

Rolf Glazinski



The Role of Emotions in Psychiatric Diagnosis

Max Scheler's philosophy of feelings as a constituent part of
Kurt Schneider's theory of psychopathology.
Translated from the German by Chris Charlesworth

Third International Edition

To
My beloved Parents

*Werner and Elisabeth
Glazinski*

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Preface

Even in normal everyday life, **“feelings”** give rise to discussions, which usually center on interpersonal relationships in the professional or private sphere. Often enough, despite the best efforts of all concerned, discussions of that kind do not lead to any tangible conclusion. Psychologists, counsellors and doctors, who are concerned on a professional level with the emotional well-being of the people in their care, also report the increasing difficulty people have in dealing with their feelings.

Some philosophical assistance is therefore urgently required to help us find our way around the emotional life of human beings, which is obviously as complex as it is vulnerable. A look at the history of philosophy, however, shows that *“well into the 19th century, philosophical tradition treated emotions exclusively under the conditions of their negation, in other words as something which preferably should not have existed”*¹.

The philosopher **Max Scheler (1874-1928)** has offered a rare glimmer of light in the darkness that philosophers have cast over emotional life. With two of his major works **“Formalism in ethics and non-formal ethics of values”** (original German title: **“Der Formalismus in der Ethik und die materiale Wertethik”**)² and **“The Nature of Sympathy”** (original German title: **“Wesen und Formen der Sympathie”**)³, Scheler has helped feelings to acquire a value of their own⁴ and to establish themselves in psychiatry.

Therefore, feelings are still one of the factors shaping the fundamentals of psychopathology⁵. Not without reason Max Scheler has been called the ***philosopher of psychiatry***⁶.

One of his PhD students was none less than **Kurt Schneider (1887-1967)**, the ***Nestor of German Psychiatry after 1945***⁷, whose major work ***“Clinical Psychopathology”*** (original German title: ***“Klinische Psychopathologie”***)⁸ still influences⁹ the currently valid International Classification of Diseases (ICD 10)¹⁰. Kurt Schneider’s philosophical dissertation¹¹ gives us a very first example how Max Scheler’s phenomenology was able to influence the concept and the development of the later system of clinical psychopathology. The key focus of the current investigation is thus an attempt to explore the connections between Max Scheler’s philosophy of feelings and Kurt Schneider’s psychopathology, which in many essential aspects represent an introduction to psychiatric diagnostics in general.

In **Chapter I**, attention is given to the cardinal philosophical questions in psychiatry: the diagnostic value of feelings, the mind-body problem, the possibility of knowing other minds and the principal concept of psychiatric illness. **Chapter II** then outlines the answers of the philosopher Max Scheler and the psychiatrist Kurt Schneider. In this both their epistemological and metaphysical positions, as well as their understanding of the concept of psychiatric illness, are discussed. **Chapter III** gives an overview over Max Scheler’s phenomenology of emotional life. **Chapter IV** describes the transfer from Scheler’s philosophy of feelings into psychopathology by Kurt Schneider. The possibilities and limitations of Max Scheler’s philosophy of feelings in its application to Kurt Schneider’s clinical psychopathology are discussed. In detail, we investigate how Max Scheler’s

analysis of emotional life¹² influenced Kurt Schneider's concept of psychiatric illness, his systematics of pathological emotions¹³ and emotional illnesses¹⁴, as well as the criteria for diagnosing schizophrenia he established¹⁵. **Chapter V** reflects the results of the investigation done in this book. Some alternative views on the question of the relationship between feelings, perception and psychopathology are given.

Nearly all sources can be found in the footnotes and, where it is of particular importance for understanding, the original text has been quoted. The investigation is based on the author's unpublished graduation thesis in his main subject philosophy (*Magisterarbeit im Hauptfach Philosophie*) ***"The phenomenology of Feelings of Sympathy at Max Scheler in its importance for Kurt Schneider's Pathopsychology"*** (original German title: ***"Die Bedeutung der Phänomenologie der Sympathiegefühle im Werk Max Schelers für die Pathopsychologie der Gefühle Kurt Schneiders"***)¹⁶ and his *Philosophical Dissertation* ***"Towards Philosophy and Psychopathology of feelings with Max Scheler and Kurt Schneider, Systematic and historical considerations"*** (original German title: ***"Zur Philosophie und Psychopathologie der Gefühle bei Max Scheler und Kurt Schneider, Systematische und historische Überlegungen"***)¹⁷ at the University of Cologne. The author is very grateful to **Professor Dr. phil. Wolfgang Baßler**¹⁸, who first mentioned the importance of Max Scheler's phenomenology of emotional life for Kurt Schneider's psychopathology in personal conversation and thus gave the initial motivation to start all the necessary research over some years.

