thinkers, like Dilthey, Georg Simmel and Weber. Walker's analysis suggests that Weber had a strong and significant influence on Jaspers, although Walker himself stated 'Jaspers follows Wilhelm Dilthey's subjectivist view, with an important rider deriving from Weber' (Walker, 1995b: 259). His thorough analysis of the antecedents of Jaspers' methodology deserves close attention. The present study, which is greatly indebted to Walker, adds some novel analyses, and argues more explicitly that Jaspers was primarily influenced by Weber and he viewed his contemporary philosophical and sociological studies through the lens of Weber.

Connecting Jaspers with Weber does not undervalue Jaspers' psychopathology. Weber's methodology was recently re-evaluated and the relationship between it and today's philosophy of science was investigated (Feest, 2010; Ringer, 1997). The present study provides a reconstruction and re-examination of the organization of Jaspers' methodology in order to illustrate further its strengths and inherent weaknesses. In turn, this will provide a better and more accurate application of his methodology.

Part 1 of this two-part study demonstrates the differences between Jaspers' methodology and the theories of philosophers and sociologists other than Weber. In Part 2, a direct comparison will be made between Jaspers and Weber.

Jaspers' account of his methodology of psychopathology

Jaspers criticized prejudices in psychiatry within the first few sections of his book and laid out a plan to present his own methodology for psychopathology. He noted that psychiatrists 'shall almost always be forced to reflect on our methodology', because '(n)ot only assertions but methods themselves come under dispute' (*AP1*: 6; *GP*: 5).² In the first edition, he presented two major prejudices: 'somatic prejudice' (*AP1*: 8; *GP*: 18) and 'philosophical prejudice' (*AP1*: 9; *GP*: 16).³

What he referred to as ‘philosophical prejudice’ was ‘speculative and *deductive thinking*, based on principles that sought to comprehend and explain everything without the test of experience’ (AP1: 9; GP: 16).⁴ ‘Somatic prejudice’, on the other hand, was expressed as: the psychic phenomena ‘must be presented ... as a physical function’ (AP1: 8; GP: 18). In this view, ‘the psyche as such’ was conceived of as ‘purely subjective’ and there was ‘no need to investigate’ (AP1: 8; GP: 18). Jaspers argued that ‘no *uniform theoretical framework* is attainable’ in psychopathology, because ‘psychic life is an infinite whole, a totality that resists any consistent attempt to systematise it’ (AP1: 8; GP: 17). Jaspers intended to arrange various approaches and ‘achieve some kind of order based on a deliberate methodology’ (AP1: vii; GP: xviii).

Jaspers introduced the term ‘phenomenology’ as one of the methods of psychopathological study in AP1:

The first step toward a scientific knowledge of the psyche is the selection [*Aussondern*], delimitation [*Begrenzen*], differentiation [*Unterscheiden*] and description [*Beschreiben*] of particular *phenomena of experience* which then, through the use of the allotted term, become defined and capable of identification time and again. ... This representation [*Vergegenwärtigen*] of psychic experiences and psychic states, this delimitation and definition of them, so that we can be sure the same term means the same thing, is the express function of *phenomenology*. (AP1: 13; GP: 25–26)

According to Jaspers, phenomenology had the function of delineating individual psychic states: phenomenology is a method of *static* understanding (AP1: 13; GP: 27). For him, phenomenology was the starting point of his methodology. With regard to the specific method of static understanding, he wrote: ‘Since we never can perceive the psychic experience of others in any direct fashion, as with physical phenomena, we can only make some kind of representation of them. There has to be an act of empathy, of understanding Our chief help in all this comes from the patients’ own *self-descriptions*.’ (AP1: 24; GP: 55). According to Jaspers, static understanding was achieved by listening to patients’ self-descriptions and empathizing with them.

Once the isolated psychic phenomena were delineated, the next question would be: ‘(h)ow are all these various data to be related?’ (AP1: 13; GP: 27). Jaspers presented two methods of connecting various psychic phenomena: genetic understanding and causal explanation. He clarified these two methods as follows:

1. We sink ourselves into the psychic situation and *understand genetically by empathy*⁵ how one psychic event emerges from another. 2. We find by repeated experience that a number of phenomena are regularly linked together, and on this basis *we explain causally*. (AP1: 145; GP: 301)

Genetic understanding is also referred to as ‘psychopathology of meaningful mental phenomena’: when ‘the meaning is clear and we understand directly *how one psychic event emerges from another*’ (AP1: 13; GP: 27), we genetically understand these psychic events. Through genetic understanding, ‘meaningful connections’ (*verständliche Zusammenhänge*) (AP1: 153; GP: 314) may be discovered. However, when ‘(o)ne psychic event follows another quite incomprehensibly’, genetic understanding ‘reaches its *limits*’ (AP1: 13; GP: 27). When psychological understanding fails, ‘(w)e can only resort to *causal explanation*, as with phenomena in the natural sciences’ (AP1: 14; GP: 28).

