

**With and beyond Jaspers: intersections between contemporary approaches in phenomenologically informed psychopathology**

**Junto e além de Jaspers: intersecções entre abordagens contemporâneas em psicopatologia informada fenomenologicamente**

Victor Luis Clavisso Portugal<sup>1</sup>; Adriano Furtado Holanda<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Universidade Federal do Paraná (UFPR) - Membro do Laboratório de Fenomenologia e Subjetividade (LabFeno). E-mail: victor.portvgal@gmail.com.

<sup>2</sup> Docente no Departamento de Psicologia da Universidade Federal do Paraná (UFPR) - Coordenador do Laboratório de Fenomenologia e Subjetividade (LabFeno). E-mail: aholanda@yahoo.com.

## **Abstract**

Karl Jaspers was influential in the phenomenological psychopathology movement. Contemporary phenomenological scholarship provides fruitful propositions in psychopathology as well as renewed recognition of Jaspers' pioneering works. This paper is an attempt to give a more general account on how Jaspers' *oeuvre* stands in face of contemporary phenomenological scholarship, outlining the intersections between them. Both poles critic the reductionism of consciousness, affirm the necessary relationship with the sciences and philosophy as well as the training and effort that the field demands. Disagreements are related to Jaspersian' restricted use of phenomenology. We claim that Jaspers provides an interesting model of applying phenomenology in psychopathology that is scientifically robust without losing the due primacy of experience in both conceptual and clinical developments. We recognize Jaspers' limitations on the development of phenomenology, nevertheless we consider that one should go with Jaspers in his rigorous descriptions, scientific endeavors, philosophical groundings, and also beyond him, emphasizing the structures of consciousness in its embodied, temporal and intersubjective features.

**Keywords:** Karl Jaspers; Phenomenological Psychopathology; Contemporary Psychiatry; Philosophy of Psychiatry; Phenomenology.

## **Resumo**

Karl Jaspers influenciou o movimento de psicopatologia fenomenológica. O conhecimento fenomenológico contemporâneo oferece proposições frutíferas em psicopatologia bem como um reconhecimento renovado do trabalho pioneiro de Jaspers. Esse artigo busca oferecer uma consideração de como a obra de Jaspers permanece em face das pesquisas contemporâneas em fenomenologia, delineando suas intersecções. Ambos os polos criticam o reducionismo da consciência, afirmam a necessária relação com as ciências e a filosofia, bem como o treinamento e esforço que o campo demanda. Discordâncias referem-se ao uso restrito que Jaspers faz da fenomenologia. Nós afirmamos que Jaspers provê um modelo interessante de aplicação da fenomenologia na psicopatologia que é cientificamente robusto sem perder a primazia na experiência em desenvolvimentos conceituais e clínicos. Reconhecemos as limitações de Jaspers referente ao desenvolvimento da fenomenologia, entretanto consideramos que se deve ir com Jaspers em suas descrições rigorosas, empenho científico, fundamentações filosóficas, e também ir além dele, enfatizando as estruturas da consciência em suas características corporificadas, temporais e intersubjetivas.

**Palavras-chave:** Karl Jaspers; Psicopatologia Fenomenológica; Psiquiatria Contemporânea; Filosofia da Psiquiatria; Fenomenologia.

## Introduction

Just over one century ago, a movement whose impacts were going to be felt until the present days was beginning to sparkle in Psychopathology. This movement has developed itself from phenomenological philosophy, initially elaborated by a certain *Zeitgeist* in the final decades of the 19th century in the Austro-German philosophical community, ranging from background authors like Franz Brentano and Carl Stumpf to the work of Edmund Husserl (Spiegelberg, 1965; Frechette, 2019). The Phenomenological Movement was, in addition, composed by many other authors, such as Edith Stein, Merleau-Ponty and Heidegger; even though all these names are examples of contemporary philosophers, the movement was also built by authors outside the philosophical field, mainly in Psychology and Psychiatry (Spiegelberg, 1972). Names that marked the first half of the 20th century like Karl Jaspers, Eugène Minkowski, David Katz and Ludwig Binswanger are also highlighted as strong contributors to the body of knowledge in phenomenologically informed psychology and psychiatry (Carel, 2011; Messas, Tamellini, Mancini, & Stanghellini, 2018). Although each of those authors have their theoretical specificities, one could say that the underlying project was to offer a response to a certain physicalist psychopathology and neurology that mainly dominated the field since the 1850s (Fuchs, 2014). The contrary proposal to this dominating view was a phenomenological approach to the psychopathological object and to the development of a science that, if it wanted to build itself rigorously, dealing with the complex phenomena of life and consciousness, should necessarily build up on the experience of subjects.