Due to the continuing scientific interest of philosophers, psychiatrists and psychologists worldwide, the third international edition of **“The Role of Emotions in Psychiatric Diagnosis”**, first published as **“Emotions in psychiatric diagnosis”**¹⁹ (original German title: **“Emotionen in der psychiatrischen Diagnostik”**)²⁰, appears again at Books on Demand, Norderstedt (Germany). In the third edition, some minor errors could be excluded.

Eschborn, in August 2018

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- 1 Fink-Eitel, Hinrich (1986), p. 521.
- 2 Scheler, Max (1980).
- 3 Scheler, Max (1973).
- 4 Lützeler, Heinrich (1947), pp. 13/14.
- 5 Gebattel, Freiherr von (1928), pp. 454/455.
- 6 Idem, *ibid.*, p. 454.
- 7 Huber, Gerd (1987a), p. 177.
- 8 Schneider, Kurt (1987).
- 9 Sims, Andrew (1991), pp. 46-51.
- 10 Dilling, H.; Mombour, W; Schmidt, M.H. (eds.) (1991).
- 11 Schneider, Kurt (1921a).
- 12 Strasser, Stephan (1956), pp. 3-13.
- 13 Machleidt, Wielant; Gutjahr, Leopold; Mügge, Andreas (1989), p. 3.
- 14 Häfner, Heinz (1996), p. 547.
- 15 Baßler, Wolfgang (1990), pp. 139-149.
- 16 Glazinski, Rolf (1993).
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Chapter I

The first chapter attempts to give an overview of questions common to philosophy and psychiatry and thus provide an introduction, albeit tentative, to the ways of thinking of these two disciplines. An introduction of this kind is necessarily incomplete, nor is it intended exhaustive in any way, but to give the reader who has no previous specialist knowledge the possibility to become familiar with the necessary fundamentals.

First, we shall focus on the intellectual connections between Max Scheler and Kurt Schneider and describe them in detail.

Max Scheler and Kurt Schneider

As we already mentioned in the foreword after completing his doctorate in medicine and post-doctoral lecturing qualifications in February 1921, Kurt Schneider wrote an additional thesis under the supervision of Max Scheler on **“Pathopsychological contributions to the psychological phenomenology of love and empathy”** (original German title: **“Pathopsychologische Beiträge zur psychologischen Phänomenologie von Liebe und Mitfühlen”**)²¹ for which he was awarded a Ph.D.

His dissertation has been published both by **Springer**²² and in the **“Journal for all the Neurology and Psychiatry”** (original German Name of the Journal: **“Zeitschrift für die gesamte Neurologie und Psychiatrie”**)²³. In the same year, Schneider published a

piece of work that was also inspired by Scheler's thinking entitled ***“Remarks on a phenomenological psychology of inverted sexuality and erotic love”*** (original German title: ***“Bemerkungen zu einer phänomenologischen Psychologie der invertierten Sexualität und erotischen Liebe”***)²⁴. On the subject of the above-mentioned works of Schneider, Scheler writes in the foreword to the second edition of his book ***“The Nature of Sympathy”*** (original German title: ***“Wesen und Formen und der Sympathie”***)²⁵:

*“In conclusion, it has been a particular pleasure to me that the first edition of this book should have received considerable attention, not only from professional philosophers and psychologists, but also among exponents of the new phenomenological approach in psychiatry and the study of sexual questions. The psychiatrist Kurt Schneider in his ‘Pathopsychological contributions to the psychological phenomenology of love and empathy’ and ‘Remarks on a phenomenological psychology of inverted sexuality and erotic love’ has made a happy extension to my original findings.”*²⁶

In the foreword of the ***third*** edition to his book ***“Formalism in ethics and non-formal ethics of values”*** (original German title: ***“Der Formalismus in der Ethik und die materiale Wertethik”***)²⁷, Scheler acknowledges Kurt Schneider's article on ***“The stratification of emotional life and the structure of depressive states”*** (original German title: ***“Die Schichtung des emotionalen Lebens und der Aufbau der Depressionszustände”***)²⁸, published in 1920, referring to it as a successful psychological application of the *“laws established on the different layers of feelings”*²⁹.

