

ABSTRACTS

HELEN BEEBEE and NIGEL SABBARTON-LEARY

ARE PSYCHIATRIC KINDS REAL?

The paper considers whether psychiatric kinds can be natural kinds and concludes that they can. This depends, however, on a particular conception of ‘natural kind’. We briefly describe and reject two standard accounts – what we call the ‘stipulative account’ (according to which apparently *a priori* criteria, such as the possession of intrinsic essences, are laid down for natural kindhood) and the ‘Kripkean account’ (according to which the natural kinds are just those kinds that obey Kripkean semantics). We then rehearse a more permissive account: Richard Boyd’s ‘homeostatic property cluster’ (HPC) account. We argue that psychiatric kinds can in principle count as natural kinds on the HPC account. Moreover, specific psychiatric kinds (Tourette’s, schizophrenia, etc.) can be natural kinds even if the category *psychiatric disorder* is not itself a natural kind.

Keywords: natural kind, psychiatric kind, homeostatic property cluster

DOMINIC MURPHY

COMPLEX MENTAL DISORDERS: REPRESENTATION, STABILITY AND EXPLANATION

This paper discusses the representation and explanation of relationships between phenomena that are important in psychiatric contexts. After a general discussion of complexity in the philosophy of science, I distinguish zooming-out approaches from zooming-in approaches. Zooming-out has to do with seeing complex mental illnesses as abstract models for the purposes of both explanation and reduction. Zooming-in involves breaking complex mental illnesses into simple components and trying to explain those components independently in terms of specific causes. Connections between existing practice and zooming-out are drawn, and zooming-in is criticised.

Keywords: explanation, mental illness, scientific representation, depression, reduction

JOHN McMILLAN

UNDERSTANDING AND JASPERS: NATURALIZING THE PHENOMENOLOGY OF PSYCHIATRY

In *General Psychopathology* (1997) Jaspers utilizes phenomenology as a method for investigating “individual psychic experience”. When investigating psychopathology, Jaspers claims that phenomenology aims at describing, presenting and classifying the psychic states of those with mental illness. However, Jaspers thinks we can know the psyche only via patient reports. He also believes that phenomenology should be “presuppositionless” and should not include what he calls “objective phenomena”. This paper considers the following, resulting questions. First, what does he mean by “objective” phenomena? Secondly, if the aim of phenomenology is to grasp the first person experience of a patient, is it obvious that “objective” methods should not play a role? Third: what assumptions about the nature of first person experience are revealed by Jaspers’s characterisation of phenomenology, empathy and

subjective phenomena? This article will show how we can naturalize the view of mental predicates and phenomenology that is to be found in Jaspers.

Keywords: phenomenology, Karl Jaspers, Ludwig Wittgenstein, Edmund Husserl, psychiatry, empathy

HANNA PICKARD

SCHIZOPHRENIA AND THE EPISTEMOLOGY OF SELF-KNOWLEDGE

Extant philosophical accounts of schizophrenic alien thought neglect three clinically significant features of the phenomenon. First, not only thoughts, but also impulses and feelings, are experienced as alien. Second, only a select array of thoughts, impulses, and feelings are experienced as alien. Third, empathy with experiences of alienation is possible. I provide an account of disownership that does justice to these features by drawing on recent work on delusions and self-knowledge. The key idea is that disownership occurs when there is a failure of rational control over one's mind. This produces a clash between the deliverances of introspection and practical enquiry as ways of knowing one's mind. This explanation places disownership on a continuum with more common aspects of our psychological life, such as addiction, akrasia, obsessional thinking, and immoral, selfish or shameful thoughts. I conclude by addressing objections, and exploring the relevance of my account to questions in the philosophy of psychiatry concerning the validity of our current taxonomy of symptoms, and the nature of psychiatric classification.

Keywords: agency, alien thought, classification, delusions, disownership, empathy, introspection, practical enquiry, rational control, schizophrenia, self-knowledge, thought insertion

DORIS McILWAIN

LIVING STRANGELY IN TIME: EMOTIONS, MASKS AND MORALS IN PSYCHOPATHICALLY-INCLINED PEOPLE

Psychopaths appear to be 'creatures apart' – grandiose, shameless, callous and versatile in their violence. I discuss biological underpinnings to their pale affect, their selective inability to discern fear and sadness in others and a predatory orienting towards images that make most startle and look away. However, just because something is biologically underpinned does not mean that it is innate. I show that while there may be some genetic determination of fearlessness and callous-unemotionality, these and other features of the personality may arise from developmental failures in the interpersonal reception of their emotions, needs and their sense of self. One is unlikely to be able to own inner experiences if shamed for having them, or if, having them, one does not know how to regulate and soothe. So psychopaths may learn to attend away and suppress them. Rather than a fully inherited difficulty, they may have become unable to reflect on inner states, so meta-emotions and self-reflective emotions like guilt and shame do not fully arise. They retain enough sensitivity to know their difference, and hide. I suggest that psychopaths are characterised by a nested sense of self, arising from the surprising effect of shame on these seemingly shameless characters. They do not have an integrated sense of self across context or across time or in relation to a generalised social other. With a nested sense of self, diminished intensity and scope of affective experience (in

both directly experienced and vicarious forms) they lack textured access to a personal, owned and integrated past. Thus they lack the kind of access to the past required for a motivationally compelling planning of the future. They lack the emotional investment in the future that enables us to overcome the motivation to act opportunistically and myopically. These individuals live strangely in time. They have a fugitive sense of self and live nimbly among many pasts. They present an elegant and coherent mask to the person they are addressing in the moment and generate possible futures without conviction.

Keywords: personality, psychopathy, self, mental time-travel, shame, pale affect

TIM THORNTON

PSYCHIATRIC EXPLANATION AND UNDERSTANDING

Jaspers's binary distinction between understanding and explanation has given way first to a proliferation of explanatory levels and now, in John Campbell's recent work, to a conception of explanation with no distinct levels of explanation and no inbuilt rationality requirement. I argue that there is still a role for understanding in psychiatry and that is to demystify the assumption that the states it concerns are mental. This role can be fulfilled by placing rationality at the heart of understanding without a commitment to the attempt to use rationality to shed light on interpretation and mindedness as though from outside those notions. Delusions still present a significant challenge to philosophical attempts at understanding, but this merely reflects the genuine clinical difficulties such states present.

Keywords: John Campbell, interventionism, normativity, understanding, Ludwig Wittgenstein