



Existenz

Volume 16, No 1, Spring 2021

ISSN 1932-1066

Psychologie der Weltanschauungen A Current Outlook from the Perspective of Psychology

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Abstract: *Psychologie der Weltanschauungen* (psychology of worldviews) published in 1919 is Jaspers' first philosophy book. Worldviews are seen as the whole of one's outlook consisting of one's knowledge and values, which guide one's view of nature, of peoples, and of one's own life. A psychology of worldviews, then, is the investigation of psychological contents and structures, of psychological development conditions, and of consequences resulting from different worldviews. Jaspers' book is based on a theoretical concept of the Hegelian triad, roughly speaking, as a thesis (here: attitudes), an antithesis (world models) and a synthesis (life of the spirit). Although Jaspers' main intention is to recognize and to live philosophy as one's own existence, his psychology of worldviews can be applied for an analysis of the contents and effects of worldviews in religion, politics, economy, and culture in general; namely an effort to understand as to the impact of worldviews in shaping everyday life expectations and outcomes for any one person and in societies.

Keywords: Jaspers, Karl; *Weltanschauung*; worldview; ideology; culture; values; enthusiasm; rationality; cross-cultural comparison; thinking.

Paradoxically, Karl Jaspers' coming into his own in the study of philosophy came about in a book that has "psychology" in its title, namely *Psychologie der Weltanschauungen* (psychology of worldviews) that was first published in 1919.¹ Similarly paradoxical is the fact that Jaspers rejected any normative content (*PW* vii) yet the book is full of normative stances, in favor of *Bildung*,²

of thinking, of knowledge, and of intensity – the latter endorsing enthusiasm in science, communication, life and love, based on values that refer to transcendence.³ *Psychologie der Weltanschauungen* is a classical German

¹ Karl Jaspers, *Psychologie der Weltanschauungen*, Berlin, DE: Springer Verlag, 1971. [Henceforth cited as *PW*, all translations are by the author]

² The German word *Bildung* connotes more than education: it comprises education, broad, deep and structured knowledge of valuable subject matters, thinking for oneself, interest in such valuable subject matters, taste, reflection, intellectuality, endeavor, appreciation, integrity.

³ An earlier version of this essay was presented at the 42nd Annual Meeting of the Karl Jaspers Society of North America in 2021, and is published in German language as Heiner Rindermann, "Karl Jaspers und die Psychologie der Weltanschauung," in *Karl Jaspers: Grundbegriffe seines Denkens*, eds. Hamid Reza Yousefi, Werner Schüßler, Reinhard Schulz, Ulrich Diehl, Reinbek, DE: Lau Verlag 2011, pp. 251–63. I would like to thank the participants at the KJSNA session for their comments, which were helpful in the development of this essay. In particular, I would like to thank Ruth A. Burch for her valuable comments on the draft of the manuscript.

philosophy book, that is based on the traditions of G. W. F. Hegel (1770–1831), Wilhelm Dilthey (1833–1911) and Immanuel Kant (1724–1804), while at the same time Jaspers linked them to enthusiastic thinkers such as Søren Kierkegaard (1813–1855) and Friedrich Nietzsche (1844–1900) and was opening thus the way to existence philosophy in its representation through Karl Jaspers (1883–1969), Martin Heidegger (1889–1976), in its French tradition of Jean-Paul Sartre (1905–1980) and Albert Camus (1913–1960), and others.

The Meaning of Worldview

Karl Jaspers understands *Weltanschauung* as the whole of an outlook consisting of knowledge and values, which guides one's view of the world and of people and of one's own life. He does not offer a precise definition of the word, thereby creating an undetermined and floating being-in-suspense (*Schwebendes*) that corresponds to his philosophical conception. In this essay I will try to give clearer and easier understandable definitions of the terms. My approach aims at the same time to present Jaspers' position and to make the concept of a psychology of worldviews fruitful for future research and reflection.

A worldview contains descriptive knowledge about the world (as in geography, physics, biology, and so on), the human being (with regard to history, soul and mind) and spiritual ideas (interpretation patterns), about matters that are objective-external (the other, the world, other people, images of the world and of human beings) as well as about subjective matters (self-images), about epistemic assumptions regarding knowledge itself (knowledge acquisition and knowledge validity) and normative evaluations (good *versus* bad, beautiful *versus* unattractive, important *versus* unimportant, meaning *versus* nonsense). Worldviews shape humans' view of the world, of themselves and their culture. Worldviews create meaning and guide the actions of those who share them. By shaping culture and society, worldviews also influence indirectly the thinking, life, and actions of those who do not share them.