According to Spiegelberg (1972) the first wave of this phenomenological psychopathology movement saw the end of its activities around the 70s, but one should not think that this approach has somehow disappeared. A new wave of Psychiatrists and Psychologists interested in Phenomenology has emerged in the sciences of mind, characterized by the renewal of interest in the phenomenal consciousness; in a more embodied conception of cognition; in the necessary account of experience for more methodologically advanced experimental designs; and in a more open and reciprocal dialogue with sciences in the Philosophy of Mind, Cognitive Sciences and Experimental Psychology (Fuchs, 2010; 2018; Gallagher, 2016; Gallagher & Zahavi, 2008; Parnas, Sass & Zahavi, 2013). This new interest in Phenomenology also brought –and still do–

forth a strong critique to the traditional physicalist models of consciousness that the mainstream cognitive sciences had created, a paradigmatic model that identifies consciousness (and mental disorders) with cerebral events, or even experiences as nothing more than epiphenomenal illusions lived by someone. This comprehension about human experience has resulted in supposedly “atheoretical” classificatory systems like the DSM and ICD, whose poor results in contemporary psychopathology are perceived even by those who share many of the paradigm’s propositions; one realizes this when facing research initiatives like the Research Domain Criteria (RDoC) (Parnas, 2014).

On this contemporary wave of phenomenologically-informed psychopathology, it is possible not only to observe new propositions concerning what should be the next steps of the present psychopathological field in the current context, but also a renewed interest and re-interpretation of classical authors of the phenomenological movement, whether they are only strictly philosophically-related, or even authors that composed the phenomenological psychopathology movement throughout the XXth century (Carel, 2011; Fuchs, 2010; Messas, Tamellini & Stanghellini, 2018). To illustrate this recent activities of phenomenological scholarship, one can see it in the continuously better interpretations of Husserl’s work in the Philosophy of Mind and Cognitive Sciences (Gallagher & Zahavi, 2008), as well as the “rediscovery” and crescent interest in Jaspers’ work. The latter case is the one that this paper will be working on, and it seems justifiable to do so and look over an author whose name was present in some of the most important publications concerning psychopathology, philosophy of psychiatry and phenomenology in most recent times (Fuchs, 2010; Stanghellini & Fuchs, 2013; Fuchs et al., 2014; Breyer et al., 2014; Busche & Fuchs, 2017; Stanghellini, Broome, Raballo, Fernandez, Fusar-Poli & Rosfort, 2019). Jaspers’ work has not only been brought to light due to the celebration of his *Allgemeine Psychopathologie*’s one hundred years, but also due to a growing awareness that revisiting his *oeuvre* can help or enlighten psychiatrists, philosophers and psychologists on many of the problems that the sciences of mind face today (Bormuth, 2013; Ghaemi, 2007; Kapusta, 2014; Maj, 2013; Mundt, 2013; Moskalewicz & Wiggins, 2017).

However, some questions emerge on the relationship between Karl Jaspers’ classical works and the contemporary approaches on phenomenologically informed psychopathology. Even though Jaspers’ importance has been recently reconsidered, is it possible to say that the author provides an interesting model even for the present days?

Are there any differences/similarities between his original proposal and the ones of contemporary authors and, if so, what are they? This paper attempts to clarify Jaspers' current position in contrast with its contemporary scholarship, as well as some examples of contemporary phenomenologically informed psychopathology.

After analyzing some important points of Jaspersian Psychopathology as well as illustrate current debates on psychopathology, phenomenological psychology, philosophy of psychiatry and applied phenomenology, we pretend with that to defend the claim that despite various limitations regarding Jaspers' reading of the great developments of the phenomenological movement (in philosophy and psychopathology), his work is still a very interesting example on current debates, not only for his historical first steps towards a phenomenological psychopathology, but also because of his scientific rigorousness, his application of phenomenology and his comprehension of the human being as an integral being whose psychopathological states/symptoms are not natural entities, but partially abstract and flexible ones, i.e. moments wholly lived by a living organism.<sup>3</sup> In addition, psychopathology today should take those important attributes of Jaspers and further consider and emphasize the various structures of consciousness, as its temporal, embodied, intersubjective features, something greatly highlighted by contemporary authors.