Jaspers did not mean that understandable psychic phenomena were not amenable to causal explanation. Thus, he wrote: ‘There is no limit to the discovery of causes and with every psychic event we always look for cause and effect’ (AP1: 147; GP: 305). He thought that psychic phenomena

could be grasped both by understanding and through causal explanation: the biological processes in the brain cannot be understood but only explained.

In a subsequent chapter, Jaspers (*GP*: 307) listed various types of understanding:

1. Phenomenological understanding and the understanding of expression⁶
2. Static and genetic understanding
3. Genetic understanding and explanation
4. Rational and empathic understanding
5. Understanding and interpretation.

He stressed the significance of empathic understanding, and he characterized genetic understanding itself as understanding by empathy. He also wrote: 'Rational understanding is merely an aid to psychology; empathic understanding brings us to psychology itself.' (*AP1*: 147; *GP*: 304). Jaspers seems to have conceived of empathic understanding as an indispensable method of psychopathology.

The problems with Jaspers' concept of understanding

Jaspers criticized various prejudices, but what about his own methodology? Berrios (1992: 310) argues that Jaspers' methodology cannot achieve entirely theory-free descriptions, because it would be impossible to overcome 'a covert, second order, hidden theoretical framework'. It has also been noted (Fulford et al., 2006: 190) that Jaspers seems to have been unaware that 'observation is always, and inescapably, theory-laden'.

In particular, the question arises of whether empathic understanding is a reliable method of science. Fulford and colleagues point out significant problems with Jaspers' notion of empathy. In accordance with Wittgenstein, they argue 'against theories that give an explanatory role to incommunicable inner mental states' (Fulford et al., 2006: 185). They summarize the problems with empathy as: '(1) (I)ts 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!' (Fulford et al., 2006: 186)

Next, let us delve into how Jaspers himself legitimized understanding.

The evidence of understanding

Jaspers stressed evidence of understanding in his works. In 1913 he wrote about evidence of genetic understanding in an article on causal and 'meaningful' connections between life history and psychosis (*KVZ*: 331–2); in the first section, he investigated the methodology of understanding. This article was referenced at the beginning of his chapter on genetic understanding in *AP1* (145), and almost the same content as in this section appeared in the later editions of *GP* (303–4). Jaspers wrote the following about evidence of genetic understanding.

The evidence for genetic understanding is something ultimate. ... The psychology of meaningful phenomena is built up entirely on ... convincing experience of impersonal, independent and understandable connections. Such conviction is ... not acquired inductively *through repetition of experience*. It carries its own power of conviction and it is a precondition of the psychology of meaningful phenomena that we accept this kind of evidence just as acceptance of the reality of perception and of causality is the precondition of the natural sciences. (*GP*: 303)

Jaspers claimed that genetically understandable connections are the 'ideal types' in the sense used by Weber. Ideal-typical meaningful connections are 'a measure for any particular event, whereby it may be recognised as more or less meaningful' (*GP*: 304). According to Jaspers, meaningful connections were preconditions or the starting points for understanding psychic phenomena. Meaningful connections were not the subject of verification, but each psychic phenomenon was evaluated based on ideal-typical meaningful connections.

Jaspers did not think that genetic understanding of meaningful connections was dependent on experience: 'The self-evidence of a meaningful connection does not prove that in a particular case that connection is *really there* nor even that it occurs in reality at all' (*GP*: 303). In another part of his book, he wrote: 'We all know a great many psychic connections which we have learnt from experience (not only through repetition but through having understood one real case which opened our eyes)' (*GP*: 314). For Jaspers, this was not a contradiction. Neither the absence of example nor a counterexample can deny a meaningful connection. A single example would be sufficient if its meaning were properly conveyed. As examples of such ideal-typical meaningful connections, he enumerated myths and works of great poets, writers and philosophers (*GP*: 303–4, 314–15), putting a higher value on works by Nietzsche and Kierkegaard than on psychoanalysis (*GP*: 360).⁷

Jaspers also investigated the self-evidence of static understanding in his 1912 article 'Die phänomenologische Forschungsrichtung in der Psychopathologie' (*PFP*). He used phenomenology to denote almost the same meaning as static understanding, as mentioned above.

Phenomenology concerns itself only with actual experiences, ... not with any factors that may be thought to underlie psychic events and are the subject of theoretical constructs. ... (P)henomenology must always find its standards within itself.