Worldviews include religious and philosophical perspectives, which Jaspers particularly examines in this book, for example, Christianity, idealism, empiricism, and stoicism, but he also discusses political perspectives, for example, Marxism and fascism in his 1931 book, *Die geistige Situation der Zeit*.

In the Jaspersian concept of worldview it is of central importance that, what I call a "real" worldview

can only be one that is practiced in one's own life. Psychologically seen, one could thus distinguish between merely communicated worldviews and actual, lived ones. For example, in a 2006 study by Arthur Brooks an astonishing example of divergence between communicated and actual, lived worldviews emerged. Contrary to common assumptions, political conservatives in the U.S. donate more money to charity than their liberal progressive counterparts, even within the same income brackets; they also donate more blood. Progressives publicly advocate helping others through others (government, society, organizations), while conservatives advocate helping others through private individuals and practice it themselves.⁴

Development and Use of the Term "Weltanschauung"

The term *Weltanschauung* was first used in the Romantic period. In the first decades of the twentieth century, worldviews were intensively studied by philosophers such as Dilthey and Max Scheler, but in the 1930s the term was also used by the National Socialists in a manner in which one had to decide pre-rationally regarding it. After World War II, the German philosopher Hans Meyer who opposed National Socialism wrote a historical analysis of occidental worldviews that was published in 1949 under the title *Abendländische Weltanschauung*. A systematic international comparison has not yet been made, even though various authors today deal with the content of worldviews in cultural comparison studies.

The Phrase "Psychology of Worldviews"

Exclusively Karl Jaspers has written a psychology of worldviews. At the core of a psychology of worldviews is the investigation of psychological contents and structures, of psychological development conditions of worldviews and of consequences of different worldviews. However, a sociological, historical, or in the broader sense any kind of empirical investigation was not intended by Jaspers.

Distinction of "Worldview" from the term "Ideology"

Ideology stands first of all for a philosophical, sociological, historical, or psychological research about

⁴ Arthur C. Brooks, *Who Really Cares: The Surprising Truth about Compassionate Conservatism*, New York, NY: Basic Books, 2006.

and teaching of ideas and as such is a concept similar to that of worldview. However, the term ideology is used pejoratively and differs from worldview in the following ways:

- * Deception: Ideology does not contain the normative component of lived existence, but stands for merely pretended worldviews which are only communicated to others or even to oneself without being practiced. They are feigned as one's own ideas and norms for strategic reasons, such as gaining power, or merely for economic interests. In addition to intentional deception of others, there can also be subliminal self-deception.
- * Reflection of objectively given conditions of life: In the second negative variant, subjective convictions reflect objective conditions (Karl Marx's notion of *Überbau*, that is, superstructure). For example, being in favor of a segregated school system versus a comprehensive school system because one grew up in it or perceives to gain benefits from it directly or by virtue of one's children. The stated arguments might be correct, but they are secondary for the formation of this conviction (which could be false consciousness, *falsches Bewusstsein*).
- * In a narrower sense and in a tradition that follows Karl Mannheim, ideology stands only for conservative and right-wing convictions (that is, for an assertion that is considered to be wrong).
- * In a merely bellicose meaning, ideology is the world of ideas of others that deviates from one's own conviction and is therefore judged to be wrong.

*Distinction from "World Model" or
"Image of the World" (Weltbild)*

The concept of "world model" or "image of the world" (*Weltbild*) when being compared to worldview (*Weltanschauung*), includes fewer or no normative aspects, no subjective or epistemic assumptions. An exact assessment of this concept is fuzzy here for different authors in different languages use the respective terms differently. Classical world models would be the heliocentric *versus* the geocentric model. For Jaspers, world model further stands for the "totality of the representational content that a human being has" (PW 141), this includes all knowledge including that about oneself, but not lived existence.

*Distinction from Thought Style (Denkstil)
and Paradigm*

Ludwig Fleck's concept of "thinking style" (*Denkstil*) and Thomas Kuhn's notion of "paradigm" describe ways of thinking used in science that specify methods of perception and investigation, constitute objects, stimulate research questions, and organize scientists into social groups. The terms are directed at epistemic undertakings, often tied to worldviews, but they are not as encompassing as these (that is, no claim is made to give meaning to life).