### **Karl Jaspers Until Today**

The well-known work of Karl Jaspers demands no introduction to those who are interested in Phenomenology or Psychopathology. Indeed “no student of the development of phenomenological psychopathology would think of contesting Jaspers' historic role in initiating a new phenomenological trend in this field” (Spiegelberg, 1972, p. 173). The German thinker has initially made his primary steps in Medicine in the first years of the XXth century, when he eventually came to learn about the state of art of the main approaches of Psychiatry in his time (Berrios, 1992). “I wanted to recognize what was possible; medicine opened, so it seemed to me, the widest field with the unity of the

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<sup>3</sup> Even though in the beginning of the century there were already authors who thought about applying phenomenology in Psychopathology (for example the 1912 *Zeitschrift für Pathopsychologie*, with contributions by names like Bergson, Külpe and Specht), Jaspers and both his 1912 paper *die Phänomenologische Forschungsrichtung in der Psychopathologie* and his book *Allgemeine Psychopathologie* (2013) are considered the head starters of a more “systematic” way into the movement.

natural sciences and humans as objects” (Jaspers, 1977, p. 11). In the very rich scientific and academical *Stimmung* provided by the Psychiatric Clinic in the University of Heidelberg under the supervision of Franz Nissl, what the young doctor encountered was a field without theoretical union (Janzarik, 1986). “Psychiatry had no common language and no conceptual anchoring analogous to the role of pathophysiology in relation to clinical medicine” (Jablensky, 2013, p. 239). While some authors believed in a strictly physical approach to mental disorders, others tended to view it through a “psychical totality” of consciousness (Fuchs, 2014). Even though a great number of psychiatrists were actually more preoccupied in explaining experience and mental disorders neurologically, following the classic neurologist Wilhelm Griesinger quote that “mental disorders are cerebral disorders”, still reigned then a psychopathology marked by heterogeneous ways of accessing the mental life without a proper methodological thinking on how to get this access (Beumont, 1992; Maj, 2013; Mundt, 2013).

However, on the beginning of the 20th century this “physicalist fever” that struggled to dominate the sciences of mind started to diminish. “The somatic paradigm neither offered a satisfactory explanation for the majority of mental disturbances nor provided effective forms of treatment” (Fuchs, 2014, p. 77). The real crisis developed when it was realized that Griesinger’s program had no chance of early fulfillment, and that it would not do to merely wait for the progress of brain pathology in order to pin down the anatomical and physiological changes that went along with mental abnormalities (Spiegelberg, 1972, p. 92). Psychopathology urgently needed a new proposal that went beyond the reductionist somatic bias. It was in the midst of this crisis and dissatisfaction with the models of consciousness that philosophers, psychiatrists and psychologists turned themselves to Phenomenology, an innovative thought that was also very skeptical about any kind of reductionism of human life, giving special consideration to a novel way of thinking about consciousness, intentionality and human experience (Jaspers, 1912). Jaspers (1997) utilized the Husserlian Phenomenology in order to formulate a psychopathological system that could primordially account for the human experience through detailed descriptions of what could indirectly be accessed of someone’s consciousness. Jaspers (1912; 1997) drew upon Husserl’s Logical Investigations, in which Husserl (1900/1975) (and consequently Jaspers) considered – even though momentary – Phenomenology as a *Descriptive Psychology*. Nevertheless, “It is important to realize that Jaspers did not simply borrow his version of

phenomenology from others –and certainly not from any philosopher” (Spiegelberg, 1972, p. 184). In Jaspers’ own words “Phenomenology is for us purely an empirical method of enquiry maintained solely by the fact of patients communications” (Jaspers, 1997, p. 55).

