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CLINICAL PSYCHOPATHOLOGY

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Clinical psychopathology aims at the identification of symptoms that are significant in view of nosographical distinctions. Schneider affirms that this discipline aims at becoming the “psychopathological doctrine of symptoms and diagnosis” - the link between descriptive psychopathology and nosography. It restricts the task of the psychopathological inquiry to the search for diagnostically relevant symptoms being interested in eliciting first and foremost those abnormal psychic phenomena that help the clinician to establish a reliable diagnosis.
Although clinical psychopathology is at risk of flattening the practice of psychopathology to that of nosographical diagnosis, it also serves an epistemologically important function since it is concerned with generalizing the individual case and subsuming it into a general category. It complements the view of descriptive psychopathology (which keeps the individual and its complexity in focus) in that the patient here is also an instantiation of a general category, rather than merely a primordially real individual. Psychopathology is not only about the description of phenomena idiosyncratically taking place in a single individual - although its first aim is to do justice to the *individuum*. It also envisions the individual as an exemplar of a given general type.
Psychopathology is a kind of scientific knowledge since it allows generalizations. It keeps in tension the knowledge about the real individual (e.g this person with schizophrenia) with the horizonal knowledge of an abstract kind (what psychopathology knows about the condition called 'schizophrenia'). Knowledge emerges as the mutual enlightenment between the individual and the genre he is attributed to.

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