The Structure of Jaspers' *Psychologie der Weltanschauungen*

Jaspers' psychology of worldviews is based on the theoretical concept of the (Hegelian) triad, which in a simplified form can be understood as the thought movement from thesis (concept), to antithesis (counter-concept, supplement, other) and to synthesis. This final form is a higher alternative to the first two terms, their sublation (*Aufhebung*) into a broader and more abstract ideation. These include in the *Psychologie der Weltanschauungen*:

- * Attitudes (*Einstellungen*): In the sense of positions, ways of thinking and lifestyles of people, they are divided into concrete-objective, self-reflective, and enthusiastic ones. In Jaspers' *Psychologie der Weltanschauungen* the part on attitudes is the one most strongly influenced by psychology. The world of ideas and the lifeworld of various philosophies is examined in the sense of interpretive psychology (*verstehende Psychologie*).
- * World models (*Weltbilder*): Containing ideas related to world, time, human beings, culture, life, and fate, they are divided into sensory-spatial, psychological-cultural, and metaphysical world models.
- * Life of spirit (*Leben des Geistes*): Forms of philosophical (epistemic, normative, and existential) worldviews, divided into skepticism and nihilism, constrained within the limited (the shell), foothold in the infinite.

An analogous trinity is found in Jaspers' book *Philosophie* (1932) in three volumes with regard to world, existence, and metaphysics. In his *Psychologie der Weltanschauungen* Jaspers did not analyze in great detail the worldviews of existing religions and peoples, instead, his focus was directed to worldviews

of a philosophical origin and especially of notable philosophers (seen as individuals) who could have been religious thinkers too.

Jaspers' core ideas, that can be found again in his later works (for instance in his *magnum opus*, *Philosophie*), are developed already in his *Psychologie der Weltanschauungen*. In addition, it contains a systematic outline of occidental and worldwide philosophy. For the reader, this systematic sketch can be used as an introduction into philosophy. However, this overview of worldviews and philosophies is not only the topic of Jaspers' analysis but forms the basis for reflection as it allows for an existential examination too.

In contradiction to Jaspers' intention of not providing a specific worldview, his *Psychologie der Weltanschauungen* as well as some of his other works are strongly normative.⁵ His colleague in Heidelberg, the philosopher Heinrich Rickert already in 1921 pointed out that Jaspers' psychology of worldviews is by no means value-free;⁶ it is not mere contemplation, as it articulates a philosophical worldview.

Central Concepts in Jaspers' *Psychologie der Weltanschauungen*

Similar to poetry the concepts in Jaspers' *Psychologie der Weltanschauungen* are interpretively open; their meaning can be grasped in their use. All terms are highly abstract and have an excess of meaning; their openness and concealment are based on the intention to think for oneself by virtue of one's existence. From an empirical-cognitive perspective, the openness of terms or even their clandestineness (hiddenness) may in fact stimulate one's own thinking. However, from the perspective of scientific disciplines, such opacity could be criticized.

In order to explain Jaspers' central concepts entire works would have to be written. Many of the concepts were also used by others. For example, the individual (*der Einzelne*) is also being used in the works by Max Stirner, Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, and Ernst Jünger; the whole (*das Ganze*) is in Hegel; idea

(*die Idee*) is a concept used by Kant. Only a very brief explanation can be attempted here; as others might prefer a somewhat different emphasis with regard to discussing these central concepts.