Phenomenology, then, deals with what is actually experienced. It views psychic events 'as from within', and brings them into immediate realization. (*PFP*: 326; Jaspers, 1968: 1322)

Jaspers distinguished between 'systematic, experimental self-observations' and 'ordinary empathic representations' (*PFP*: 319–20; Jaspers, 1968: 1317). Here, he set the limit to empathic understanding.

This attitude of mere sympathetic [*miterlebend(en)*] understanding ... is ... 'subjective' in a very special sense; and when specific assertions or formulations are made on this basis without any reference to more far-reaching study or to any regular system of concepts, such assertions or formulations do indeed deserve to be dismissed as 'merely subjective' in a derogatory sense. Assertions of this sort cannot be discussed or verified. We may appreciate this type of understanding ... but we can never give it recognition as a 'science'. (*PFP*: 316–17; Jaspers, 1968: 1315, translation altered)

When Jaspers stressed the self-evidence of understanding, the role of empathy in understanding retreated. With regard to static understanding, 'ordinary empathic representations' and 'mere sympathetic understanding' were discarded as insufficient methods of science. With regard to genetic understanding, Jaspers claimed the 'impersonal' and 'ultimate' evidence of 'ideal-typical' meaningful connections. Now, it may be perceived that such terms are remote from empathic understanding (see Fulford et al., 2006: 221).

Indeed, Jaspers' psychopathological studies were at times in conflict with his own method for empathic understanding. In his chapter on static understanding, he cited many research papers in psychiatry as examples of phenomenological study, but these were ordinary case reports. As Langenbach (1995: 218) says, 'Jaspers's case reports reveal this gap between claims and reality of

phenomenological analysis'. In addition, Chapter 3 of *AP1*, entitled '*Die Verständlichen Zusammenhänge*' (Meaningful Connections), was devoted to genetic understanding, and written in a very rational manner.⁸ As an academic work, *AP1* inevitably embodied a rational and organized form of writing.

Interpretation and understanding

Jaspers commented in *AP1* on the relationship between understanding and interpretation:

We speak of understanding when what has been understood has been fully expressed in some movement, utterance or act. We speak of interpretation when in a given case sparse clues allow us to apply with a reasonable degree of probability certain meaningful connections that we have come to understand from elsewhere. (*AP1*: 147; *GP*: 307)

He also said: 'Yet interpretations always remain to a certain extent nothing but *guesses* [*Vermutungen*]' (*AP1*: 298; *GP*: 715).⁹

Here understanding and interpretation are construed as opposing concepts, and understanding is considered absolutely certain. In another article, Jaspers wrote: 'All such objective data, however, are always incomplete and our understanding of *any particular, real event* has to remain more or less an *interpretation* which only in a few cases reaches any relatively high degree of complete and convincing objectivity' (*KVZ*: 332; *GP*: 303). Here, interpretation is not in opposition to, but is a part of understanding. As such, it gives the following impression: 'Whereas previously Jaspers describes understanding as consisting in an immediate and direct grasp of meaningful connections, it now appears that understanding is something we construct only on the basis of observing events' (Fulford et al., 2006: 221). Jaspers' usage of understanding and interpretation seemed to be inconsistent.

If the above sentences are not considered to be contradictory, it should be construed that understanding and interpretation are ideal-typically opposite, but empirically intertwined. If understanding and interpretation are construed ideal-typically, then understanding is evident and convincing, whereas interpretation is speculative. In practice, however, understanding is often incomplete, and is complemented by speculative interpretation.

Prejudices and presuppositions

Jaspers seems to have had conflicting views with regard to presuppositions in scientific investigations. When he first established his methodology, he emphasized the significance of evident observations without presuppositions. At the same time, he wrote that 'phenomenological attitude is to be acquired only by ever-repeated effort and by the ever-renewed overcoming of prejudice' (*PPF*: 318; Jaspers, 1968: 1316) and he acknowledged the difficulty in achieving such presuppositionless observations.

In later editions of *GP*, Jaspers modified his standpoint and more explicitly acknowledged the difficulty with presuppositionless observations. He distinguished between prejudices (*Vorurteil[e]*) and presuppositions (*Voraussetzung[en]*) (see Wiltsche, 2008) and acknowledged that psychopathologists cannot do without some presuppositions. According to his later standpoint, presuppositions are 'the ground of his [the investigator's] ability to see and understand' and 'provide guiding ideas' (*GP*: 21). Jaspers thought that presuppositions were different from prejudices which

he branded as 'rigid, circumscribed' and 'wrongly taken as absolutes' (*GP*: 21). For him, what was important was to become aware of one's own presuppositions.