Jaspers’ challenges and accomplishments are those of formulating a psychopathological system with a wider and richer comprehension of the human experiential life, equally preserving rigor and objectivity of a proper robust science. A General Psychopathology should for Jaspers “[...] clarify our knowledge of the fundamental facts and the numerous methods used; it should systematize this knowledge into comprehensible form and finally shape it so that it enriches the self-understanding of mankind” (Jaspers, 1997, pp. 38-39). His use of Phenomenology, although controversial in the specialized scholarship,<sup>4</sup> enabled him to enlarge the scope of the psychopathological science through a preparatory work (*Vorarbeit*) in order to enter the experiential domain (Wiggins & Schwartz, 1997). The psychopathologist could with this method perform an effortful exercise of bracketing the existent prejudices – somatic, intellectualist – in order to access the phenomena presented by the patient; this was also possible through an understanding (*Verstehen*) position that could grow an empathic relationship in the clinical context, favouring the detailed descriptions of the patients’ language, behavior and ways of being and expressing themselves in the world (Kapusta, 2014). “Since we can never perceive the psychical phenomena in others directly, as we can physical phenomena, it can only be a matter of empathic understanding [*verstehen*], to which we can be directed by enumerating in each case a series of external characteristics of the psychic situation.” (Jaspers, 1997, p. 55). The guiding comprehension in Jaspers’ work is that the human consciousness and existence could not be completely grasped by any explanatory system; something proper of human existence is characterized by its open and incomplete nature.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Even though Jaspers showed a very innovative application of phenomenology in psychopathology, it’s now reason for discussion in specialized scholarship how was his apprehension of Husserlian Phenomenology. It is possible to find in Jaspers’ works on psychopathology and phenomenology only references to the first two volumes of Husserl’s Logical Investigations, having no further commentaries on the development of Husserlian phenomenology, as well as other authors of the phenomenological movement (Stanghellini & Fuchs, 2013).

<sup>5</sup> Considering this open nature of humanity, Jaspers advises the scientists entering the field of psychopathology (that involves both social as natural sciences), that is necessary to keep an open mind for all empirical possibilities, going against the temptation of reducing human life to a common denominator (Jaspers, 1997).



Now, as a consequence of Jaspers' tremendous works, the importance to retake and more carefully examine his psychopathological *oeuvre* has made itself increasingly important. Some motives for that revisit are I) the present similar problematic conceptions of the mainstream paradigm in the sciences of the mind, in philosophy and psychopathology, that can be compared to what Jaspers himself confronted in his time (Maj, 2013; Stanghellini & Fuchs, 2013; Fuchs, 2014); II) the necessary philosophical and methodological discussions in psychopathology that enable one to reflect upon the metaphysical and epistemological underlying core commitments on the field (Fulford, Stanghellini & Broome, 2004; Jablensky, 2013; Maj, 2013; Mundt, 2013; Parnas, Sass & Zahavi 2013); and III) his importance for the clinical experience through an "understanding" psychopathology, which makes an effort to avoid prejudices and create a better approach towards the patient and his suffering (Häfner, 2015).

On Jaspersian' contemporary scholarship, the common view is that in many ways his work on rigorous and careful description of psychopathological states built on experience can be far more interesting than what is presented in current DSM editions (Wiggins & Schwartz, 1997). In this line of reasoning, Ghaemi (2007) establishes a severe critic of the DSM-III since its harsh transformation in the 80s, when its supposed "atheoretical" stance gave space only to a guideless "philosophy" that confirms the empirical scientific method without thinking about psychiatry's conceptual basis. The analogy here is that as in the turn to the 20th century, its last decades also saw a new enthusiasm on neuroscientific findings, succeeded by the disappointment and consequent criticism of the many limits of this supposed progress (Maj, 2013). With this critique and dissatisfaction it is possible to see the recent bold proposal of Schwartz, Moskalewicz and Wiggins (2017), in which it is the humanist Jaspers altogether with his pluralistic, descriptive and comprehensive psychopathology, and not Kraepelin and his "natural history" of diseases, that should be considered the father of contemporary psychiatry. Jaspers also has a special place in contemporaneity through his focus on first-person experience, the inter-relational and contradictory aspects of the totality of world structures, as well as a more pluralistic and fundamental search for a scientific account of psychopathology (Kapusta, 2014). Finally, Maj (2013) remarks that Jaspers' Weberian-inspired "fictitious" ideal types in psychiatric diagnosis are much more interesting than the natural entities offered by neurobiological nosology.

## Contemporary Approaches in Psychopathology

Considering the contemporary “latter wave” of a phenomenologically informed psychopathology, it is also possible to see a constant growth of the interest in and a necessary revisit to both classical and contemporary authors in the phenomenological tradition in philosophy and psychopathology. “Over the last years, we have been witnessing in the international context the emergence of what is presented as a ‘new research domain’ within the philosophical field, the so-called ‘philosophy of psychiatry’” (Basso, 2018, p. 5). One can see this development as many different authors have begun to “drawn on a host of phenomenological writings, from Husserl to Merleau-Ponty, Sartre, Gurwitsch and Heidegger” (Carel, 2011, p. 35).