- * Shell (*Gehäuse*): An objectivized cage, foothold in the limited; this is a rigid and therefore wrong scheme of thought and life, examples of its manifestation are authoritarianism and dogmatism, but for Jaspers also rationalism, liberalism, or harmonism.
- * Foothold in infinity (*Halt im Unendlichen*): There is no foothold in infinity in a rigid system of thoughts; instead, foothold occurs in the flow of thought and in reflecting upon life in relation to the whole of existence.
- * Limit situation (*Grenzsituation*): Refers to touchstones in the life of all people and in their orientations—that is, struggle, death, contingency, guilt—human existence shows and realizes itself in these events.
- * Struggle (*Kampf*): A limit situation, a basic condition of life, an element of an examination in the world of spirit, also manifests itself in the form of a loving struggle and in existential communication.
- * Enthusiasm (*Enthusiasmus*): An intensive way of thinking and living, an attentive life in the whole, in love and as a human being. Impassioned commitment that helps to cross given boundaries.
- * Subject-object split (*Subjekt-Objekt-Spaltung*): The world and life do not exist as a unit, but are separated into self and other (similarly, antinomy as opposites within thought and life); mysticism tries to overcome this duality.
- * Dialectics (*Dialektik*): The position A can be contrasted with position B, and when both positions are overcome and sublated this results in a third position C.
- * The Whole (*das Ganze*): While science examines partial questions, its aim must be to recognize the totality of interconnectedness; truth and meaning arise in thought and life through the reference that is given to it. Jaspers referred to this situation as *das Umgreifende* (the encompassing), it has a connotation of transcendence.
- * The individual (*der Einzelne*): The individual who chooses to live a conscious and reflective life without being absorbed into the crowd.
- * Authenticity, honesty, truthfulness (*Echtheit, Redlichkeit*): Jaspers promotes intellectual integrity and truthfulness in one's relationship to oneself and others; he also stresses seriousness (*Ernst*) when exploring possible existence.

⁵ For example, Jaspers writes that he would not give a prophetic philosophy in his *Psychologie der Weltanschauungen*, even if this were to be the true philosophy (PW 2).

⁶ Heinrich Rickert, "Psychologie der Weltanschauungen und Philosophie der Werte," *Logos. Internationale Zeitschrift für Philosophie der Kultur* 9 (2021), 1-42.

- * Idea (*Idee*): For Jaspers, idea means a point of reference regarding thinking.
- * Reason (*Vernunft*, Λόγος): An ability to reflect, to abstract, and to think openly; a way of thinking that can self-reflect, that can relate to imprecise content such as ideas and is open to consider alternatives; thinking is referred to a meaningful whole. Thinking is not identical with pure problem solving in everyday life; the more practical and useful thinking can be referred to as intellect, mind, or wit (*Verstand*).
- * Faith (*Glaube*): Refers to the incommunicable; that which is beyond reason, yet as a belief in reason, faith is the prerequisite for reason.
- * Existence (*Existenz*): A reflected, chosen, and serious life of a person in relation to the whole of being; appearance and development of the whole in the immanence, an individual's being-there in the world (*Dasein*) in light of transcendence.

I hope that these descriptions add clarity to these concepts and at the same time are stimulating for one's own thinking and life.

The Psychology of Worldviews in its Historical Context

Jaspers mentions Hegel, Kant, Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, and Max Weber as the relevant intellectuals who have influenced his *Psychologie der Weltanschauungen*. He refers to Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* as being the only "grand attempt" (*großartige Versuch*) of a systematic psychology of worldviews that was known to him (PW 12-3). For Jaspers, writing his first philosophical text meant that intellectual contents are presented, discussed, and evaluated systematically; whereas his previous genre of empirical investigations in the sense of hermeneutic psychology (*Verstehende Psychologie*) now occur marginally.

In the late 1910s and in the early 1920s, Jaspers had also given lectures on psychology of religion, yet not in the shape of an analysis of the differences between religions, but as an understanding of religious forms of belief, experience, and thought (for instance, of prayer, mysticism, conversion, lifestyle). Jaspers was not alone in his interest in worldviews at the beginning of the twentieth century; in his time, Max Weber and Werner Sombart also analyzed them, but in a historical-sociological way regarding their relevance for cultural and economic development.

In terms of a history of ideas (*Geistesgeschichte*),

the aforementioned authors are to be found in an idealistic tradition that regards intellectual content as effective for the conduct of life of individuals, societies, and cultures. In contrast, there are authors who focus on materialistic concepts (understood in a broader sense) such as economic factors (for instance, the concept of capital in the writings of Karl Marx), social-structural factors (as in struggle for resources; again Marx, and also Pierre Bourdieu), the satisfaction of needs (from sexuality to libido and power; notably Sigmund Freud and Alfred Adler, and also Bourdieu), evolutionary-biological factors (genetics, sociobiology; notably Charles Darwin, Gregory Clark, Michael Hart), historical-power-political factors (colonialism, dependency theories; developed by Marvin Harris, Fernando Henrique Cardoso) or institutional factors (economic freedom; Adam Smith, Friedrich August von Hayek). Of course, these different approaches could be combined, and a meaningful combination of their core ideas (such as the impact of worldviews being achieved through institution-building) comes closer to the historical reality, in recent decades materialist concepts have dominated.