Phenomenologies of Jaspers and Husserl

Since Jaspers used the term phenomenology as one of the main methods of psychopathology, the relationship between his psychopathology and Husserl's phenomenology should be further investigated. There have been controversial arguments about the influence of Husserl on Jaspers; these will now be reviewed.

Traditionally, Jaspers was thought to have been influenced by Husserl (Spiegelberg, 1972).¹⁰ Berrios (1992) and Walker (1994a, 1994b) insist that Jaspers was not greatly influenced by Husserl. Wiggins and Schwartz (1995, 1997), however, strongly object, claiming that Husserl had a great influence on Jaspers.

Jaspers referred to Husserl (*AP1*; *GP*), but these references are problematic. Berrios (1992) notes that Jaspers at first mentioned Husserl's *Logische Untersuchungen* (*LU*) but deleted that reference in later editions of *GP*. In *AP1*, he certainly included 'Log. Untersuchungen, Bd. II' (*AP1*: 4n1).¹¹ According to Berrios (1992: 314), this reference was 'only up to the 1920 (second) edition'. The corresponding part of the English translation of the seventh (1959) edition, included a note: 'No new principle but a new thoroughness in the old method¹² is offered by Husserl in his phenomenological basis for psychological enquiry.' (*GP*: 3n1). However, there is no reference to *LU*. Berrios (1992) also notes an additional change between the editions of *GP*. In later editions, Jaspers wrote:

Husserl used the term [i.e. phenomenology] initially in the sense of 'a descriptive psychology' in connection with the phenomenon of consciousness; in this sense it holds for our own investigations also, but later on he used it in the sense of 'the appearance of things' (*Wesensschau*) which is not a term we use in this book. Phenomenology is for use purely an *empirical method of enquiry* maintained solely by the fact of *patients' communications*. (*GP*: 55n1)

These sentences were not present in the corresponding part of the first edition (*AP1*: 24). Berrios (1992) concludes that Jaspers eventually rejected the method of Husserl's phenomenology.

It should be noted that Husserl also changed his standpoint throughout the course of his investigation. First, he attempted 'to base logic and arithmetic on psychology', but in *LU* he abandoned psychologism and 'argued that logic is not reducible to psychology' (Inwood, 2005: 408). Husserl 'proceeded to outline the idea of a pure logic purged of psychological admixtures' (Spiegelberg, 1976: 95). In *LU* he named his own study phenomenology (Spiegelberg, 1976: 103). Later he addressed the problem of other minds and summarized his idea around 1930 (Inwood, 2005: 410; Spiegelberg, 1976: 157–8). There, he used the term *Einfühlung*, but his accounts were 'by no means an orthodox interpretation of it'; he 'admitted that all our knowledge of others is to some extent indirect' (Spiegelberg, 1976: 158). Husserl changed his opinion once again in later years, but this point is tangential to the present study and will not be addressed here.

Walker (1994a, 1994b) investigated Husserl's standpoint in *LU* and compared it with Jaspers' phenomenology. Walker analysed overall arguments in *LU* and stressed that Husserl had already moved away from psychologism at the time of *LU*. Walker also notes Husserl's regret for the misunderstandings of the first edition of *LU* after its publication in 1900 and 1901. In the preface of the second edition published in 1913, Husserl repeatedly addressed the misunderstandings of his

work. He regretted ‘my misleading account of phenomenology as descriptive psychology’ (*LU*: I. 12–13; cited in Walker, 1994b: 256), since he wrote in the first edition ‘(p)henomenology is descriptive psychology’ (*LU*: II. 24n1; cited in Walker, 1994b: 256). He corrected this to: ‘if psychology is given its old meaning, phenomenology is not descriptive psychology’ (*LU*: II. 23; Husserl, 1970: 261). Walker (1994a: 128) explains: ‘Jaspers’s psychopathological phenomenology is a descriptive empirical psychology of real experiences, while Husserl’s phenomenology of pure logic is a descriptive, eidetic psychology of ideal essences.’ Walker insisted that Jaspers mistakenly adopted Husserl’s methodology as ‘descriptive psychology’, but no significant influence from Husserl was evident.

Moreover, there is another problem which concerns the whole of Jaspers’ arguments on phenomenological method as a way of understanding patients’ psychic states: the phenomenological method in *LU* was not a method for understanding other minds. Empathy was not discussed thematically in *LU*. A phenomenological method in *LU* ‘was *not meant to apply to the analysis of other minds*’ (Berrios, 1992: 318, original italics). If someone wanted to apply such a phenomenological method to psychopathology, ‘one would have to demand a “phenomenological attitude” from the patient’ (Langenbach, 1995: 217). Langenbach continues somewhat ironically: ‘This may be clinically achievable only by a lucky chance, e.g. the mental illness of a phenomenologist with preserved abilities of introspection and communication’ (p. 217). Luft (2008: 49) claims that applying a phenomenological attitude to abnormal psychic experiences is in itself contradictory.