Kurt Schneider for his part, refers to Scheler in ***“Pathopsychology of feelings and drives”*** (original German title: ***“Pathopsychologie der Gefühle und Triebe”***)³⁰, which was first published in 1935 at Gustav Thieme in Leipzig and later appeared as ***“An outline of the pathopsychology of feelings and drives”*** (original German title: ***“Pathopsychologie der Gefühle und Triebe im Grundriss”***)³¹ in the form of an appendix to his ***“Clinical Psychopathology”*** (original German title: ***“Klinische Psychopathologie”***)³². He writes:

*“It is to Scheler that we owe the impressive phenomenology of the stratification of emotional life.”*³³

In his article ***“Philosophical underpinnings of the 20th century psychiatry”*** (original German title: ***“Philosophische Grundlagen der Psychiatrie des 20. Jahrhundert”***)³⁴, Dietrich von Engelhardt sums up the influence of Scheler’s analyses of emotional life on Kurt Schneider’s psychopathology as follows:

*“Scheler influences psychiatry with the links he makes between philosophy of life, phenomenology and anthropology. Kurt Schneider applies Scheler’s differentiation of emotionality and feelings to depression: he links ‘vital sadness’ to endogenous depression, ‘sadness of the mind’ to reactive depression. Anthropological psychiatry in general has been influenced by Scheler.”*³⁵

His comments are correct but by no means exhaustive. The author of this investigation sees himself faced with the task of describing the extent of Max Scheler’s philosophy of feelings on Kurt Schneider’s concept of psychopathology in a way that is both systematic and reflect its importance.

However, we shall precede this by some historical and fundamental reflections on the relationship between philosophy and psychiatry in order to be able to formulate the cardinal questions that are common to both disciplines.

On the relationship between philosophy and psychiatry

The following exposition is of necessity incomplete. A comprehensive description of the links between philosophy and psychiatry would require a separate work comprising several volumes. At this point, therefore, only two aspects will be highlighted, since they are of particular importance for understanding the intellectual links between Max Scheler and Kurt Schneider.

The first aspect is of a general nature and is intended merely to clarify the fact that there are reciprocal connections between philosophy and psychiatry. A clarification of that kind seems to be particularly necessary because, in the wake of biological psychiatry, the successes of which are considerable, the philosophical implications of the subject seem to have been forgotten.

In particular, the phenomenological method established by the mathematician and philosopher **Edmund Husserl (1859-1938)**³⁶, which was anticipated by Max Scheler and, thanks to his work, incorporated into psychopathology, has enriched the methodology of psychiatry. Although it is not possible in this investigation to go into the ground working work achieved by Edmund Husserl, we will nevertheless outline, at least briefly, how Max Scheler made use of this phenomenological approach in his thinking.

Principal thoughts

First, it should be borne in mind that, since Hippocrates, Plato and Aristotle, links have always been made between philosophical questions and psychiatric and medical problems. Therefore, the medical historian **Dietrich von Engelhard** points out:

“The link between psychiatry, or general medicine, and philosophy goes back to the Antiquity. In the Corpus Hippocraticum, as well as in the works of Plato and Aristotle and other philosophers of the Greco-Roman world, there are interpretations of causality, the mind-body relationship, and the theory of affects, personality and psychological disorders, some features of which still form the basis of our contemporary interpretations.”³⁷

Although it is not possible to follow more closely the progression of this relationship throughout history, if philosophical and psychiatric problems are more closely interwoven than is generally assumed, we must ask from what common source these two disciplines are apparently fed. This source is nothing less than the structure of cognition itself, which precedes any attempt to solve a problem of any individual discipline.

If philosophers enquire into the conditions underlying cognition and perception, psychiatrists, like all representatives of an individual discipline, try to find a solution to the problems of their particular discipline, using the method at their disposal, which ultimately is nothing more than a particular instance of human perception. Thus, it is possible that elements of a structure of perception shaped by philosophers have wittingly or unwittingly entered into psychiatry. In the preface to their book