A Current Outlook from the Perspective of Psychology

There are four different ways in which Jaspers' *Psychologie der Weltanschauungen* and Jaspers' thinking can be taken up today:

(1) In philosophy, viewed as an academic discipline, Jaspers' work can be hermeneutically and scholarly interpreted, compared with other works and philosophers, and historically analyzed (for example, one could explore the significance of the *Psychologie der Weltanschauungen* in the history of ideas in general, or in Jaspers' own development of thinking).

(2) In psychology and the social sciences (sociology, pedagogics, cross-cultural research, economics), worldviews in religion, in politics and in culture in general—as communicated and lived beliefs in everyday life—can be analyzed and their impact on life and life outcomes be assessed. Although this is a genuinely psychological topic, economists too have addressed these topics in recent decades. Most widely known is David Landes' 1998 opus, *The Wealth and Poverty of Nations* in which he considered (among other possible causes) culture based on religion as being a causal factor leading to

differences in wealth.⁷ This approach was taken up in more detail by Lawrence Harrison who precisely described various cultural factors and how they affect economic activity and ultimately prosperity via behavior and institutions.⁸ Such approaches go back to the studies of Weber whose work Jaspers also took up in his own book (and Jaspers was personally acquainted with Weber as well).

Numerous scholars have noted the impact of culture, religion, and ideological variables as causal factor for innovation, the industrial revolution, and wealth (for example, Deirdre McCloskey, Joel Mokyr). In my own research, I have analyzed the content of religions and their impact on education, learning, rationality, thinking, merit-based (meritoric) orientations, and the development of a civilian world (*bürgerliche Welt*) and modernization.⁹ Holy texts have an impact in combination with the role model function of their founders, that is additionally shaped by later revision processes and the transformed understanding of the religious message by scholars, along with the lived practice of a given religion. Of course, religions do not act in life via baptism, but via their impact on education up to modernization by manifesting their influence in abilities, behaviors and institutions, and in this way, religions can at least partly explain differences in wealth, politics, and the wellbeing of nations.

Jaspers' work could prove fruitful for further research on worldviews as follows:

- * A hermeneutic analysis as to which contents of the classic texts can be linked to the effects of a worldview.
- * An analysis of which ideas have been added at later stages of a worldview.
- * An analysis of how people actually thought, what motivated them in their everyday actions.
- * An examination of how people think today, what motivates them in their actions.

Equally important is research regarding the potential correlations between worldviews and upbringing, education and cognitive competence,

between worldviews and institutions and economy, and adding a novel field of research, namely the repercussion (retroaction) of these societal aspects on the shaping of worldviews. A unidirectional worldview determinism is overly simplistic.

Worldviews can be evaluated with regard to complexity, structure, and aesthetics, with regard to openness (*versus* rigidity), rationality, ethics, educational affinity, conduciveness to thinking. Relevant pairs of opposites could form: materialistic *versus* idealistic worldviews (as in Jaspers), religious *versus* non-religious, irrational *versus* rational, bourgeois (*burgher, bürgerlich*) *versus* non-bourgeois, modern *versus* pre-modern, and so on. Of course, none of the worldviews at hand will be insertable in an unaltered manner into a single pair of opposites; moreover, there are overlaps between the various categorizations as worldviews are not reified; worldviews influence one another, react to societal norms and eventually will change.

(3) In Jaspers' psychology of worldviews, recognizing and living philosophy as an existence constitutes one of his core objectives. Merely a disciplinary philosophical and a disciplinary psychological-empirical analysis of worldviews is insufficient. Such disciplinary and empirical approaches represent a productive misunderstanding of Jaspers' main intention of recognizing and living philosophy as an existence. For Jaspers, passing down philosophy is a result of engaging with past thinkers' thought as worldviews are creations of thinkers. Jaspers' efforts of writing the *Psychologie der Weltanschauungen* should be seen as a process of organizing, understanding, and evaluating other thinkers. And for readers it is intended to be a point of departure for engaging with their own thinking which is meant to be part of a reflected life. Thinking and acting are to refer to intellectual ideas as well as to the whole of existence. In practical terms, this means to protect persons against aberrances of thinking and science, for instance politicization, indolence or narrowness, and to lead to reasonable, freer, and intellectually more stimulating as well as veracious thinking.