This movement is aware of the possible problems of an “application” of Phenomenology, however, believes that besides being a restrict philosophical theory, Phenomenology can have a lot of consequences for both the human and social sciences. Regarding Phenomenology in Psychiatry and Psychology, the diverse and plural movement throughout the 20th century should have “[...] reassured the skeptics that there are demonstrable connections between phenomenological philosophy and such sciences as psychology and psychiatry. Moreover, it should have demonstrated that phenomenology is more than a mere philosophical theory and that it can have far reaching consequences” (Spiegelberg, 1972, p. 359). This is what has been called a mutual relationship between phenomenology and the sciences (Zahavi, 2010). As it is possible to see in the history of Phenomenology, this type of pragmatic assertion is not ill-founded; much on the contrary, since the Husserlian concept of Phenomenological Psychology<sup>6</sup> to Merleau-Ponty’s more open contact with the sciences, together with authors such as Jaspers, Minkowski, Goldstein Katz and others, one can see a possible and very necessary dialogue that tries to offer some contributions for the old empirical-transcendental debate that has been for many authors theme of discussion (for more, see Heinämaa, 2013; Zahavi, 2004)

Even though this contemporary movement holds very heterogeneous (historical and epistemological) perspectives, one can excerpt some general features of its own time

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<sup>6</sup> Husserl presented throughout his work the conceptual project of the Phenomenological Psychology (Husserl, 1977), in which it is stated the two-way possibility of accessing consciousness, one in the natural stance (Phänomenologische Psychologie), and the other in the more known transcendental stance (through the Transzendente Phänomenologie).

(Basso, 2018). One very prominent and continually exposed is the dissatisfaction of the current mainstream psychiatry, as the acknowledgment of an apparent crisis of its own commitments and presuppositions (Messas, Tamelini & Stanghellini, 2018). This psychiatry first guided by a behaviorist and positivist epistemology (influenced by logical positivism) has in the 80s adopted for itself – mainly on the occasion of the DSM-III – an even stronger physicalist position, highlighted by biological reductionism and classificatory objectivism, all through the borrowed lens of the diagnostic model taken from general medicine (Parnas, Sass & Zahavi, 2013). Contrary to the supposed “atheoretical” stance preached by the DSM, there are underlying presuppositions on what consciousness is, the line between normal and abnormal, as well as ontological and epistemological considerations about human experience and the ways of accessing it. This eventually leads to an oversimplification of Psychopathology, in which the current methodologies are “unable to capture the subtle distinctions in experience that constitute the essentials of the psychiatric object” (Stanghellini, 2013, p. 436). The group of authors here referred as this “new wave” recognizes the scientific and ethical problems of those assumptions, drawing on a critical phenomenological stance that tries to offer new conceptual frameworks that can be quite superior to the existing ones (Parnas, Sass & Zahavi, 2013; Stanghellini, 2013). Consequently, as in the cognitive sciences, by adopting this approach one takes a more holistic comprehension of consciousness and human life that cannot be reduced to the brain nor its representations, namely “treating the mind as fundamentally inseparable from the existence of our subjective experience, its biological embodiment and its situatedness in the socio-cultural world” (Froese, 2011, p. 114).

Now, this contemporary movement wants to depart from previously mistaken views. Other important features that characterize this approach, assisting it in this intertwining of both rescuing insights from phenomenological philosophy, psychiatry and psychology as well as authoring a novel way of conceptualizing psychopathology is, namely the diverse resources that those authors drawn from phenomenology. The contributors’ theoretical influences ranges from Husserl to Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty and others (Carel, 2011). However, not only they utilize more than one “guiding” author, they also operate with different concepts from different perspectives inside phenomenological

scholarship, and even outside it.<sup>7</sup> “One of the strengths of contemporary phenomenology is the rich conceptual arsenal that it offers for the analysis of the bodily aspects of human experience” (Heinämaa, 2018, p. 533). That has some consequences referring to the “tools” available for the phenomenological analysis, as well as the possibilities of ranging deeper on the various recent collaborations with the philosophy of mind (Gallagher & Zahavi, 2008), Cognitive Sciences (Fuchs, 2002; 2009; Froese, 2011), and the more recent and promising embodied and enactive approaches to consciousness (with its proper consequences for psychopathology)<sup>8</sup> (Thompson, 2007; Gallagher, 2016; Fuchs, 2018).