Jaspers did not seem to mind these problems. He acknowledged that good self-descriptions were rare and carried out ‘only in very favourable conditions’ (*PFP*: 320; Jaspers, 1968: 1317), for instance, by ‘highly educated and intelligent patients’ (*PFP*: 320n2). But he also wrote: ‘(w)hether we are representing our own past psychic experiences or those of other people is immaterial’ (*PFP*: 319; Jaspers, 1968: 1317). This is evidently different from Husserl’s position. Therefore, as Walker acknowledges (1995b: 254), we cannot consider Husserl as the origin of Jaspers’ use of phenomenology as empathic understanding.

Walker faces harsh criticism from Wiggins and Schwartz (1995, 1997), who claim there was a strong influence from Husserl on Jaspers, and insist that ‘Jaspers adopted Husserl’s notions of intuition, description, and presuppositionlessness’ (Wiggins and Schwartz, 1997: 15). Fulford and colleagues (2006) also maintain that Jaspers’ conceptual framework was significantly influenced by Husserl.

However, even those who see a strong influence from Husserl on Jaspers acknowledge that the phenomenology proposed by Jaspers is not the same as that of Husserl. Spiegelberg (1972: 184) writes, ‘Jaspers did not simply borrow his version of phenomenology from others’. Spiegelberg also states that ‘presentification’ (*Vergegenwärtigung*) of Jaspers is different from Husserl’s phenomenological intuition.

‘Presentification’ (*Vergegenwärtigung*) is certainly not a primary component of the phenomenological method as envisaged, for example, by Husserl although he may mention it in connection with the intuitive fulfillment of our intentions or in ‘experiments’ in freely varying imagination. ... Jaspers does not make any attempt to describe it [*Vergegenwärtigung*] explicitly ... (Spiegelberg, 1972: 184)

Spiegelberg argues that Jaspers’ way of receiving the patient’s self-description was indirect and did not comprise phenomenological intuition. Luft (2008: 37n15) also notes that Jaspers’ use of the term *Vergegenwärtigung* was naive and different from Husserl’s use. Additionally, Spiegelberg comments that ‘demarcation’ (*Begrenzung*) was ‘related to concept formation in the customary sense’ and ‘not peculiar to philosophical phenomenology’ (Spiegelberg, 1972: 185). Wiggins and Schwartz also write about the difference between Husserl and Jaspers.

Husserl and Jaspers' methods differed in the following ways: (1) Husserl's phenomenology is an eidetic philosophy while Jaspers' is an empirical science; (2) Husserl's phenomenology employs self-reflection while Jaspers' uses empathy and understanding; and (3) Husserl requires the direct intuitive givenness of mental processes while Jaspers requires the less direct, intuitive *Vergegenwärtigung* of patients' mental processes. (Wiggins and Schwartz, 1995: 332, original italics)

Fulford and colleagues (2006: 186) also acknowledge that 'Jaspers' conception of phenomenology differed quite considerably from Husserl's'. They also say (p. 188): '... 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".'

Luft (2008) attempts to see the influence of Husserl on Jaspers, but his pursuit of phenomenological method in psychopathology in effect reveals substantial differences between Jaspers' 'phenomenology' and that of Husserl. Luft notes that Jaspers turned away from Husserl, although he holds that Jaspers' effort towards a presuppositionless attitude was under the influence of Husserl. Luft also found Husserl's note that suggested he thought the descriptive method of Jaspersian psychopathology was not similar to phenomenology in Husserl's own sense.

Some deny the influence of Husserl on Jaspers and others maintain it, but both parties agree that Jaspers developed his own version of phenomenology which was different from that of Husserl. Moreover, both sides admit that Jaspers' phenomenology is synonymous with descriptive psychology and is therefore empirical, whereas the thrust of Husserl's phenomenology is *Wesensintuition*. In effect, there exists an agreement that Jaspers' phenomenology was different from Husserl's.

The actual point of the controversy is on the relationship between the first edition of Husserl's *LU* and Jaspers' subsequent arguments, and, in particular, the position of the first edition of *LU* within Husserl's changing standpoints. Wiggins and Schwartz (1997) draw attention to Husserl's description in the first edition which equated phenomenology with descriptive psychology. According to this interpretation, Jaspers adopted the standpoint of the first edition of *LU* correctly. In contrast, Walker (1994a, 1994b) emphasizes that Husserl had already moved away from descriptive psychology in the first edition of *LU*. Thus, Walker regards Husserl's reference to 'descriptive psychology' as a slip of the pen. The basis of Walker's argument was that Husserl had abandoned psychologism.