(4) And in other respects, too, one could pick up on Jaspers' work: science is truth-oriented and must take up substantively relevant questions that are grounded in the logic of scientific thought itself. In this field, Weber and Sombart succeeded in analyzing the significance of religions, namely of Protestantism, Catholicism, Confucianism, Judaism, Buddhism, Islam, and Hinduism, and they did not shy away from

⁷ David S. Landes, *The Wealth and Poverty of Nations: Why Some are so Rich and Some so Poor*, New York, NY: W. W. Norton, 1998.

⁸ Lawrence E. Harrison, *Jews, Confucians, and Protestants: Cultural Capital and the End of Multiculturalism*, Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2013.

⁹ Heiner Rindermann, *Cognitive Capitalism: Human Capital and the Wellbeing of Nations*, Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2018.

clear formulations and evaluations. In contrast to this, today's university is often politicized and pseudo-ethicized; these probing questions are not to be asked, as they are deemed to be too delicate. Or analyses of worldviews are in themselves being devalued as a form of culturalism. Behind this restriction is an understandable fear of playing into the hands of those who might use it in order to negatively evaluate other cultures and religions. Perception of reality as such, however, disappears in this way. Historical-sociological and ideological-psychological descriptions of the development of present conditions enables one to understand the differences between previous and current societies and cultures. The principle of truth and internal scientific criteria must regain primacy within science.

Jaspers Himself as Person and Existence – A Lived Worldview

*Das Glück des denkenden Lebens.*¹⁰
(The happiness of the reflective life.)
Karl Jaspers

In early 2009, I received the following message from a colleague in philosophy:

Jaspers and his *Psychology of Worldviews* were a kind of "salvation" for me as a 15-year-old: Loving struggle. I wrote an annual paper [*Jahresarbeit*] in school on Jaspers, Thomae,¹¹ and decision problems in basic logical-mathematical research. It was the only paper of my school years that really interested me.¹²

Jaspers was and still is a person who—through his works and his life and the coherence of both—can fascinate people. He is an exemplary scientist and an exemplary existence, who offers a motivating example and orientation, especially in times of having fundamental doubts, regarding science, thinking, and enlightenment. At the same time, Jaspers always refused to want to convey values. In the *Psychologie der Weltanschauungen* he declares:

Whoever wants a direct answer to the question of how to live, will look for it in vain in this book. [PW vii]

¹⁰ Karl Jaspers, *Philosophie, Band 1: Philosophische Weltorientierung*, Berlin, DE: Springer Verlag 1956, p. xxv. [Henceforth cited as *P* with volume number]

¹¹ Hans Thomae (1915–2001), German developmental psychologist.

¹² Personal communication 5 January 2009. [My translation]

I disagree with Jaspers' assessment. I consider his book to be a kind of pamphlet for education (*Bildung*), thinking, knowledge, and intensity—endorsing a life of enthusiasm in science, communication, life and love being oriented to values that go beyond the given and point toward the transcendent. Here is another quote, from chapter I. C. "The enthusiastic Attitude":

What it [the enthusiastic attitude] has in common with all others is its *metaphysical foundation*, its incommensurability with rational categories, with usefulness, success, mere reality...The enthusiastic attitude means an *awake life*, a life *in the whole and in the essence*...The everywhere single enthusiasm appears in many types according to the concrete substance in which it reaches an idea-related penetration. Such types are: the enthusiasm in the metaphysical soulfulness of the active attitude, in the struggle in sexual love, in the scientific work, in the artistic creation, in the personality formation. [VW 119, 123]

Jaspers can give fire and flame to inspire people who are interested in intellectual subject matters. The extent and structure of his knowledge is impressive, for instance his work regarding the great philosophers that includes occidental as well as oriental founding figures. His character is steadfast, as he had not bowed to National Socialism. In his thinking and civic life, Jaspers is Protestant, liberal (in the sense of John Locke and John Stuart Mill), enlightening, both psychologically and existential-philosophical.