This crescent and most compelling relationship between Psychopathology with Philosophy and the Sciences in general is one of the main characteristics of the contemporary phenomenological approaches in psychopathology. It is possible to find an empathetic view of a necessary relationship (whether in a critical or favorable way) of psychopathology that is informed of recent scientific findings in neuroscience, as well as one that is in constant critical exercise of questioning and debating its own philosophical presuppositions (Fulford, Morris, Sadler & Stanghellini, 2003; Fulford, Stanghellini & Broome, 2004). The interdisciplinarity of philosophy, the humanities, natural and social sciences is therefore seem as a requirement if one wants to effectively proceed towards a more integral and satisfactory attempt of exploring humanity in all its cultural, biological, subjective and existential totality (Fuchs, 2002; 2004; Parnas & Sass, 2008; Parnas, Sass & Zahavi, 2013)

Therefore, within contemporary phenomenologically informed psychopathology, it is possible to see an approach that draws on the phenomenological method in order to formulate and develop a program of research that gives the due importance to the first-person perspective of the patient’s experience through careful descriptions of their discourse. However, if only that was accounted as phenomenology, it would doubtless be a reductionist account of phenomenological science and its various possibilities. Phenomenology, more broadly understood, comprehends consciousness and the human-life as involved in a nexus of continuous lived experiences manifesting and becoming itself in a certain temporal flow (Parnas & Sass, 2008; Fuchs, 2010). This experiential

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<sup>7</sup> As is the case on the contributions on analytical philosophy of mind that also provide interesting (although always subject to critic) non-reductive account of consciousness, for it see Parnas & Sass, (2008), and Gallagher & Zahavi (2008).

<sup>8</sup> For more interesting discussions about enactivism and psychopathology, see Colombetti (2013), de Haan (2017) and Fuchs (2018).

subject is also necessarily taken as an embodied intersubjective agent, marked by the totality that encompasses the relationship of a situated person in a certain social environment (Fuchs, 2011; Ratcliffe, 2018). Temporality, embodiment, intentionality and intersubjectivity are some of the structures of consciousness also explored by psychopathologists when dealing with anomalous experiences (Parnas & Sass, 2008; Fuchs, 2010; Fuchs & Schlimme, 2009; Parnas, Sass & Zahavi, 2013). Not a completely physical brain-centered consciousness, neither a “ghost in the machine”, contemporary phenomenological psychopathology understands the *being-in-the-world* as continuously affected by the vulnerability of human existence, in the everlasting dual and controversial tension between the lived body (*Leib*) that one is, and the physical body (*Körper*) that one has (Fuchs, 2010; Heinämaa, 2013). “It its connected with recognition for the ambivalent, conflict-ridden form of our existence, whereby as bodily organisms we can nevertheless confront our own side of nature and turn our body into an object” (Fuchs, 2018, p. 282).

The last important feature of the new phenomenological approaches to psychopathology is the continuously highlighted necessary both arduous training of and a continuous effort in the psychiatric expertise.<sup>9</sup> With this training, the learning practitioners face themselves with the necessary bracketing of presuppositions about the patients’ suffering as well as the causality of events that led them to that encounter, being therefore able to establish a more conscious relationship through rapports and interviews (Parnas & Sass, 2008). Not only clinical practice, as Stanghellini and Fiorillo (2015) very strongly remark, it seems very important for psychopathology to “re-become a fundamental column of psychiatric training” (p. 107), providing psychiatrists with a method to better perceive the patients’ biographical, individual and unique structure of experience, enabling the presented phenomena to be carefully described and afterwards explained. Such an expertise resulted of both theoretical and practical training is, for Parnas, Sass and Zahavi (2013), possible in a two-years residence, involving psychopathology lessons and discussions between peers after real face-to-face interviews with patients. That training and personal effort of trying to deal with the therapists’ own preconceptions about their actions and the people that they are daily interacting makes it

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<sup>9</sup> Jaspers (1997) had already discussed the necessary account of the combination of a bold psychopathological training - studying both the natural and the human sciences -, and always performing a critically account (assisted by philosophy) of its own methodology and presuppositions. Phenomenology has here a special place in dealing with the various prejudices one has in the psychopathological field, enabling then through the phenomenological method the relation to others in a more dialogical way.

possible a more fruitful therapeutic relationship, a better and more effective communication that is mediated by the present atmosphere (*Stimmung*) and corporeal resonance, rather than only symbolic language (Fuchs, 2004).