There is disagreement about the extent of influence on Jaspers that the first edition of Husserl's *LU* exerted; however, this disagreement derived from divergent interpretations of *LU*, not from Jaspers. This remains an important matter in philosophy that cannot be solved within the scope of psychopathology¹³.

The above controversy does not change the common opinion that Jaspers' phenomenology is different from Husserl's phenomenology in its full-fledged form. To summarize and conclude this section, it can reasonably be stated that Jaspers' 'phenomenology' was different from Husserl's.

Jaspers and Dilthey on understanding

Dilthey, like Husserl, was also regarded as a theoretical forerunner of Jaspers. Jaspers referred to Dilthey's work *Ideen über eine beschreibende und zergliedernde Psychologie* (1894; *IBZP*). Jaspers distinguished understanding and explanation: biological processes within the brain cannot be understood but only explained. This differentiation was similar to the famous thesis of German cultural sciences (*Geisteswissenschaften*): '(n)ature we explain, but psychic life we understand' (*IBZP*: 144; Dilthey, 2010: 119).¹⁴

Often Jaspers' distinction between understanding and explanation was attributed to Dilthey's framework. In addition, Jaspers' account of interpretation was often attributed to Dilthey's hermeneutics. Jaspers wrote about 'hermeneutic rounds' (or hermeneutic circles) in the later editions of *GP* (356), although Jaspers did not cite Dilthey. Jaspers' account of understanding and interpretation tends to be attributed to Dilthey's concepts.

This formulation was not incorrect, but it did not mean that the theoretical framework set out by Jaspers was the same as that of Dilthey. As Wiltsche (2008) notes, the terms 'understanding and explanation', if taken as catchphrases, tended to conceal the actual theoretical background behind them. The relationship between understanding and explanation is in fact 'multi-faceted' (Feest, 2010: 2).

Fulford and colleagues (2006: 219) state that 'Jaspers was merely using the Dilthean approach to introduce the distinction between understanding and explanation', but in other respects Jaspers had a different framework from that of Dilthey. Thus, the relationship between Dilthey's concept of understanding and Jaspers' psychopathology warrants further evaluation.

Dilthey's concept of Verstehen

Dilthey, who aimed to grasp human life as a whole, was against a too intellectualistic approach, and pursued how psychic experiences may be grasped by a method other than rational explanation (Bollnow, 1967: 14–15). Accordingly, in *IBZP* Dilthey investigated the methodology of understanding in the human sciences as opposed to explanation. Hermeneutic circles were not an explicit theme of this work (Misch, 1923/1964: lxxviii).

Dilthey asserted that psychic experiences are present from the beginning as a whole:

The human sciences are distinguished from the natural sciences first of all in that the latter have for their object facts that are presented to consciousness as from outside – as phenomena and as given in isolation – while the objects of the former are given *originaliter* from within as real and as a living continuum or nexus [*Zusammenhang*]. ... The lived whole [*erlebte Zusammenhang*] is primary here; the distinction among its constituent parts only comes afterward. ... (I)n psychology it is precisely the connectedness that is originally and continually given in lived experience [*Erleben*]: life presents itself everywhere only as a continuum or nexus. Psychology thus has no need for inferentially based concepts in order to establish a coherent whole relating the main groupings of mental facts. (*IBZP*: 143–4; Dilthey, 2010: 119–20)

According to Dilthey, psychic experiences were certainly present and needed no justification: epistemology is rather grounded on the psychology of our cognitive processes (*IBZP*). His standpoint in *IBZP* can be called psychologism, since he 'argued that descriptive psychology could provide a neutral foundation for the other human sciences' (Makkreel, 1999: 235). Since psychic experiences were given at first hand, the first thing we can and have to do is to describe them. The analysis of the experiences was second-hand.

In *IBZP*, Dilthey thought that it was evident that we understood each other because human beings had uniformity. He considered the diversity among people's experiences as quantitative differences; apparent qualitative differences among us were a result of such quantitative differences (*IBZP*: 229–30). From this standpoint, one can understand another person as a quantitative modification of one's own experience. Such an understanding would be accomplished by the transference (*Übertragung*) of oneself into the position of another (*IBZP*: 198–9). Although Dilthey acknowledged the possibility that one may not be able to understand another person in the case of qualitative deviations (*IBZP*: 199), such cases were not of major interest to him. At that time, understanding other minds was not a difficult problem for him.

Dilthey did not use the term '*Einfühlung*' in *IBZP*, although he wrote about the transference of oneself into the position of another. In his later work, Dilthey (1910/1992: 146) used the term '*Nacherleben*' for transference of one's position into another. In a personal notebook written around 1910, which was published posthumously in 1926, he did use the term *Einfühlung* but he distinguished it from *Nacherleben*, even though they were mutually related concepts (Dilthey, 1926/1992: 215).