- * Civic life: Although Jaspers often seems behind the times and unworldly in his language and normative ideas, he was never extreme, one-sided, or unrealistic. When it comes to practical matters, he takes pragmatic positions. For example, in his book *Die Idee der Universität* (1923) he recognizes the need for economic and social-functional perspectives on higher education. Someone has to pay for all this. Society needs something in return for its funding, and without money and education there is no science.
- * Protestant (in the sense of Weber and Sombart): Jaspers stands for an upright, unbending, and normative attitude, for an orientation informed by honesty (*Redlichkeit*) and duty, for doing properly the things one does. Playful-ironic-nonseriousness was alien to him; he was of a North German aristocratic nature.
- * Liberal stance: Jaspers is open-minded, interested in the thoughts of others, accepts the ideas of others, but never loses sight of a clear normative framework.

- * Enlightening approach: Jaspers represents Enlightenment values, namely, education (*Bildung*), freedom, equality of opportunity, democracy, and reason. He is idealistically oriented in the sense of wanting to improve the given through ideas, and in the form of upholding the belief that humanity and the world can be changed guided by an ideal.
- * Psychological orientation: Human beings, self, and self-reflection are at the center of Jaspers' philosophy.
- * Existentialist (existential-philosophical, *existenzphilosophisch*) viewpoint: Jaspers stands in a religious, platonic, extra-rational, romantic, and idealistic tradition of emphasizing a depth that is not obvious, not accessible by way of direct understanding. Things are not as they appear at first sight; they stand for more than that: World and self are ciphers (*Chiffre*) that point beyond themselves. Life contains enigmatic aspects. Words are shadows of larger ideas. Struggle, life, limit situation, enthusiasm, can never be fully fathomed. Philosophy is not knowledge, not thinking, but a life guided by thought. Thinkers belong to a millennia-old spiritual realm of humankind.

Jaspers is not exclusively an Enlightenment thinker, but at the same time also a post-Enlightenment thinker. There is a tension between these different ways of thinking and orienting oneself. Philosophy is enlightenment and life in existence at the same time:

The great task of philosophy became this: without abandoning the sciences, examining them by their standard of compelling certainty, to assure ourselves in that from which we live. It is a matter of philosophizing as a function of our reality itself, of thought-forms which, emanating from personal life, address themselves as a communication to the individual. [P1 xxv]

The thought presented requires the resonance of the possible existence of the reader. [P1 xxix]

Philosophical truth is a function of communication with myself and with the other. [P2 114]

Truth that is myself. [P2 416]

From Jaspers one does not adopt single units of knowledge (in the sense of "the Greek worldview was first X, then Y, and then Z"), but one rather engages in philosophical thinking and philosophical life in itself. Thinking by oneself, thinking correctly, living in thinking and thinking in life, all this is in the becoming

of an idea reflected in oneself. Thinking for oneself, thinking correctly, living in thinking and thinking in living, all of this defines philosophical life.

Science as an Existential Task

For Jaspers, science is an existential-ethical enterprise of humans who are bound to pre-scientific values, which concerns them holistically and aims at the whole of truth. Science and philosophy need one another. Jaspers writes:

Philosophy is effective in the impulses of the original will to know, in the ideas which make clear-sighted and lead to the choice of the objects.¹³

This encompassing, which we are or can be, whether we make it conscious as spirit, as existence, as reason, is the actual life, in which science finds its meaning and reason. Hence the secret, which is nevertheless palpable every moment, that in the business of science not the intellect alone and not the tangible achievement constitutes the core, but that something must resonate in the scientific world: it is in work and personality more than the always determined, finite content of an insight. [IU 32]

To the original will to know, insight is an end in itself. [IU 51]

Being pervaded by the idea of the university is an element of a worldview: of the will to unrestricted research and search, to the boundless development of reason, to unrestricted openness, to the questioning of everything that can occur in the world, to unconditional truth with all the danger of *sapere aude*. [IU 64]

The argument that science would need to include philosophy has also been advanced by others, but never in this breadth, with an existential reference (which goes beyond mere epistemology and scientific theory, which only concern thinking and institutions), and by presenting a clear normative claim.

Science needs in its practice a connection to thinking, rationality, and reflexivity and it needs to be possible to be criticized by scientists in case of any deviation from these principles. Jaspers' philosophy can provide this foundation in the form of a modern understanding of science's underlying ideas.

¹³ Karl Jaspers, *Die Idee der Universität*, Berlin, DE: Springer Verlag 1946, p. 30. [Henceforth cited as IU]