### **Jaspers Reappraised**

After considering an outline of Jaspersian psychopathology, some of its current commentators and also some of the main characteristics of the contemporary movement of phenomenologically informed psychopathology, we would like now to start making the case for better sketching Jaspers' importance in the XXIth century regarding the use of phenomenology. It should not be taken lightly the importance of recent discussions on applied phenomenology, i.e. the discussion of what are –if there are– the prerequisites of doing or using phenomenology outside philosophy, namely in Psychology, Psychiatry, Nursery, Anthropology and so on –with contented disputes concerning classical researchers like Amedeo Giorgi, Van Manen and others-. (Finlay, 2009; Morley, 2010; Zahavi, 2018; 2019). Questions concerning the program and application of phenomenology both inside and outside philosophy raise various problems, and the diverse solutions that different authors in the phenomenological movement have tried to give seem to be also something debatable. “This diversity finds reflection in phenomenological research, where the application of philosophical ideas to empirical project provokes both uncertainty and controversy” (Finlay, 2009, p. 6). The debate of an application outside the strict philosophical field seems to go through major problems, namely the very concept of phenomenology, its tension between either a descriptive or interpretive method, and the question of whether phenomenology brings anything to sciences or to the non-philosophical field in general (Finlay, 2009).

In this current debate, one could very well point to Jaspers as an interesting example to be observed in the history of the phenomenological movement. “Some of the first influential applications of phenomenology were in the domain of psychopathology and experimental psychology. Already in 1912, Jaspers published a short article outlining how psychiatry could profit from Husserlian phenomenology” (Zahavi, 2019, p. 13). Jaspers is displayed as an author that not only performed (even if momentary, although with wide repercussion) a very robust position towards a phenomenological field of research outside philosophy, for instance in Psychopathology, but that also showed the

possibility of carrying out capable and fruitful research while not fully compromising himself with a Husserlian transcendental enterprise (Spiegelberg, 1972). In all of his psychopathological works in which Jaspers quoted phenomenological philosophy, the author made it clear his theoretical decisions (for example not adopting Husserl's eidetic reduction), as well as his not so strong concessions with other aspects of Phenomenology as a philosophical program (Jaspers, 1912; 1977; 1997).

I assumed Husserl's Phenomenology, which in its outset was named descriptive psychology, as method, retaining it under resistance of its further developments regarding the *Wesenschau*. To describe the appearances in Consciousness, what the patients internally lived, it proved itself as possible and profitable. Not only delusions of the senses, also delusional lived experiences, modes of self-consciousness, the feelings could be so clearly grasped by the self-descriptions of the patients be very clearly grasped, that they in other cases could be recognizable with certainty. Phenomenology was a research method (Jaspers, 1977, p. 23).

If on one hand Jaspersian scholarship has arduously debated the status of Jaspers regarding Husserlian phenomenology and also if Jaspers himself could be considered a phenomenologist (Spiegelberg, 1972; Stanghellini & Fuchs, 2013; Walker, 1994), on the other hand one can find in the very history of the phenomenological movement different authors –with almost uncontested affiliation to phenomenology– that not necessarily accepted all the claims of Husserlian's Transcendental Idealism. But that could be said not only outside the strictly philosophical field of “applied phenomenology”, as we have been tried to show with examples from psychopathology, but also inside the very different philosophical circles that emerged throughout the movement. “But already much earlier, one can find phenomenologists who were unequivocal in their rejection of Husserl's transcendental turn” (Zahavi, 2019, p. 2). One could observe for an example what was called “Munich Circle”, namely what was considered Husserl's early phenomenology, composed by students like Adolf Reinach, Alexander Pfänder, Roman Ingarden and others, whose interests in “realistic phenomenology” were exactly in the intersection between psychology and philosophy, dealing with themes such as the study of acts and objects of experience and meaning (Spiegelberg, 1965).

This is evidence of how interesting Jaspers' project of a “ phenomenological direction of research” –with all his theoretical, methodological and historical complications– was and still should be defended and stood by, not only because of its historical significance, but also his various robust, rich and propositive characteristics,

such as its scientific rigorousness to found a psychopathological science that builds up on the subjects' experience altogether with his ontological comprehension of the human being as a being-in-the-world, whose experience cannot be reduced to neurological explanandum, being then need a combination and collaboration of human and natural sciences –always assisted by philosophy– in order to deal with the human being as an object. What is offered by Jaspers is not only an approach in which one should deal in a certain way with the subject in the clinical context, neither only descriptions of the subjects' behavior and statements or even only a philosophical account of consciousness in relation to abnormal psychical phenomena; Jaspers pursues with this Psychopathology a wider goal that maybe was not yet overcome, to “[...] fit the whole together” (Jaspers, 1997, p. 39); namely, to clarify methods and facts used, trying to systematize all of this in a certain way that can make our understanding of humanity richer. Through that, Jaspers (1997) claims the necessity of furthering knowledge, not against the others who previously came, but in fact to offer a novel intertwinement of a scientific account of human being and its incomplete and irreducible nature.