It was in his later works that Dilthey changed to a more relativistic standpoint. When he tried to understand not only another person's mind but also more general cultural phenomena, psychologism proved to be an insufficient method (Bollnow, 1967: 167–8). Dilthey moved away from the psychologism of *IBZP* and turned to a hermeneutic method (Bollnow, 1967: 212; Ghaemi, 2010: 172), and 'asserted that all the human sciences are interpretive and mutually dependent' (Makkreel, 1999: 236).

Dilthey was interested in Husserl's phenomenology for a short time (around 1905), but before long he noticed that their conceptual frameworks were fundamentally different (Spiegelberg, 1976: 123).

A comparison between Dilthey and Jaspers on understanding

There are considerable differences between Dilthey's concept of understanding and that of Jaspers. Jaspers had a somewhat ambivalent attitude towards certainty of understanding, whereas Dilthey unambiguously supported self-evidence of understanding. At times, Jaspers emphasized self-evidence of understanding, yet stressed that our understanding needed further elaboration if it were to be empirically correct. For Dilthey, psychic experiences were present from the beginning and did not warrant further justification than that of itself.

In Dilthey's framework, there was no need to distinguish static and genetic understanding, because meaningful connections were given to our experiences from the beginning. Jaspers tried to single out elementary psychic phenomena at first and then to find the relationship between them.

We cannot prove that Jaspers adopted the term *Einfühlung* from Dilthey. The latter's methodology was empathic, but he did not use the term *Einfühlung* as often as generally thought. As mentioned above, Dilthey used the term *Einfühlung* in a personal notebook. A portion of this notebook is thought to have been given as a lecture about 1910 (Dilthey, 1992: 360), but there is no evidence that Jaspers heard it.

Jaspers referred only to Dilthey's 1894 work *IBZP* (*GP*: 301n1). At the same time Jaspers referred to a criticism of Dilthey's work by Hermann Ebbinghaus (1896), although Jaspers did not go into the exact details of the criticism. This reference to Dilthey cannot be found in the corresponding part of the first edition of Jaspers' book (*AP1*) or his thesis on the understandable meaningful connections (*KVZ*). Since Jaspers used the term hermeneutic circles in later editions of *GP*, there remains a possibility that Jaspers might have been influenced implicitly by Dilthey's works other than the *IBZP*.

However, taking the above differences into account, it is concluded that Dilthey's influence on Jaspers was limited. Jaspers' method of understanding is different from that of Dilthey. Moreover, the term 'empathy' was not used in Dilthey's work cited by Jaspers.

Jaspers and Simmel

Jaspers referred to Simmel's *Probleme der Geschichtsphilosophie* (1905; *PGp*) as an important work on methodological issues. At the beginning of his 1913 article, Jaspers referenced *PGp* and

Weber's *R&K* as important methodological works (*KVZ*: 329n; Jaspers, 1974: 82n1). The same references were made in later editions of *GP* (301n1).

As the title indicates, the theme of Simmel's work was the methodology of historical science; however, he emphasized the significance of the psychological approach in historical science. He investigated how psychic experiences of others can be understood.

Jaspers explicitly cited Simmel in the next part of the 1913 article, and referred to Simmel's concepts of 'understanding of *what has been said*' and 'understanding the *speaker*' (*KVZ*: 330; Jaspers, 1974, 83; see also *PGp*: 263) as an important distinction. Jaspers equated 'understanding of what has been said' with rational understanding, and 'understanding the speaker' with empathic understanding (*KVZ*: 330; Jaspers, 1974, 83; Walker, 1995b: 262).

Simmel claimed that we should try to put ourselves in another person's position and understand his/her intention in order to understand him/her, even though this method cannot perfectly reproduce another's experience (*PGp*: 262–4). He used terms such as *Mitfühlen*, *Nachbilden* and *Nacherleben*, but not *Einfühlung* (this point was also acknowledged by Walker, 1995b: 261). Simmel emphasized the role of empathy, although he did not use the term *Einfühlung*.

Jaspers' concept of empathic understanding was influenced by Simmel, although the two scholars used different terminology.

Conclusion

This paper has reviewed the methodology of Jaspers' psychopathology and has compared it with works by Husserl, Dilthey and Simmel. Understanding (*Verstehen*) emerged as the key concept in Jaspers' methodology, so this became the main focus of the study. It concentrated on the works of the scholars that Jaspers cited, but did not explore the thoughts of each scholar in depth. The aim was to delineate and discuss the extent to which each work substantially influenced Jaspers at the time when he first established his methodology. In contrast, many other studies have inadvertently included the later thoughts of scholars, to which Jaspers could not have referred before 1913.

Consequently, this paper casts doubt on the general opinion that Jaspers was under the profound influence of Husserl or Dilthey. Jaspers' method of understanding was considerably different from Dilthey's. Jaspers used the term phenomenology as a synonym for static understanding, but this usage was considerably different from Husserl's use of phenomenology. Thus, it may be assumed that both Husserl and Dilthey had only limited influence on Jaspers.

Finally, this paper pinpoints conflicting ideas and views of Jaspers on the topic of understanding. He emphasized the significance of empathic understanding and at the same time advocated rational and ideal-typical understanding.

In Part 2 of this study (to be published in *History of Psychiatry* 24(3)), an alternative view of Jaspers' methodology and its theoretical origin will be presented.

Notes

1. The following abbreviations are used in the text and Notes; see References for full details.

AP1: Jaspers K (1913/2009) *Allgemeine Psychopathologie: Ein Leitfadens für Studierende, Ärzte und Psychologen*.

GP: Jaspers K (1962/1997) *General Psychopathology*; originally published as Jaspers (1959).

IBZP: Dilthey W (1894/1964) *Ideen über eine beschreibende und zergliedernde Psychologie*; translated as Dilthey (2010).

KVZ: Jaspers K (1913/1990) *Kausale und "verständliche" Zusammenhänge zwischen Schicksal und Psychose bei der Dementia praecox (Schizophrenie)*; partially translated as Jaspers (1974).

LU: Husserl E (2009) *Logische Untersuchungen*; this is a critical edition comparing the first 1900–1 edition and the second 1913 edition, which was translated as Husserl (1970).

PPF: Jaspers K (1912/1990) *Die phänomenologische Forschungsrichtung in der Psychopathologie*; translated as Jaspers (1968).

PGp: Simmel G (1905/1997) *Die Probleme der Geschichtsphilosophie: eine erkenntnistheoretische Studie*, 2nd edn; translated as Simmel (1977).

R&K: Weber M (1903–6/1988) *Roscher und Knies und die logischen Probleme der historischen Nationalökonomie*; translated as Weber (1975).

2. *Allgemeine Psychopathologie* underwent extensive revisions, especially after the fourth edition, and the English version (*GP*) is a translation of the seventh German edition. In the present paper, citations to both *AP1* and *GP* are given for sentences which were unchanged between editions.
3. In the later editions of *GP*, Jaspers also addressed other prejudices on equal terms.
4. In all quotations from *AP1* and *GP*, original italics are followed.
5. The words ‘by empathy’ were added in the translation, but they reflect Jaspers’ intention faithfully.
6. The distinction between phenomenological understanding and the understanding of expression was not listed in the first edition (*AP1*: 147), although the understanding of expression already appeared in it (*AP1*: 132–4).
7. Such examples of ideal-typical understanding raise a problem. Fulford et al. (2006: 223) note this point and remark: ‘There are not many commentators who would regard Nietzsche’s analysis as a particularly representative example of an ideal-typical understanding This makes it surprising that Jaspers should champion Nietzsche’s account while simultaneously criticizing Freud for over simplifying matters’
8. The corresponding part in *GP*, Part Two of the book entitled ‘*verstehende Psychologie*’, was written in an even more rational and orderly manner.
9. In the later editions, Jaspers added arguments on interpretation, as the index of *GP* (895) indicates.
10. Walker (1994a: 118n1) lists many researchers who connected Jaspers’ psychopathology with Husserl’s phenomenology.
11. The original text in the first edition was: ‘Hieran reihen sich die Bücher von *Ebbinghaus*, *Titchener*, *Lipps*, die – besonders *Lipps* – die “höheren” psychischen Vorgänge mit zu behandeln suchen. – Nicht im Prinzip, aber in methodischer Reinheit neu ist die phänomenologische Grundlegung psychologischer Untersuchungen, die von *Husserl* gefordert und in einzelnen Teilen durch grundlegende Analysen verwirklicht wurde (Log. Untersuchungen, Bd. II)’ (*AP1*: 4n1).
12. ‘(T)he old method’ is not an appropriate translation, but it does not matter to the subject of this study.
13. It is difficult to evaluate the position of the first edition of *LU* even for philosophers (Inwood, 2005; Spiegelberg, 1976). Some philosophers remark that Husserl tried to overcome the dichotomy between psychologism and logicism (Saito, 2002; Spiegelberg, 1976).
14. The distinction between understanding as a method of human sciences and explanation as a method of natural science was already present in the mid-nineteenth century (Phillips, 2010).

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