## **Conclusions**

In this paper, we attempted to map some of the most important differences and similarities of Jaspers' initial psychopathological project in contrast with the contemporary approaches of phenomenologically informed psychopathology, as well as Jaspers' importance in various discussions ranging from philosophy of psychiatry to applied phenomenology. The most significant points will be described in the following. First, both the work of Jaspers and the contemporary schools share a common *leitmotiv*, namely a very strong critique against the reductionism of consciousness, be it either a physicalist brain centered account or even its representational, epiphenomenal, behavioral or cognitive counterparts. While Jaspers faced the explosion of neurology and the “brain-mythologies” of his time, contemporary mainstream psychopathology faces today a concept of consciousness that is still reduced to the brain (or a more dynamical account of it), now assisted by neuroimaging scans and more physiological knowledge that reinforces the idea that human existence can only be reduced to certain states of neuronal activity. This doesn't mean the adoption of an anti-scientific stance by the critics of this research program, since both Jaspers and the new approaches recognize a necessary better



dialogue between psychopathology, philosophy, and the human/natural sciences, but rather a philosophical and methodological critique against it. For both Jaspers and the contemporary authors, in order to perform such a task of critique and at the same time provide something in return, it is demanded by the students of this field both rigorous theoretical (scientific, philosophical, methodological) and clinical training, as well as personal effort to keep on an area which requires a continuously self-critical development and a keen attitude with both theory and the clinical insights/experiences.

Referring to the concept of Consciousness, it is possible to find in contemporary literature such a definition that is directly linked to the Jaspersian' phenomenological account of a being-in-the-world characterized by its temporal flow, altogether with its experiential "ownness" feeling of "what is it like" to exist. However, going beyond Jaspers assumed limited reading of Husserl, contemporary authors employ broader insights of both phenomenology and consciousness, ranging from different authors of the phenomenological movement. Not only Phenomenology offers a careful descriptive attempt of first-person perspective in order to approach the patients' experiences (as Jaspers would advocate), it also offers various accounts of the embodied subject, whose experiential structures are those of an intersubjective, embodied and temporal consciousness rooted in a pre-reflexive *Lebenswelt* (life-world). This more generous understanding of Phenomenology is marked by a range of authors of the phenomenological movement (including the later Husserl himself) that in different ways followed or adapted what one could see in the first steps of the Logical Investigations. In addition to this matter, while Jaspers explicitly opposed to Husserlian's *Wesenschau*, contemporary authors provide a more favorable account of it and its methodological consequence, as is the case with the Imaginative Variation, which when applied in psychopathology seeks to find the invariances of a particular mental disorder.

At last, even though Jaspers gave the first steps of what came to be an extraordinary movement of phenomenological research in psychopathology that today has many contemporary questions and propositions to deal with, still are both Jaspersian' work and scholarship very important – if not necessary – resources to add up on the development of this specific field. Not only Jaspers' I) bold critique against the reductionism of human consciousness and existence to objective findings, also valuable to contemporary psychopathology are II) his accounts of methodological pluralism, III) the necessary integration of psychopathology with the sciences – together with the

important IV) critical philosophical thinking to help with a better development of this relationship –, as well as V) the proper training and personal effort if one that wants to enter the psychopathological discipline. However interesting and innovative was Jaspers' reading of phenomenology for the time, his posterior indifference of Husserlian and other authors' phenomenological development limited the possibilities of his psychopathology, something that the new authors successfully avoid by bringing different concepts of classic and contemporary phenomenology to the fore. Nevertheless, not only Jaspers remains the main author that really set the proper start on phenomenological psychopathology, he is also even to our time an important resource for a careful and more expanded continuity of psychopathology, allowing the current authors to enlarge and critically build a more structured direction of research in phenomenological psychopathology. On the tension between individual experiences (non-reducible) and general classifications, Jaspers shows us how can Psychopathology engage with this matter in a scientific and rigorous way, without losing the individual uniqueness of what has perhaps for many other approaches been lost of sight: the human being.

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